



ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma
in Business
610/5393/4

Qualification Specification v2

Version Control

Version and date	Change details	Section
V1-2025-02-28	Draft for accreditation	
V2-2025-03-05	Updated qual numbers	

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About ABE

Recognition

ABE Level 3 qualifications are aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements. All ABE qualifications are part of the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). ABE is fully regulated by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator for England. In addition to Ofqual, ABE has agreements or recognition by regulatory authorities in many other countries where we operate – check our website for more details.

ABE diplomas

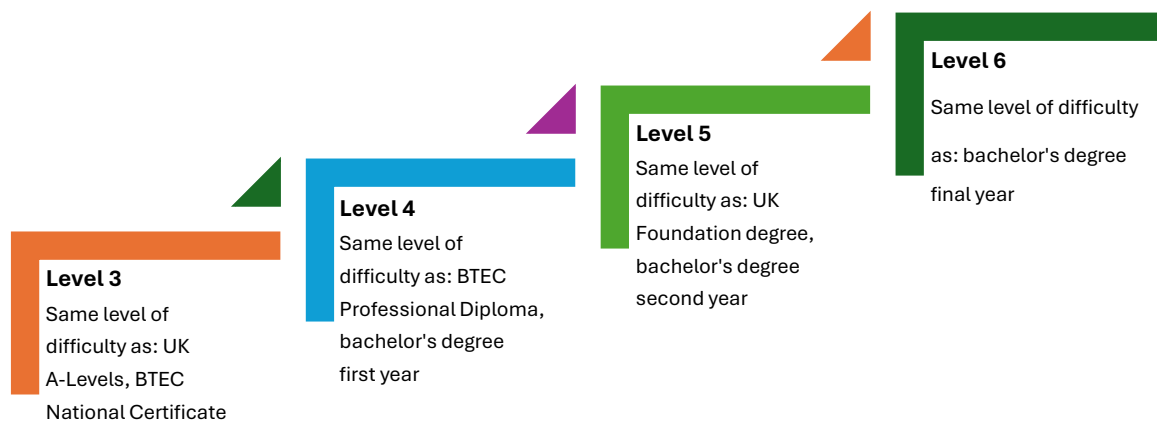
Our diplomas are management focused and blend common units with more specialist subject areas, enabling you, through the learning, to develop expertise in particular disciplines as well as a strong understanding of business management in general. They represent the latest in professional standards and provide opportunities for students to develop professional behaviours. Our focus on developing practical workplace knowledge and skills alongside academic expertise, is a winning combination for ABE graduates.

ABE diplomas 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 tuition resources to help them deliver teaching to an outstanding standard.
International	For more than 50 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, Human Resources or Leadership alongside this.

About your qualification

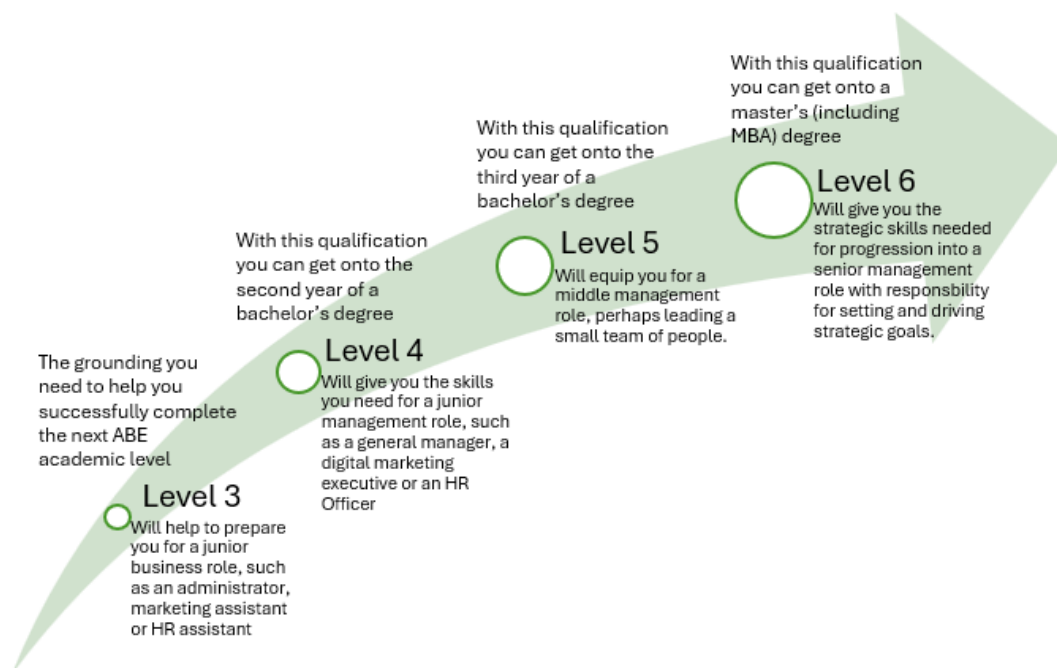
ABE is regulated by Ofqual who also manage the Regulated Qualifications Framework, which ABE Diplomas are accredited against. Qualifications within the RQF must be levelled against the RQF level descriptors to ensure they are broadly similar in the knowledge and depth of understanding required to pass 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 3–6 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.

