



**ABE Level 3 Certificate in
Business Essentials
(603/1603/2)**

Qualification Specification

Version 2.3

Version and date	Change detail	Section
Launch Version – June 2017	Document created.	All
Version 2.0 – July 2019	Additional guidance added. Weighting changed Indicative content removed	Qualification summary; Assessment Unit specifications Unit specifications
Version 2.1 – July 2019	Grade boundaries revised.	Grading
Version 2.2 – October 2021	Updating wording to reflect new assessment strategy.	Assessment method – whole document Recognition of prior learning (RPL), accreditation of prior learning (APL), and exemptions Assessment
Version 2.3 – November 2024	General updates.	Cover sheet and Progression.

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About ABE

Recognition

ABE is fully regulated by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator for England. In addition to Ofqual, ABE have agreements or recognition by regulatory authorities in many other countries where we operate – check our website for more details.

All ABE qualifications are part of the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

ABE qualifications are valued internationally because they are:

Professional	Our qualifications are designed to give you the knowledge and skills you need to excel in a managerial career
Affordable	ABE is a not-for-profit organisation; as such we endeavour to keep costs to a minimum. Our fast track routes to degrees are often much less expensive than traditional routes
Recognised	In addition to respected regulatory authorities, our qualifications are recognised by colleges, universities, employers and governments around the world
Supported	As an ABE member, you can access a wealth of resources designed to support your studies, and enhance your learning experience. Each ABE unit has its own study guide and we support our colleges with a wealth of tuition resources to help them deliver teaching to an outstanding standard
International	For more than 40 years, learners around the world have been benefitting from ABE qualifications
Proven	Our alumni speak for themselves – see their testimonials on our website. They work in a diverse range of industries and organisations. Many are in top jobs or running their own successful enterprises
Flexible	You can study full time or part time at a pace that suits you. All our diplomas provide expertise in business management and offer you the option of specialising in Marketing or Human Resources alongside this
A great route to university	ABE diplomas have credits which are accepted by universities around the world. Holders of ABE diplomas can fast track onto a degree course, meaning the cost of your education is dramatically reduced

Why study with ABE

ABE has an outstanding history and an excellent global reputation. Our qualifications are designed to give you the best chance of achieving your full potential in your chosen career. There is a world of opportunity waiting for you, and ABE can help you seize that opportunity and succeed.

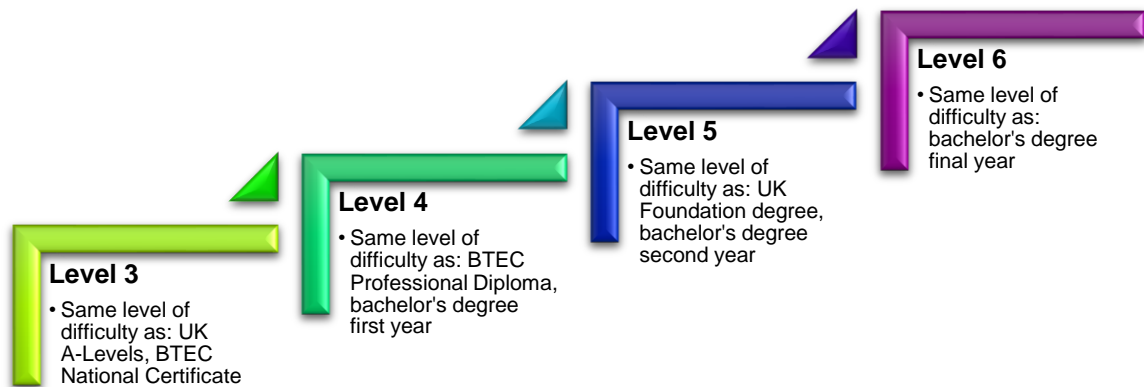
The content and format of our qualifications are the outcome of extensive research which explored the knowledge and skills employees need to possess in order for businesses to succeed. When redeveloping the new qualifications in Business, we collaborated with a wide range of students, employers, higher education providers, colleges and subject experts to ensure that the new qualifications meet their needs and expectations. Our findings highlighted that organisations require staff with a set of strong core business skills that can be flexible and adapted to diverse environments.

This research, along with consultation with employers and subject experts, has provided the backdrop for ABE's outstanding portfolio. Our qualifications are designed to adapt and develop in line with the needs and demands of employers now and in the future.

Whether you dream of becoming an entrepreneur, getting a great job, being promoted to senior management, or if you are already in a leadership role and want to enhance your professional skill set, an ABE qualification will help you turn your plans into reality.

