

Level 6, Unit 3, International Business Case Study (25 credits)

Assessor's guide to interpreting the criteria

RQF general description for Level 6 qualifications

- Achievement at Level 6 requires a learner to command highly specialised skills, including scholastic, across the entire area of business studies, and be able to critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge.
- Learners at this level are expected to be able to critically evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources.
- Learners should be able to utilise, transfer and apply research, diagnostic and creative skills in a wide range of situations. They will exercise appropriate judgement in complex planning, design, technical and management functions related to products and services, operations, and processes, including resourcing.
- The level of accountability at Level 6 expects the learner to accept full responsibility for determining and achieving outcomes. In an observed behaviours plan, he/she should be attempting to lead, for a first time, complex and heterogeneous groups.

EQF general description for Level 6 qualifications (RQF Level 6 is mapped to EQF Level 6)

- Achievement at EQF Level 6 reflects the ability to build, select and use advanced, factual and theoretical knowledge within the field of business. The learner must also demonstrate critical understanding of relevant theories and principles.
- This level commands an advanced range of cognitive and practical skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in the specialised field of business.
- A learner at this level is expected to manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts, and to take responsibility for managing professional development of other individuals and groups.

General requirements

- Conformance of individual student's performance to unit criteria and standards must be confirmed by a trained assessor.
- Centres, in collaboration with the assessors, must ensure that there is system in place allowing collection and storage of routine evidence of students' work (e-portfolios). E-portfolios should be in a format allowing online access, on request, by a TLM account manager.
- When the assessor is satisfied with a candidate matching all the criteria to the specification subject to the guidance below, the Centre can request a review of the e-portfolio by an account manager.
- If the account manager confirms the assessor's judgements, the student will get 30 marks towards his/her final mark, and be allowed to sit a final examination.
- When the student passes the final examination (see below Method of assessment), the student is considered to have completed all the requirements for the qualification.

Expansion of the assessment criteria

1 The learner will understand the international business environment facing global

operators.

1.1 The learner can identify and describe the key challenges facing global businesses and organisations in a changing world.

Candidates must identify and explain the key challenges which organisations face in a global, interlinked and dynamic world.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

1.2 The learner can describe key features of globalisation and international trade.

Candidates must be able to freely discuss, from different perspectives and without prejudice, the key features, importance, and impact of globalisation and international trade, incl. limitations, controversies and ongoing debates.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

1.3 The learner can identify and prioritise key drivers in the international business environment relevant to a specific business.

Candidates must identify and arrange on order of priority the key elements of the international business environment which are relevant to a particular business organisation.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

1.4 The learner can evaluate the impact of emerging issues on an organisation's international activities.

Candidates must evaluate how emerging issues impact an organisation with international operations, how are such emerging issues being identified and what adjustments -- in generic terms -- need to be made within the organisation in order to respond to arising opportunities and challenges.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

2 The learner will be able to develop a strategic business plan for an international organisation.

2.1 The learner can explain the role of strategy in the international context.

Candidates must define and explain the role of corporate and business strategy in an international context.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Candidates would typically discuss theoretical concepts (e.g. models of competitive advantage and product/market strategies, and resource based strategies focusing on internal competences). Learners should explain the differences between narrower local, regional or national strategies, and international strategies. They must also explain whether regional and national determinants preserve their importance in international strategic context.

2.2 The learner can identify and analyse strategic outcomes using relevant theory and practical business models.

Candidates must identify and critically analyse strategic outcomes with the help of relevant and appropriate theoretical and practical business models.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

There is a vast array of approaches which learners may use at this particular stage. Though the exact set of models used will be an individual selection of each learner, the assessment should focus on robustness of logic, adequacy and comprehensiveness of used models, skills for critical analysis and ability to interpret results and draw valid conclusions, even in situations which are untypical, dynamic and extremely complex in nature. Ability to engage problematic and debatable issues -- as opposed to staying safe with well-known and non-challenging analytical patterns -- should be rewarded and encouraged. Special attention should be given to adequate distinction between related and unrelated determinants and outcomes, and to evaluation of non-measurable/qualitative information and outcomes.

2.3 The learner can formulate recommendations embracing domestic as well as international strategies.

Candidates must formulate comprehensive, consistent, logic-bound, relevant and appropriate recommendations that embrace both domestic and international strategies.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

3 The learner will be able to evaluate the implementation of a strategic business plan.

3.1 The learner can identify the cross-functional issues that affect the implementation of a business plan.

Candidates must identify and explain the cross-functional issues which may affect the implementation of a particular business plan.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should examine issues such as collaboration, coordination, resource procurement (e.g. timing, ordering process, etc.), management and leadership involvement, people engagement, alignment of objectives and actions, prioritising objectives, adequate control mechanisms (e.g. financial/accounting dept control over the expenses of other departments related to plan implementation) etc. This criterion is closely related to criterion 3.3.

3.2 The learner can prioritise the critical success factors in a business plan and how they are or were supported.

Candidates must identify, evaluate and arrange in order of priority the critical success factors in a business plan, and describe how they are being supported.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

The explanation of how the key success factors are being supported should take into account the complexity and interconnectedness of activities and objectives, and should provide a clear relational approach to determinants, triggering factors, and outcomes.

