

OxfordAQA

International AS/A-level

Business (9725)

Switching guide

Switching from Pearson Edexcel International or Cambridge International Examinations to Oxford International AQA Examinations

Switching to OxfordAQA International AS and A-level Business (9725)

The OxfordAQA International has been developed by a number of specialists in education, including current teachers. The specification and assessments have been written with teachers and students in mind. It aims to provide a solid foundation, ideal for preparing students for further study at university level or equivalent.

Key features:

- Streamlined content to reflect challenges faced by businesses today. Greater clarity around exactly what topics need to be covered.
- All four papers are now entirely modular, allowing for focused revision and opportunities to apply knowledge to a range of engaging and contemporary businesses.
- Questions that allow students to demonstrate an ability to develop opinions, whilst offering clarity to centers regarding how students can maximise their marks.

OxfordAQA specification (9725)	Pearson Edexcel specification (XBS01 and YBS01)	Cambridge International syllabus (9609) 2026, 2027, 2028
Overall structure		
<p>Split into four topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Business and markets. 2 Managing operations, human resources and finance. 3 Business analysis (A-level only). 4 Business strategy (A-level only). 	<p>Split into four topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 1: Business enterprise. • Unit 2: Business structures and processes. • Unit 3: Strategic business decisions. • Unit 4: Business in a global context. 	<p>Split into five topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Business and its environment. 2 Human resource management. 3 Marketing. 4 Operations management. 5 Finance and accounting.
<p>AS Unit 1: Business and markets</p> <p>Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes. 60 marks. 50% of AS. 20% of A-level.</p> <p>Four compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A has short answer questions worth 10 marks.</p> <p>Section B has calculation questions worth 10 marks.</p> <p>Section C has extended response questions worth 16 marks.</p> <p>Section D has extended response questions worth 24 marks.</p> <p>Any content from section 3.1.</p>	<p>AS Unit 1: Business enterprise assessment</p> <p>Exam length: 1 hour 30 minutes. Exam paper in two sections:</p> <p>Section A: supported multiple-choice questions – 24 marks.</p> <p>Section B: questions based on data – 56 marks.</p> <p>Total for paper: 80 marks. Students may use a calculator.</p> <p>The quality of written communication will be assessed in the context of this unit through the 14 mark data response question in Section B of the paper.</p>	<p>AS Paper 1 (40 marks)</p> <p>Section A: four short answer questions. There are two parts to the first three questions.</p> <p>Section B: one essay from a choice of two. There are two parts to each essay.</p> <p>Questions are based on the AS Level subject content.</p>

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<p>AS Unit 2: Managing operations, human resources and finance</p> <p>Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes. 60 marks. 50% of AS. 20% of A-level.</p> <p>Four compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A has short answer questions worth 10 marks.</p> <p>Section B has calculation questions worth 10 marks.</p> <p>Section C has two extended response questions worth 16 marks.</p> <p>Section D has two extended response questions worth 24 marks.</p> <p>Any content from section 3.2.</p>	<p>AS Unit 2: Business structure and processes</p> <p>Exam length: 1 hour and 30 minutes.</p> <p>Section A: supported multiple-choice questions – 24 marks.</p> <p>Section B: questions based on data – 56 marks.</p> <p>Total for paper: 80 marks. Students may use a calculator.</p> <p>The quality of written communication will be assessed in the context of this unit through the 14 mark data response question in Section B of the paper.</p>	<p>AS Paper 2 (60 marks)</p> <p>Two data response questions. There are six parts to each question.</p> <p>Questions are based on the AS Level subject content.</p>

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<p>A2</p> <p>Unit 3: Business analysis</p> <p>Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. 80 marks. 30% of A-level.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A has one case study followed by five short answer and extended response questions worth 40 marks.</p> <p>Section B has one case study followed by five short answer and extended response questions worth 40 marks.</p> <p>Any content from Section 3.3.</p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Unit 3: Strategic business decisions</p> <p>Exam length: 2 hours.</p> <p>Section A: questions based on data – 40 marks. Section B: extended response questions based on data – 40 marks.</p> <p>Total for paper: 80 marks. Students may use a calculator.</p> <p>The assessment of this unit may draw on material from Units 1 and 2, enabling synoptic assessment.</p> <p>The quality of written communication will be assessed in the context of this unit through the 12 mark data response question in Section A and both the 20 mark questions in Section B of the paper.</p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Paper 3 (60 marks)</p> <p>Five questions based on a case study. There are three parts to Question 3 and two parts to Question 4.</p> <p>Questions are based on the A Level subject content; knowledge of material from the AS Level subject content is assumed.</p>