About your qualification

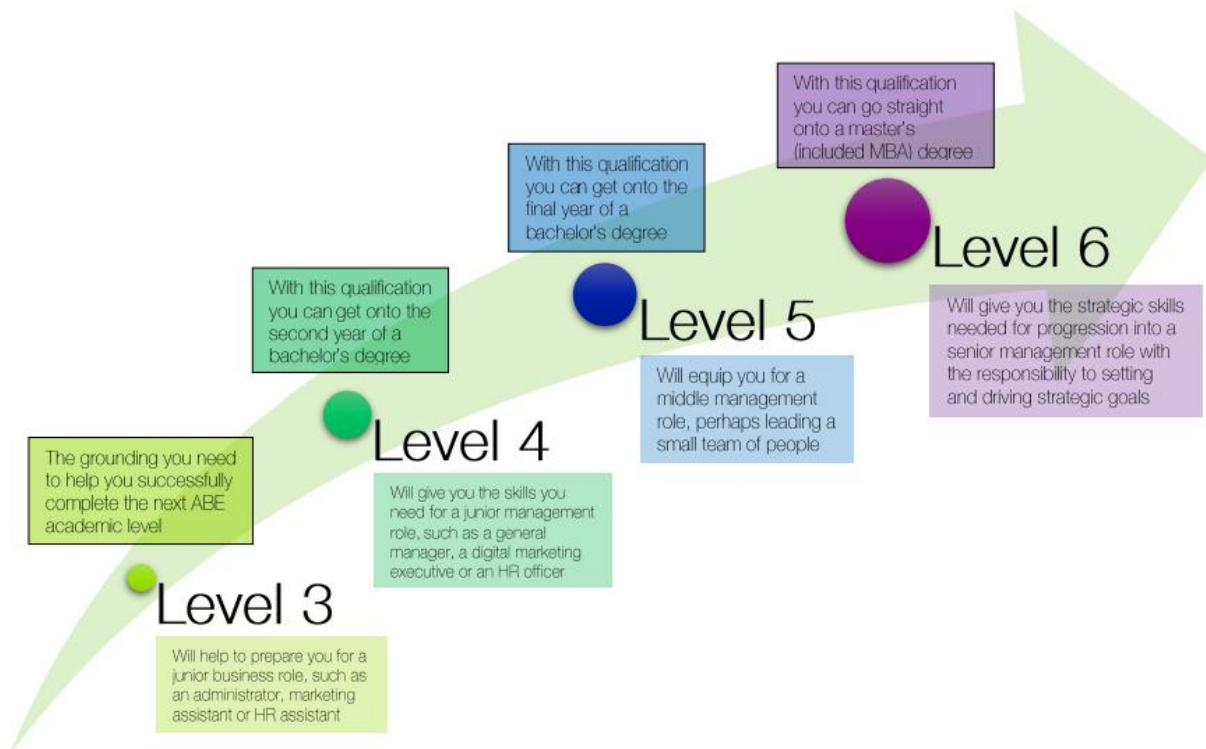
ABE is regulated by Ofqual who also manage the Regulated Qualifications Framework, which ABE qualifications are accredited against. Qualifications within the RQF must be levelled against the RQF level descriptors to ensure they are broadly similar in the knowledge and depth of understanding required to pass them. The size and the content of qualifications at the same level can vary. The diagram below shows how the levels progress.



Pathways

ABE's framework of business management qualifications runs from Level 3, right through to Level 6. You can enter at Level 3 and progress all the way to Level 6, enabling you to accumulate the credits needed for a university top-up, or you can enter onto the framework at any point depending on your centre's professional and academic judgement— see our 'Entry guidance' section for more details.

Progression



ABE qualifications have been designed with progression in mind and, after completing one of our qualifications, you can progress to employment or to a higher level of study.

ABE offers you a full framework of qualifications that have been designed for you to be able to progress right from Level 3 all the way up to Level 6. Each qualification builds from the one before, taking you from introductory units through to strategic ones.

The Level 4-6 Diplomas do not have any pre-requisites and you are free to start on the Level that best suits where you are in your learning journey and the scope of the academic requirement in each qualification. ABE recommends that you follow the learning of one qualification at a time but this is not a requirement.

ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials is worth 24 credits and builds the foundation for you to progress to ABE Level 4 Diplomas in Business. After completing this you will be able to take advantage of one of our university partnerships (see website for more details on progression arrangement and exemptions).