3.3 The learner can explain how an international business plan is monitored, measured and controlled.

Candidates should outline how an international business plan is monitored, measured and controlled and explain the processes and structure of monitoring and control mechanisms.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should discuss how monitoring, progress and outcome measurement and evaluation are different for an international strategic/business plan, as compared to the domestically oriented. Control systems and processes should also be discussed in the same context. Answers should go beyond the trivial and demonstrate creativity and ability to extend, combine and transfer knowledge, as required by the general level descriptors at this qualification level (QCF/EQF Level 6). The criterion is closely linked to 3.1 above.

3.4 The learner can explain the role of financial management in an international business.

Candidates must explain the role of financial management in international business by contrasting the environment, responsibilities, activities, and available instruments, characterising domestic and international operations.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

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Special attention must be dedicated to financial risks and approaches to managing such risks, and to the sources of financing available to businesses with international operations.

3.5 The learner can compare the outcomes of implementation with stated intentions.

Candidates must compare -- and critically evaluate -- the outcomes of planned activities with initial intentions and objectives.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Candidates would also be expected to interpret the results of their comparison and evaluation, outline and explain any discrepancies.

4 The learner will be able to to evaluate organisational structures for international operations.

4.1 The learner can identify key cultural values that impact on the international business dimension.

Candidates must identify the key cultural values which may be observed -- or whose presence may be deduced with a reasonable certainty from indirect evidence -- that do or would impact the international business dimension of company's operations.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

4.2 The learner can assess the role of cultural values in shaping customs and practice in an organisation.

Candidates must explain and assess the role of cultural values in shaping the practices of an international organisation.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Note that answers must contain sufficient evidence that learners clearly distinguish between values and norms. Furthermore, the individual and organisational values should be discussed in an international context, with the potential of mixing and blending of values and cultures being dedicated proper attention. Learners must outline and be able to plan the process of establishing organisational values and customs, taking into account potential risks.

4.3 The learner can describe a range of methods and approaches to matching

Organisational structures to international operation.

Candidates must describe and justify how different methods and approaches may lead to successful

matching of organisational structure to the specific context of international operations of the business in question.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners must demonstrate critical thinking and agility in deciding on the most appropriate organisational structure to be used by the firm, and in outlining the process of transition from current structure to the desired type and state. Particular attention should be dedicated to structure which presume and facilitate dynamic development in highly versatile environments with a vast array of environmental determinants.

4.4 The learner can make recommendations relevant to the needs of the organisation in the international environment.

As a natural extension of 4.3, candidates must elaborate and suggest a number of measures which are relevant and appropriate to the international context and would contribute to organisational improvements and optimisation of business operations.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

4.5 The learner can describe and explain how communications can be supported across an organisation operating internationally.

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to transfer and apply communications theory to a specific situation where communications must flow freely within the organisation, and suggest comprehensive models and processes tailored to the specific organisational structure and including functional and divisional units, and strategic business units.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

5 The learner will understand the importance of leadership, strategic direction and change management within the international business context.

5.1 The learner can explain the issues underpinning motivation for change.

Candidates must explain the determinants of motivation for change in the specific circumstances of the business case study.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should base their approach on sound theoretical ground and demonstrate good grasp of the subject matter. Assessors should look for evidence of ability to relate theory and practice, skills in identifying issues by way of recognising and properly diagnosing individual and organisational symptoms and exhibited behaviours.

5.2 The learner can explain methods for creating readiness for change.

Candidates must recommend and explain, given the particular circumstances of the case study, the appropriate methods and actions to create/facilitate readiness for change.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

5.3 The learner can evaluate the strategic role of leadership in developing successful international operations.

Candidates must evaluate and explain the strategic role of leadership in developing and sustaining successful international operations, and outline the specific tasks which leadership must face in the particular business case.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

5.4 The learner can explain the role played by planning in the shaping the future direction of an organisation.

Candidates must explain -- and demonstrate by outlining a feasible planning process conformant to the particular circumstances of the international business case -- the role and importance of planning for guiding and shaping organisation's activities and future.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

6 The learner will understand the macro-environmental factors that affect international organisations.

6.1 The learner can evaluate the impact of national and international political and legal systems on an organisation.

Candidates must be able to critically evaluate the relationship between international political and legal systems and determinants on one side, and business operations, on the other.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

6.2 The learner can explain how international business solutions are affected by a target country's economic stage of development.

Candidates must reach beyond theoretical constructs and explain a specific situation by describing how generic international business solutions are impacted by the level of economic development of the target country of company's operations.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

6.3 The learner can analyse and report on the growing importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in relation to a specific business.

Candidates must evaluate the importance of CSR for a particular business and suggest practical and working solutions for aligning that business to the global trends in the area of social responsibility.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners must demonstrate understanding and abilities to interpret and discuss the criterion within the context of sectoral and global frameworks, such as sectoral Codes of Conduct and the UN Global Compact.

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