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<p>A2</p> <p>Unit 4: Business decision making</p> <p>Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. 80 marks. 30% of A-level.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A has one case study followed by five short answer and extended response questions worth 40 marks.</p> <p>Section B has one case study followed by five short answer and extended response questions worth 40 marks.</p> <p>Any content from Section 3.3.</p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Unit 4: Business in a global context</p> <p>Exam length: 2 hours.</p> <p>Section A: questions based on data – 40 marks. Section B: extended response questions based on data – 40 marks.</p> <p>Total for paper: 80 marks. Students may use a calculator.</p> <p>The assessment of this unit may draw on material from other parts of the course, enabling synoptic assessment.</p> <p>The quality of written communication will be assessed in the context of this unit through the 12 mark data response question in Section A and both the 20 mark questions in Section B of the paper.</p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Paper 4 (40 marks)</p> <p>Two essay questions based on a case study. Questions are based on the A Level subject content; knowledge of material from the AS Level subject content is assumed.</p>

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<p>Assessment Objectives:</p> <p>AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business terms, concepts, theories, methods and models.</p> <p>AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding to various business contexts.</p> <p>AO3: Analyse business issues, showing an understanding of the impact on individuals and organisations of external and internal influences.</p> <p>AO4: Evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to make informed judgements on business issues.</p>	<p>Assessment Objectives:</p> <p>AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified content.</p> <p>AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content to problems and issues arising from both familiar and unfamiliar situations.</p> <p>AO3: Analyse problems, issues and situations.</p> <p>AO4: Evaluate, distinguish between and assess appropriateness of fact and opinion, and judge information from a variety of sources.</p>	<p>Assessment Objectives:</p> <p>AO1: Knowledge and understanding Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding.</p> <p>AO1: Application Apply knowledge and understanding to problems and issues in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar business situations and contexts.</p> <p>AO3: Analysis Analyse business problems, issues and situations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using appropriate methods and techniques to make sense of qualitative and quantitative business information. • Interpreting and unpacking complex issues and situations to their constituent parts and searching for causes, impact and consequences. • Distinguishing between factual evidence and opinion or value judgement. • Drawing valid inferences and making valid generalisations. <p>AO4: Evaluation Evaluate business evidence, explanation, argument, discussion and analysis in order to make reasoned judgements, present measured conclusions and, where appropriate, make recommendations for action and implementation.</p>

General note

Although there are many topic areas that are common across all specifications, the way in which they are organised and assessed varies significantly. OxfordAQA is the only international board offering a fully modular course – making it easier for teachers and students to prepare for examinations.

In general Edexcel is less specific about what is included under certain topics as it gives one or two examples rather than specifying in detail what is needed which means that matching the specifications precisely is not always possible.

OxfordAQA's specification is designed to introduce key business concepts at AS level, broadening out to analysis and strategic decisions at A2.

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3.1 Unit 1: Business and markets		
<p>3.1.1.1 The nature and purpose of business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs • Business objectives • Business plans. <p>This section provides a foundation understanding of key business concepts – crucial to aid understanding of topics taught later.</p>	<p>This section of the OxfordAQA specification covers several important concepts that appear in different parts the Edexcel specification e.g. business objectives appear in 1.3.5 entrepreneurs and leaders.</p>	<p>This section is much larger in the Cambridge International syllabus, containing information that has now been removed from the OxfordAQA specification such as factors of production.</p>
<p>3.1.1.2 Types of business ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of business • Shareholders • Business and stakeholders. <p>This section introduces a range of contexts that exam questions could be applied to, such as family businesses.</p>	<p>Edexcel does not include family businesses or small and medium size enterprises.</p> <p>Edexcel includes franchises. This topic is included in Year 2 in OxfordAQA.</p>	<p>This section is again covered in a number of different areas in the Cambridge International syllabus.</p> <p>The Cambridge International syllabus includes some topics that are included in Year 2 of OxfordAQA, such as business growth.</p>