Qualification summary

Qualification title

ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials (603/1603/2)

Operational start date

1st June 2017

Qualification objectives

The objectives of the ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials are as follows:

- Explain the purpose of business
- Explain the characteristics of different business structures
- Explain the functions and activities of an organisation
- Describe the key resources required for a business
- Explain the different types of customer and their importance
- Explain the importance of managing business risk
- Explain continuous improvement techniques
- Explain the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability within an organisation
- Describe the use of technology to build success
- Describe recent trends relating to ways of working within an organisation
- Explain key requirements for transition into work or a new role
- Describe how to become more effective in a role
- Explain effective ways to communicate within a business

Who is it for?

This qualification is for learners that are 16 and over.

The ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials develops skills for both the modern business professional who is looking to progress and for newly employed staff starting their career in business.

Who regulates this qualification?

The qualification is regulated in the UK by:

- Ofqual

Entry guidance and criteria

There are no formal entry requirements to study an ABE Level 3 Certificate; however, the centre should ensure that you have a reasonable expectation of success on the programme by assessing your previous qualifications and/or related work experience.

Hence, it is their responsibility to use their professional and academic judgement when assisting you in making the decision at which level you should enter the ABE programmes.

In order to successfully study for an ABE qualification, you should have an appropriate level of English language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). To ensure success rates are maximised, for **all** ABE qualifications, we recommend the following standards are met:

- IELTS 5.5
- Cambridge ESOL - Preliminary PET or BEC
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) – 36-41
- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) - B2

Centres can use other English language tests as a measure of a learner's English language skills; but the centre must be satisfied that the score is equivalent to those recommended above.

Before the qualification can be assessed and awarded

To be awarded the ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials learners are required to successfully achieve the one mandatory unit. There are no optional pathways as part of this qualification.

Knowledge, skills and understanding to be assessed

The knowledge, skills and understanding being assessed in this qualification is as follows:

- Explain the purpose of business and the characteristics of different business structures
- Explain the functions and activities of an organisation
- Describe the key resources required for a business
- Explain the different types of customer and their importance
- Explain the importance of managing business risk
- Explain continuous improvement techniques
- Explain the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability within an organisation
- Describe the use of technology to build success
- Describe recent trends relating to ways of working within an organisation
- Explain key requirements for transition into work or a new role
- Explain effective ways to communicate within a business and how to become more effective in a role

Staffing and physical resource requirements

As part of the centre accreditation process ABE ask for details around staffing and physical resource. For more information on becoming an ABE accredited centre go to: <https://www.abeuk.com/abe-accreditation>

Recognition of prior learning (RPL), accreditation of prior learning (APL), and exemptions

If you hold a qualification from either another professional body or university which is similar in content and level to the ABE Level 4, 5 or 6 qualifications, you might qualify for RPL, APL or an exemption from some ABE units.

If you wish to find out if you qualify for any exemptions before you register with us, please send us a letter or an email to admissions@abeuk.com and we will forward you a copy of the ABE Exemptions Policy and application form.

If you are already registered, you can find further information on the [ABE Portal](#).

Localisation

It is very important when studying for your ABE qualification that you consider your local business environment and try to apply what you are learning to relevant scenarios in your local business context. Doing this will help you to put your learning into practice and use it in your professional day-to-day activities.

The nature and form of organisations varies widely. Internal factors such as ownership, business strategy, and size each play a part in defining the shape and focus of an organisation. In turn, this impacts upon the expectations and responsibilities placed on individual managers. Whilst trends in the external environment impact on organisations differently, increased globalisation and digitalisation have led to increasing competition resulting in a growing need for managers to be aware of external practices and approaches and to adopt a best fit approach.

You should take into account the following when preparing for your summative assessment:

- The structure, culture, size, vision, and mission of the organisation you are working for or basing your assessment on
- The local culture and how this impacts on employee and stakeholder expectations of a manager
- Availability of resources
- Feasibility and suitability of practices within your specific setting

Qualification structure

ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials (603/1603/2)

The ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials consists of **one** mandatory unit. To be awarded this qualification you must achieve a minimum of a Pass in the mandatory unit.

The total Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is **160 hours**

The Total Qualification Time (TQT) is **240 hours**

The credit value is **24**

ABE Unit code	Unit title	Level	GLH	Credits	Assessment method
Mandatory Unit					
3UBE	Business Essentials	3	160	24	Timed Open Book Exam

Credits, Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time

As part of its Ofqual regulation, ABE allocates a Total Qualification Time (TQT) to each of its qualifications. TQT is the estimated total number of hours that learners will need in order to complete and achieve the qualification.

