

Advanced Higher Business Report Guide for Candidate

The Business Report accounts for 50 of the 150 marks awarded in the external exam. The aim of the Report is to allow the opportunity to apply knowledge in a critical way to a real situation. The Report should be between 2,500 and 3,500 words long (not including Appendices). It will be submitted to SQA at the end of April.

When preparing the Report ensure that everything is fully explained and justified with reference to information that has been gathered. Evidence of research should be placed in Appendices at the end of the Report.

Use the section headings below when compiling the Report.

Analysis (25 marks)

The Strategy (6 marks)

- ◆ State how long the strategy is expected to take to implement and why the length of time suggested is appropriate.

The Fit between the Strategy and (the Organisation's) Objectives (5 marks)

- ◆ Use the information researched for the NAB to explain how the strategy will help the organisation to achieve each of its objectives.
- ◆ Explain which objectives are most directly, and which least directly, are linked to the strategy and why.
- ◆ Make sure something is developed for each objective.

The Strategy and the Current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats faced by the business (8 marks)

- ◆ Explain how the SWOT assisted development of the business strategy.
- ◆ Show how and why the strategy fits in — or does not fit in if this is the case — with each of the items on the SWOT drawn up for the NAB.
- ◆ Explain any items in the SWOT that are not dealt with by the strategy and say why they are not covered.

Resources Needed (6 marks)

- ◆ Explain what resources are needed and why each one is necessary for the intended strategy.
- ◆ Suggest how the organisation might get hold of the resources.
- ◆ Comment on any difficulties the organisation might face when it tries to get hold of resources — eg do they have to be custom built; is finance available?
- ◆ Comment on any difficulties the organisation might face when it uses the resources — eg will training be needed?

Evaluation (25 marks)

Implications of the Strategy for Current Resources (6 marks)

- ◆ Explain what changes will be needed in resources — such as marketing, financial, operational, human, administrative or research and development resources.
- ◆ Justify each part of the explanation by referring to the research undertaken.
- ◆ Suggest how the organisation could respond to any changes.
- ◆ Describe the benefits and costs of different ways of responding

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Information Used to Develop the Strategy (8 marks)

- ◆ Analyse the accuracy of the information used.
- ◆ Compare the benefits of having each piece of information to the costs of obtaining it and state whether it was worthwhile or not.
- ◆ Evaluate how appropriate each piece of information was.
- ◆ Identify any gaps in the information collected and explain why it was not possible to collect the missing items.
- ◆ Evaluate how any gaps in information may affect the strategy.

The Strategy and Stakeholder Expectations (6 marks)

- ◆ Explain how the strategy fits in with the expectations of 3 major stakeholders in terms of how well it deals with the aspects which each sees as most important.
- ◆ Explain how the strategy may affect these stakeholders.
- ◆ Analyse the beneficial effects of the strategy on the stakeholders.

Overall Evaluation (5 marks)

- ◆ Draw conclusions from your research and analysis about how successful each part of your strategy is likely to be.
- ◆ Make sure you justify each conclusion — ie back it up by referring to what was found in the research.
- ◆ Explain how the success of the strategy will be measured.
- ◆ Explain anything that might throw the strategy off course and why it is impossible to predict everything that might happen.

Don't forget to include Appendices.