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<p>3.1.1.3 The external environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market conditions • External business environment. <p>This section looks at a range of key external issues influencing businesses.</p>	<p>The external environment is covered in Edexcel in 2.3.5 external influences and is very similar to the OxfordAQA specification.</p> <p>Edexcel contains more information about business legislation.</p>	<p>This OxfordAQA section is covered in Cambridge International in 6.1 External influences on business activity.</p>
<p>3.1.2.1 Marketing objectives and plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing objectives • Marketing plans • External and internal influences on marketing plans, objectives and decisions. <p>This section introduces marketing and the key roles upheld by this department.</p>	<p>Marketing objectives and strategies are set out in Edexcel section 1.3.3.</p> <p>Edexcel does not include a marketing plan.</p>	<p>These topics are covered in several sections in Cambridge International.</p> <p>Cambridge includes some areas that are not covered by the OxfordAQA specification, including Customer Relationship Marketing.</p>

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<p>3.1.2.2 Marketing data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market research Interpretation of marketing data <p>This section looks in depth at market research and the interpretation of marketing data.</p>	<p>There is generally similar content in OxfordAQA and Edexcel.</p>	<p>This section links to the 3.2 Market research section of the Cambridge International specification. There are many similarities between this section of the Cambridge syllabus and OxfordAQA.</p>
<p>3.1.2.3 Segmentation, targeting and positioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Segmentation, targeting and positioning 	<p>Edexcel specifically includes product trials which are not required by OxfordAQA.</p>	<p>These topics are covered in Cambridge International sections:</p> <p>3.1.5 Mass marketing and niche marketing</p> <p>3.1.6 Market segmentation.</p> <p>OxfordAQA includes contexts such as premium and budget positioning which are not covered by Cambridge.</p>
<p>3.1.2.4 The marketing mix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements of the marketing mix including product, pricing, the promotional mix and distribution The importance of marketing. <p>This section covers the marketing mix, a fundamental business principle.</p>	<p>Edexcel examines the Boston Matrix, which OxfordAQA covers in Unit 3.</p> <p>Edexcel includes the elasticity calculations (price and income) in section 1.3.2 The market.</p> <p>Edexcel does not examine cross elasticity.</p>	<p>Cambridge examines the Boston Matrix, which OxfordAQA covers in Unit 3.</p> <p>This section is similar to the OxfordAQA marketing mix section (3.1.2.4)</p>

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3.2 Unit 2: Managing operations, human resources and finance		
<p>3.2.1.1 Operations management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations • Operations processes. <p>This section provides a crucial introduction to the operations department and key objectives set by the department.</p>	<p>This is similar content to in Edexcel 2.3.4 Resource Management.</p> <p>Edexcel covers cel production which is not taught in the OxfordAQA specification.</p>	<p>The topics in this section are taught in the Cambridge International syllabus in 4.1 (Operations management)</p> <p>OxfordAQA outlines the key operational objectives, not taught in the Cambridge syllabus.</p> <p>4.1.1 The transformation process is not examined in the OxfordAQA specification.</p>
<p>3.2.1.2 Operations competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity • Efficiency and productivity • Lean production • Customer service • Quality • The importance of operations management. <p>This section has been designed to reflect the modern world of operations, including topical issues such as zero hours contracts, as well as ethical and environmental issues.</p>	<p>This is similar content to in Edexcel 2.3.4 Resource Management.</p> <p>The Edexcel specification covers zero hours contracts in 1.3.4 Managing people.</p>	<p>The Cambridge syllabus covers some issues in the A level part of the syllabus, such as: 7.4 Human resource management (HRM) strategy</p> <p>Some areas of this section are taught in different areas of the Cambridge syllabus such as: 9.3.4 Lean production.</p> <p>Cambridge also covers some topics not taught by OxfordAQA, such as Enterprise resource planning (ERP) in 9.3 Operations strategy.</p>