Examples of activities which can contribute to Total Qualification Time include:

- Guided Learning
- Independent and unsupervised research/learning
- Unsupervised compilation of a portfolio of work experience
- Unsupervised e-learning
- Unsupervised e-assessment
- Unsupervised coursework
- Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar
- Unsupervised work-based learning

Within the TQT value of each qualification, we also define the Guided Learning Hours (GLH). The GLH is the estimated total number of hours for centres to deliver a qualification to their learners. The GLH covers any activities completed under direct instruction or supervision of a lecturer/teacher/tutor etc. For example, classroom learning supervised by a teacher, live webinar or telephone tutorial, e-learning supervised by a teacher in 'real time' and all forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer/teacher/tutor.

Credits

ABE qualifications also have credits assigned to them. When you achieve a qualification with credits, you can use these credits towards progression to another qualification.

Modes of study

To study for an ABE qualification, you should be registered with an ABE Accredited Centre. For more information on finding an accredited centre, please see the ABE website.

When studying for your ABE qualification, you will most likely learn both with supervision from tutors at your centre and through your own self-study time.

Your centre is responsible for teaching ABE qualifications and they will likely use a range of delivery methods. For example, they might use:

- Classroom delivery (face to face taught time)
- Mentoring and coaching from tutors or external employers
- E-learning
- Formative assessment
- Live webinars
- Assessment support for assignment writing and revision sessions

Note: The list above is indicative; to find out more about how you will be taught, you should contact your centre.

Suggested reading and resources for the qualification

For each unit in the ABE qualifications, ABE will provide the following learning materials:

- A Study Guide in PDF format available on the ABE Portal. This Study Guide is aimed at learners and will expand on the Unit Syllabus, including case studies and examples, activities, and a glossary of terms
- Tutor Resource Packs for centres. These will contain session plans, presentations, activities and wider resources available for each unit
- A Recommended Reading List, including online resources, available on the ABE Portal

Assessment

ABE's assessments are specifically designed to fit the purpose and objective of the qualification. The ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials is assessed by a Timed Open Book Exam, which is externally set and marked by ABE. You can find out how each unit is assessed by checking the Unit Specification in this document, or the qualification tables above.

Timed Open Book Exam

ABE sets Timed Open Book Exams in the format of an OBE question paper and template answer booklet. Sometimes a scenario is provided. Like the assignments, there is a requirement for an organisational context. Learners can find the word count for Timed OBEs clearly outlined in the brief and repeated in the template answer booklet. In addition, there is a separate guidance document outlining guide times for each Timed OBE.

Learners have two opportunities each year to submit Timed Open Book Exams. For further details please visit the assessment section of the ABE website; <https://www.abeuk.com/assessments>

All Timed OBEs are submitted by centres to ABE for marking, and results will be released by ABE on each session's specified Results Day. For more information on results release, please consult the ABE Website. Centres can find more information about submitting Timed OBEs in the Centre Delivery Guide.

Marking and moderation

ABE have a broad and varied external academic team with a breadth of experience across the qualification areas and levels. Our external assessment team mark across the three assessment windows and are very familiar with ABE students and the format of ABE exams and assignments. ABE has a very robust marking and moderation process; assessments are marked by our external team and standardised, the assessments then go through two phases of moderation and then when the final result is reached the results are presented to the assessment board for ratification, prior to publishing.

Additional examination requirements

There are no additional examination requirements for this qualification.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

In the development of this qualification ABE has taken steps to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to achievement. For learners with particular requirements reasonable adjustments may be made in order that they can have fair assessment and demonstrate attainment. There are also arrangements for special consideration for any learner suffering illness, injury or indisposition. Full details of the reasonable adjustments and special considerations are available from the ABE candidate portal.

Appeals and enquiry of results

ABE has an appeals procedure that has been written in accordance with the regulatory arrangements in the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition. Full details of this procedure, including how to make an application, are available on the ABE Portal.

You can find further information relating to ABE assessment on the Exam Regulations section of the [ABE website](#).

Grading

In order to achieve an ABE qualification, you must demonstrate sufficient depth of study and acquisition of knowledge and skills expected for the qualification. You will need to demonstrate your achievement through the assessments set by ABE. On completion of your ABE qualification, you will be awarded an overall qualification grade based on your performance across all of your unit assessments.

