

# OxfordAQA

## International AS and A-level Business (9725)

### Summary of changes

The current **OxfordAQA AS** and **A-level Business (9625)** specification is being replaced by the updated **OxfordAQA AS** and **A-level Business (9725)** specification.

The timetable for the existing and updated qualifications is as follows:

International AS and A-level Business		
Series	Current 9625 Specification	Revised 9725 specification
Teaching	Last teaching AS September 2025	First teaching AS September 2026 onwards
	Last teaching A2 September 2026	First teaching A2 September 2027 onwards
June 2026	BU01, BU02, BU03, BU04	None
January 2027	BU01, BU02, BU03, BU04	None
June 2027	BU03, BU04	BSS1, BSS2
January 2028	BU03, BU04	BSS1, BSS2
June 2028	None/discontinued	BSS1, BSS2 BSS3, BSS4

## Summary of specification changes

### Specification and unit code changes

The current specification 9625 uses BU01–BU04 unit codes and the updated 9725 uses BSS1–BSS4.

### AS Assessment structure

The BU01 and BU02 papers are 1 hour 30 minutes, 80 marks and the BSS1 and BSS2 papers are shorter at 1 hour 15 minutes, 60 marks. The updated 9725 AS papers use a restructured question format including a calculation-based Section B and a reduced total number of 12 mark essay style questions from three to two per paper.

### A2 Assessment structure

The current 9625 BU04 Section A assesses three extended response questions that do not align to a case study. The updated 9725 BSS4 Section A is a case study question that matches the format used in the three other sections of the A2 papers, which means that all four sections in BSS3 and BSS4 are based on case studies.

### **A2 subject content structure**

The current 9625 specification has three content sections, with the A2 content in Section 3.3 assessed across both BU03 and BU04. The updated 9725 specification splits the A2 content into two sections, one for each A2 paper. In 9725, Section 3.3 Business Analysis is assessed in BSS3 and Section 3.4 Business Strategy is assessed in BSS4.

### **A more consistent approach to quantitative questions**

The AS papers BSS1 and BSS2 now assess 10 marks of mathematical questions in Section B. The A2 papers BSS3 and BSS4 now assess 8 marks of mathematical questions, which are found in the first four mark question in each case study.

### **6 Appendix: quantitative skills in business**

The 9725 specification introduces a dedicated appendix outlining the quantitative skills expectations of the specification.

## **Summary of subject content changes**

### **3.1 AS Unit 1 subject content**

A summary of the changes to the 9625 subject content is as follows:

- 3.1.1.1 The key business terms and concepts section has been removed from the specification, with the terms either removed or moved to the relevant sections of the specification. Section 3.1.1.1 now has three sections covering entrepreneurs, business objectives and business plans.
- 3.1.1.2 Forms of business now includes partnerships and no longer includes co-operatives.
- 3.1.1.3 Market share has been included in market conditions, and the concentration ratio has been clarified to the four firm concentration ratio. The barriers to entry into a market has been given added clarification. The effect of changes in incomes has been clarified with additional detail, and the effect of changes in government policies has been removed.
- 3.1.2.1 The importance of marketing section has been removed. Brand loyalty is now included in the marketing objectives section. The marketing plans and influences on marketing plans sections have both been further clarified.

- 3.1.2.2 Further clarification has been provided on the forms of primary and secondary marketing research. Big data and data mining has been removed from the interpretation of marketing data.
- 3.1.2.3 Segmentation by income has been removed and more clarification has been provided on market positioning.
- 3.1.2.4 The marketing mix has been simplified to 4Ps from 7Ps. The Boston Matrix has been moved to A2 Unit 3. The stages of new product development have been added, and the concept of brand loyalty. The pricing section now includes more detail on influences and methods of pricing as well as related calculations. The promotional mix no longer includes exhibitions and instead references sponsorships and social media. The distribution section has added agents, wholesalers and retailers as intermediaries. The importance of marketing section has been added.

## 3.2 AS Unit 2 subject content

A summary of the changes to the 9625 subject content is as follows:

- 3.2.1.1 The external/internal influences on operation plans sections have been removed. The operations management section has been moved to section 3.2.1.2. Further clarification has been provided on operations objectives. Elements of section 3.2.1.3 have been moved into a new operations processes section in section 3.2.1.1
- 3.2.1.2 This section has been removed – aspects of the content have been incorporated into other parts of section 3.2
- 3.2.1.3 This is now section 3.2.1.2. More detail has been provided about the various aspects of capacity, efficiency and productivity, lean production, customer service quality and operations management.
- 3.2.1.4 This is now section 3.2.1.3. Matching supply to demand content has moved to capacity in section 3.2.1.2. More detail has been provided in the supply chain management section.
- 3.2.2.1 More detail has been provided on different recruitment stages, selection methods and employment contracts. The final section on internal and external influences has been removed.
- 3.2.2.2 Employee engagement has been replaced with employee retention rates
- 3.2.2.3 The managing human resources content has moved to section 3.2.2.5. References added for tall versus flat structures, employee representation rates and restructuring, including delayering (restructuring has been moved from A2 section 3.3.10.2).