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<p>3.2.1.3 Inventory and supply chain management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory Supply chain management. 	<p>Similar content to Edexcel 2.3.4 Resource management (Inventory control).</p> <p>Edexcel provides less detail regarding what is required to be taught in this section.</p> <p>OxfordAQA includes Just in case inventory management to compare with JIT.</p>	<p>The content of OxfordAQA is similar to Cambridge International: 4.2 Inventory management.</p> <p>4.2.1 Managing inventory</p> <p>4.2.2 Just in Time (JIT)</p>
<p>3.2.2.1 Human resource objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resources objectives and planning. <p>This section provides a crucial introduction to the human resource department and key objectives set by the department.</p>	<p>This section is covered in the Edexcel specification under 1.3.4 Managing people.</p> <p>There are a lot of similar topics examined in the Edexcel specification, but with less detail as to what should be taught.</p>	<p>This section is covered under 2.1 Human resource management (HRM) in the Cambridge syllabus.</p> <p>There are some topics covered by Cambridge not assessed by OxfordAQA including Management by Objectives (MBO) – implementation and usefulness.</p>
<p>3.2.2.2 Human resource data</p> <p>Human resource data</p>	<p>Many of these topic areas are included in Edexcel under in 3.3.5 Assessing competitiveness.</p>	<p>Cambridge teaches this under a number of different sections, including:</p> <p>2.1.2 Workforce planning</p> <p>4.1.2 Efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and sustainability</p>
<p>3.2.2.3 Organisational design</p> <p>Organisational design</p> <p>This section explores different way that an organisation can be designed to best help the business organise itself.</p>	<p>Organisational design (structure) is covered in Edexcel 1.3.4 Managing people.</p> <p>Edexcel includes the matrix organisational structure, which is not taught in this area of the OxfordAQA specification.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <p>7.1.2 Types of structure: functional, hierarchical (flat and narrow), matrix</p> <p>7.1.3 Delegation and accountability</p> <p>7.1.5 Centralisation and decentralisation</p> <p>Cambridge International includes 7.1.4 Control, authority and trust and 7.1.6 Line and staff not taught by OxfordAQA.</p>

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<p>3.2.2.4 Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits of motivated employees How to improve employee motivation. 	<p>Edexcel includes Mayo as a motivation theorist, which is not present in the OxfordAQA specification.</p> <p>Edexcel includes a larger number of non-financial methods of motivation.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <p>221 Motivation as a tool of management and leadership.</p> <p>222 Human needs.</p> <p>223 Motivation theories.</p> <p>224 Motivation methods in practice: financial motivators, nonfinancial motivators.</p> <p>Theorists in the OxfordAQA specification are Taylor, Maslow and Herzberg. Cambridge International also include Mayo, McClelland and Vroom theory.</p> <p>Cambridge International includes the “ways in which employees can participate in the management and control of business activity”.</p>
<p>3.2.2.5 Employer-employee relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee involvement Employer-employee relations Managing human resources. 	<p>There is a small section in Edexcel relating to employer-employee relations in 1.3.4 Managing people which goes into less detail than OxfordAQA.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <p>2.1.7 Management and workforce relations.</p>
<p>3.2.3.1 Sources of finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of finance. <p>This section introduces the finance section of the course, including a range of different sources of internal and external finance.</p>	<p>Edexcel includes this under 2.3.1 Planning a business and raising finance (internal and external finance)</p>	<p>The content is similar to Cambridge International:</p> <p>5.2.2 Internal and external sources of finance</p> <p>5.2.3 Factors affecting the sources of finance</p> <p>5.2.4 Selecting the source of finance</p>

		Cambridge International includes a number of different external sources of finances not examined by OxfordAQA, including debentures, leasing, government grants and micro finance.
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<p>3.2.3.2 Breakeven analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break-even output. 	<p>Similar content between OxfordAQA and Edexcel 2.3.2 Financial planning.</p>	<p>The content is similar to Cambridge International:</p> <p>5.4.1 Cost information. 5.4.2 Approaches to costing: full, contribution 5.4.4 Break-even analysis.</p> <p>Cambridge International has more detail on costs eg marginal; direct and indirect cost Cambridge International includes the limitations of break-even analysis</p>
<p>3.2.3.3 Profit and cash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit • Budgeting • Cash flow forecasts. 	<p>This section of OxfordAQA is featured in the Edexcel specification under sections including:</p> <p>2.3.3 Managing finance 2.3.2 Financial planning</p> <p>Edexcel includes a detailed section on business failure, not included in OxfordAQA.</p>	<p>The content is similar to Cambridge International:</p> <p>5.5 Budgets 10.1 Financial statements</p> <p>Cambridge International includes incremental budgets not examined by OxfordAQA. It also includes 10.1.3 Inventory valuation.</p>

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3.3 Unit 3: Business analysis		
<p>3.3.1 Mission, objectives and SWOT analysis This section includes the link between mission, objectives and strategy. It covers SWOT analysis and the need to consider stakeholders when making decisions.</p>	<p>Similar content to 3.3.1 such as corporate objectives and stakeholder influences, SWOT analysis is covered in Edexcel’s Making strategic and tactical decisions 3.3.2.</p> <p>OxfordAQA includes stakeholder mapping which consider the relative power and interest of different stakeholder groups. This is not in the Edexcel specification.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4 Business objectives 1.5.2 Business stakeholders 6.2.1 Developing business strategy <p>OxfordAQA includes stakeholder mapping which considers the relative power and interest of different stakeholder groups. This is not included in Cambridge International.</p> <p>Cambridge International includes blue ocean strategy and core competence as a framework for business strategy.</p>