The following qualification grades are available:

Grade
Distinction
Merit
Pass
Fail

Units will be assessed using the following grading scale:

Grade	Boundary
Distinction	70 - 100
Merit	55 - 69
Pass	40 - 54
Fail	0 - 39

To be awarded the **ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials**, you must complete and achieve a minimum of a Pass in the single mandatory unit

Grade descriptors

The table below details the grade descriptors that will be used to make judgements on grade boundaries. These descriptors will also help you to understand what we expect to see in order to achieve each grade.

Level 3

0-49 Fail	50-64 Pass	65-79 Merit	80-100 Distinction
Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter			
Lack of, limited or incomplete knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory and concepts; largely unable to apply in context.	Adequate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory, but with some minor gaps; some ability to apply in context.	Good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory; generally able to apply in context.	Excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory; consistently able to apply in context.
Information gathering, use of reading sources and data			
Lack of, limited or only partly completed evidence of information gathering, use of resources and data, which may not be appropriate.	Adequate evidence of information gathering, use of resources and data.	Clear evidence of information gathering, use of resources and data, all of which is generally used to support answers.	High level of evidence of information gathering, use of resources and data, all of which is highly appropriate and used consistently to support answers.
Application and interpretation			
Lack of or limited interpretation and application of theory and concepts; weak or missing justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Adequate interpretation and application of theory and concepts; adequate justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Good interpretation and application of theory and concepts; generally supported justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Outstanding interpretation and application of theory and concepts; justifications and recommendations are consistently supported where relevant.
Professional communication			
Poor presentation, structure and editing; several presentation errors	Adequate and logical presentation, structure and editing; minor errors.	Good standard of presentation, structure and editing; limited number of errors.	Excellent presentation, structure and editing; well-structured and error-free.

Results and certification

The results release date for each session is published on your portal dashboard and on the [Assessment page](#) of the website.

If you are taking an ABE qualification, please allow three months from the date of your results to the receipt of your certificate. Certificates are usually dispatched around six weeks after results have been published (this is to allow time for any enquiries about results or appeals). Transit times vary according to which country you are in so we say allow three months but most people won't have to wait this long

For a fuller explanation of the process see our [blog](#).

Unit specifications

In the second section of this document, you will find the Unit Specification for each unit included in the **ABE Level 3 Certificate in Business Essentials**.

The Unit Specification contains all the information you need about a particular unit, including the Credit value, Guided Learning Hours and the Unit Syllabus details. You should use the Unit Specifications to see what you will be expected to learn and what you will be expected to demonstrate in your assessments.

Here are some key terms to help you read and use the Unit Specifications:

Qualification	The qualification is the outcome of your studies and assessment, and represents your achievement.
Unit	A unit is a component of the overall qualification, focusing on a particular topic or area of study relevant to the qualification. Some units may be mandatory and some may be optional so be sure to check before starting your studies.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	TQT is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	GLH is an element of the TQT and is an estimate of the number of hours during which the learner is given specific guidance by their tutor towards the achievement of the qualification, for example: face to face teaching, e-learning, mentoring etc.
Element	An element represents a segment of learning within the unit. Each individual element has its own rationale and content.
Learning outcomes	The learning outcome lays down the expectations of the learner and defines the knowledge, understanding and/or skills they will acquire on completion of the Unit.
Assessment criteria	The assessment criteria define what a learner must know, understand or be able to do, proving that they can achieve the Learning Outcome.
Indicative content	The indicative content is the scope of knowledge required in order to fulfil the assessment requirements and achieve the learning outcome; it also outlines the technical components of the programme.
Weighting	The way in which a section of the content is emphasised in terms of teaching, learner effort, and emphasis in assessment.

Indicative content

Comprehensive indicative content for each unit can be found in the unit syllabus on the ABE Portal.

Unit Type: Mandatory

Level: 3

Credits: 24

GLH: 160

Assessment Method: Timed Open Book Exam

For success in today's business environment, the skills and capabilities needed have changed significantly from those required even five years ago. With constantly changing aims and goals in business, the way in which we achieve success is also different. For many employees, these changes will affect their career path and progression.

The influence of technology, globalisation, and environmental issues mean that, in order to be successful and to progress in a career, the skills of the modern professional need to be relevant and adaptable, to cope with a new way of working.

This unit develops skills for the modern business professional, who is looking to progress, and for newly employed staff starting their career in business.

For new entrants into employment, it introduces them to an understanding of how businesses are run and how to contribute to that success.

For experienced employees, this unit will refresh, update, and introduce modern concepts of working to improve their skills. The programme focuses on the key capabilities required for you to work in a way that adds value to their organisation by developing practical working skills. The elements of learning enable you to develop these skills. Application of these skills is encouraged in suggested activities and formative assessments.