- 3.2.2.4 More detail provided on the three named theories of motivation. Non-financial methods of motivation and engagement has been added.
- 3.2.2.5 More detail has been provided to the sections on employee involvement and employer-employee relations. The managing human resources section has been moved here from section 3.2.2.3.
- 3.2.3.1 This section has been removed.
- 3.2.3.2 This section has been removed.
- 3.2.3.3 This is now section 3.2.3.1. The content has changed to cover specific internal and external sources of finance.
- 3.2.3.4 This is now Section 3.2.3.2, and is unchanged.
- 3.2.3.5 This is now section 3.2.3.3. Profit margins and budgeting/budget statements have been added.

### 3.3 A2 subject content

The A2 subject content section has now been split into two sections. Section 3.3 Business Analysis is assessed in BSS3 and Section 3.4 Business Strategy is assessed in BSS4.

A summary of the changes to the 9625 subject content is as follows:

- 3.3.1 References to strategy have been removed from this section, as strategy is now covered by Unit 4. Financial calculations have been added as part of the SWOT analysis section.
- 3.3.2 The Boston matrix has been added from AS Unit 1. The price earnings ratio and window dressing have been removed. Triple bottom line has been moved to section 3.4.4 and the balanced scorecard has been removed. Subject content from 3.3.10.3 has been added in to a section about business culture.
- 3.3.3 Changes have been made to how Porter's five forces are to be approached.
- 3.3.4 A reference to PESTLE analysis has been added, and sections 3.3.4 to 3.3.6 have been combined into one overarching section. More context has been added to the political and legal environment content.
- 3.3.5 This section is now part of 3.3.4. More context has been added to some economic factors such as taxation, exchange rates, inflation/deflation and interest rates. Other economic factors have been removed, such as protectionism (now in section 3.4.4), investment in infrastructure, price of resources and labour markets., Globalisation has been moved to section 3.4.4. A new section 3.3.5 contains content on forecasting sales, including three period moving averages.

- 3.3.6 This section is now part of 3.3.4. Urbanisation and the growth of online businesses has been removed. Disruptive technology and the impact of artificial intelligence has been added.
- 3.3.7 This section has been moved to 3.4.3. Sensitivity analysis and the business environment have been removed and opportunity cost has been added. Content on decision trees which has been included from Section 3.1.1.1
- 3.3.8.1 This section is now 3.4.1. The Strategy content removed from 3.3.1 has been added to this section, including the maths skills associated with the SWOT analysis from section 3.3.1
- 3.3.8.2 This section is now 3.4.2. Bowman's strategic clock has been removed and further detail has been added about market mapping, strategic positioning and differentiation strategies.
- 3.3.9.1 This section now forms part of 3.4.4. More detail has been added to diseconomies of scale and the experience curve. Synergy and overtrading have been removed and forms of integration have been added. Greiner's model of growth has been removed.
- 3.3.9.2 This section is now part of 3.4.4. Further detail has been added to this content section.
- 3.3.9.3 This section is now part of 3.4.4 and changed title to globalisation. The reference to NAFTA has been changed to USMCA. References to emerging economies and differences between countries have been removed. More context has been added to the factors affecting decisions on international markets and the calculations students will be asked to consider in this context. References to protectionism, tariffs and quotas have been added. The managing international business section has been removed.
- A new section has been added to 3.4.4 on sustainability, which includes the triple bottom line reporting from 3.3.2, and explores aspects of environmental, economic and social sustainability.
- 3.3.10.1 This section has been removed, including the Tennenbaum Shmidt continuum.
- 3.3.10.2 This section is now 3.4.6. The references to incremental and disruptive change have been removed. More context has been provided for Lewin's force field analysis and Kotter and Schlesinger's four reasons for resistance and six ways of overcoming resistance. A new section about risk and uncertainty has been added.
- 3.3.10.3 This content has moved to section 3.3.2. More context has been provided around business culture, and Hofstede's features of national cultures has been removed.
- 3.3.10.4 This section is now 3.4.5. Organisation structures have been removed. More context has been added to strategy implementation.