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<p>3.3.2 Analysing the existing internal position of a business</p> <p>This section draws and builds upon some AS content, allowing revision opportunities of ratios such as profitability ratios.</p>	<p>Similar content to 3.3.3 Assessing competitiveness</p> <p>Edexcel does not include financial efficiency ratios.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in: 10.2 Analysis of published accounts 6.2.2 Corporate planning and implementation</p> <p>Cabridge covers depreciation which is not covered in the OxfordAQA specification.</p>
<p>3.3.3 Analysing the industry environment This section uses Porter’s five force analysis of the competitive environment of an industry.</p>	<p>This is not covered in the Edexcel specification.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in: 6.2.1 Developing business strategy</p> <p>Cambridge includes alternatives such as scenario planning, which are not included by OxfordAQA.</p>
<p>3.3.4 Analysing the external environment to assess opportunities and threats</p> <p>This section introduces PESTLE analysis and considers the different aspects of PESTLE in more detail.</p>	<p>External influences are covered in 3.3.1 Business objectives and strategy however less detail is provided as to what should be covered by each subheading.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in: 6.1 External influences on business activity</p>
<p>3.3.5 Analysing future sales</p> <p>This section looks at methods of forecasting sales including extrapolation and quantitative sales forecasting.</p>	<p>This section is covered under 3.3.3 Decision-making techniques (quantitative sales forecasting).</p> <p>This section includes the calculation of four period centred moving average, not included in the OxfordAQA specification.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in: 8.1.3 Sales forecasting</p> <p>This section includes the calculation of four period centred moving average, not included in the OxfordAQA specification.</p>

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3.4 Unit 4: Business strategy		
<p>3.4.1 Strategic options: choosing which markets to compete in and what products to offer</p> <p>This section focuses on the Ansoff matrix and SWOT analysis to develop corporate strategy.</p>	<p>The Ansoff matrix is covered in Edexcel’s 3.3.2 Making strategic choices.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in: 6.2.1 Developing business strategy</p>
<p>3.4.2 Strategic positioning: Choosing how to compete</p> <p>This section covers different ways a business can choose how to complete, including market mapping and low-cost v differentiation strategies.</p>	<p>These strategic options are not covered by the Edexcel specification.</p>	<p>These strategic options are not covered by the Cambridge International syllabus.</p>
<p>3.4.3 Deciding on a strategic investment</p> <p>This section covers methods of putting a value on potential investments, including decision trees and methods of investment appraisal such as payback period, average rate of return and net present value.</p>	<p>These topics are covered in 3.3.3 Decision-making techniques</p>	<p>Decision trees feature under: 6.2.1 Developing business strategy</p> <p>Investment appraisal is features under: 10.3 Investment appraisal</p> <p>The OxfordAQA specification does not include the limitations of investment appraisal calculations.</p>

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<p>3.4.4 Types of strategies This section covers business growth, innovation, globalisation and sustainability.</p>	<p>Growth is covered in Edexcel 3.3.2 Business growth.</p> <p>Franchising is covered in 2.3.1 Planning a business and raising finance.</p> <p>Sustainability is covered under 4.3.4 Global industries and companies (multinational corporations).</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3.3 Business growth 1.2.2 Business ownership 6.1.7 Environmental
<p>3.4.5 Implementing a strategy This section considers how to implement a strategy, network analysis and strategic decision making.</p>	<p>Similar content to Edexcel in:</p> <p>Network analysis (critical path analysis) is included in Edexcel 3.3.3 Decision-making techniques.</p> <p>Edexcel does not cover strategic drift or why strategies may fail.</p>	<p>Similar content to Cambridge International in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.2.1 Developing business strategy 9.3.5 Operations planning (network analysis) <p>Other topics in Cambridge International that are not in OxfordAQA appear in a number of other sections, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.2 Business strategy 7.3 Leadership 7.4 Human resource management strategy 8.2 Marketing strategy 9.3 Operations strategy 10.4 Finance and accounting strategy
<p>3.4.6 Change, risk and uncertainty This section considers change management, including Kotter and Schlesinger’s change theories, as well as Lewins Forcefield analysis. This section also considers risk and uncertainty.</p>	<p>Edexcel contains similar content surrounding change management in 3.3.6 Managing change.</p>	<p>A lot of similar content is taught in the Cambridge International syllabus under 6.2.2 Corporate planning and implementation.</p>