The structure leads you through an introduction to the modern business environment and how they work within it. It encompasses practical skills, knowledge, and guidance on how to focus on working methods to improve capabilities

This unit has a particular focus on how the employee can become an asset to an organisation by looking at the role of the employee, how employees fit in within an organisation and how they can add value to their role. It therefore supports new employees, those already working, and those seeking to change jobs or gain promotion and need to understand contemporary working methods.

What you'll learn

The table below shows the learning outcomes of this unit (what you will be able to do or what you will know), along with the assessment criteria (what you will be able to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome).

Learning Outcomes The learner will:	Assessment Criteria The learner can:	Weighting
Element 1 - The nature of business		
1. Explain the purpose of business	1.1 Explain the objective of a business 1.2 Describe the nature and purpose of trade 1.3 Explain the relationship between mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategy 1.4 Explain the impact of business on individuals, economies, and the environment	35%
2. Explain the characteristics of different business structures	2.1 Explain the legal structure of a business 2.2 Describe the internal structures of an organisation	
3. Explain the functions and activities of an organisation	3.1 Explain the main functions within an organisation and their roles	
Element 2 - Key processes and resources in business		
4. Describe the key resources required for a business	4.1 Explain the role of human resources in an organisation 4.2 Explain how finances are managed within an organisation 4.3 Describe the importance and role of physical resources	30%
5. Explain the different types of customer and their importance	5.1 Explain the differences between internal and external customers 5.2 Explain how to monitor customer service	
6. Explain the importance of managing business risk	6.1 Explain the role of risk management within an organisation 6.2 Describe the role of an employee in managing risk	
7. Explain continuous improvement techniques	7.1 Explain the concept of continuous improvement 7.2 Explain how continuous improvement supports the success of a business	

Learning Outcomes The learner will:	Assessment Criteria The learner can:	Weighting
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Element 3 - New ways of working in business

8. Explain the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability within an organisation	8.1 Explain the difference between CSR and sustainability 8.2 Explain the use of CSR and sustainability within a workplace	15%
9. Describe the use of technology to build success	9.1 Discuss the use of technology in business 9.2 Describe the use of apps and mobile technology in business	
10. Describe recent trends relating to ways of working within an organisation	10.1 Explain the use and effects of outsourcing on an organisation 10.2 Explain the increase in 'remote working' 10.3 Explain the effects of 'contract working'	

Element 4 - The skills needed for successfully working in business

11. Explain key requirements for transition into work or a new role	11.1 Explain the requirements of a new role 11.2 Describe the behavioural and professional requirements of a role	20%
12. Describe how to become more effective in a role	12.1 Describe methods of planning work 12.2 Describe how to respond to change 12.3 Describe personal development needs 12.4 Explain how learning and development can improve job performance	
13. Explain effective ways to communicate within a business	13.1 Explain effective communication 13.2 Compare different methods of communication within a business	

Capabilities

Alongside academic learning and development, ABE qualifications have been designed to develop your practical skills and capabilities. These capabilities are highlighted as certain values, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that will help you in your professional development.

Below is an overview of the behaviours, skills, and attitudes that you will develop through this unit:

Element of learning	Key capabilities developed
Element 1 - The nature of business	<p>Ability to understand the purpose of business and trade</p> <p>Ability to identify a range legal and internal business structures</p> <p>Ability to identify key business functions and understand their role within a business</p> <p><i>Commercial awareness, business functions</i></p>
Element 2 - Key processes and resources in business	<p>Ability to understand different roles within an organisation</p> <p>Ability to identify internal and external customers, and understand the importance of internal and external customer service</p> <p>Ability to identify continuous improvement techniques and how they support business success</p> <p><i>Customer service, managing risk, continuous improvements</i></p>
Element 3 - New ways of working in business	<p>Ability to identify the ways in which businesses engage in corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts</p> <p>Knowledge of how businesses use technology, including apps and mobile technology</p> <p>Awareness of trends in new ways of working within organisations</p> <p><i>CSR, sustainability, use of technology, trendspotting, new ways of working</i></p>
Element 4 - The skills needed for successfully working in business	<p>Awareness of behavioural and professional requirements in the workplace</p> <p>Ability to assess own personal skills for transition into either the first job or new role</p> <p>Ability to plan own self-development for a role</p> <p><i>Collaboration, teamwork, communication skills, self-development, planning, responding to change</i></p>



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