The ABE Level 3 Foundation Diplomas are each worth 40 credits, making them ideal for supporting you in progressing to higher education. They provide you with a recognised qualification that can enhance your career prospects and employability and enable you to develop your knowledge and skills in business.

You have the opportunity 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 Foundation Diploma in Business

Operational start date

3rd March 2025

Qualification objective

The objectives of the ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business are as follows:

- To equip learners with fundamental business skills, knowledge and the understanding necessary to progress.
- To equip learners with knowledge and understanding of business organisations.
- To equip learners with knowledge and skills in relation to marketing and project management within business.
- To provide opportunities for learners to enter or progress in employment in business, or progress to higher education qualifications.
- To offer learners the chance of career progression in their chosen field.
- To allow flexibility of study and to meet local or specialist needs.

Who is it for?

This qualification is for learners that are 16 and over. It gives learners the opportunity to learn about Business alongside other fields of study, in order to progress to study a range of higher education courses. This qualification can also support those looking to progress into, or within, employment.

The ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business is built upon the subjects covered in the ABE Level 2 Certificates and give a more extensive coverage of knowledge and understanding in Business, Marketing and Project Management.

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 ABE Level 3 Diplomas; 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 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). For the ABE Level 3 Diplomas, ABE recommends the following standards are met:

- IELTS - 6
- Cambridge ESOL - Cambridge English First - Cambridge English Advanced (points score 196 or above)
- Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) - 56
- 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 Foundation Diploma in Business learners are required to successfully achieve the **four units from the business 'pillar': two mandatory and two optional units.**

Knowledge, skills and understanding to be assessed

The knowledge, skills and understanding being assessed in this qualification are:

- Understanding different types of business organisation and how they meet different needs, together with the factors that can affect business organisations.
- Developing knowledge of the legal, ethical and social requirements in relation to business organisations.
- Understanding of the functions and structures of business organisations and financial aspects in relation to business management.
- Understanding of the importance of control within a business and how to measure performance.
- Developing a working understanding of different marketing strategies and when to use them.
- Understanding of the role of marketing and how to plan a marketing campaign, including the stages of the marketing campaign process.
- Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts in project management, the overarching approach to effective project management and project management methodologies.

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 3, 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](#).

Qualification Structure

ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business

Learners must complete **two** core mandatory units and **two** optional units from the business 'pillar' to achieve ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business. In order to be awarded the qualification learners must achieve a minimum of a Pass in **all four units**.

The total Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is **200 hours**

The Total Qualification Time (TQT) is **400 hours**

The credit value is **40**

ABE Unit Code	Unit Title	Level	GLH	Credits	Assessment Method
Core Mandatory Units					
3UBO	Business Organisations	3	50	10	Timed Open Book Exam
3BMC	Business Management and Control	3	50	10	Assignment
Optional Units					
3UME	Marketing Essentials	3	50	10	Assignment
3UIPM	Introduction to Project Management	3	50	10	Assignment

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 suitable for use by learners to support their studies and for tutors as the basis for their teaching. It will expand on the Unit Syllabus, including examples, activities, a recommended reading list and a glossary of terms.
- Tutor Guide for centres. This gives tutor-focused recommendations on how best to teach this syllabus.
- A set of Frequently Asked Questions.

Assessment

ABE's assessments are specifically designed to fit the purpose and objective of the qualification. The ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business is assessed by a combination of timed open book exam and assignment, both externally set 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.

Assignment

ABE sets assignments in the form of an assignment brief. Sometimes a scenario and/or templates are provided as well. An organisation context is required. Learners can find the required word count for each assignment on the front of the assignment brief. For more information on assignments, please go to the questions and answers section of the ABE website.

Learners have three opportunities per year to submit assignments. For further details please visit the assessment section of the ABE website: <https://www.abeuk.com/assessments>.

All assignments submitted are marked by ABE. Results are released by ABE on each session's specified Results Day.

For more information on results release, please consult ABE Website. Centres can find out more information about submitting assignments in the Centre Delivery Guide.

Marking and moderation

ABE has a broad and varied external academic team with a breadth of experience across the qualification areas and levels. Our external assessment team marks across the three assessment windows and is 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 and standardised by our external team, after which they go through two phases of moderation. 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 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

Calculation of the qualification grade

The overall qualification grade will be calculated based on learner performance at unit level. Each unit carries a maximum of 100 points. The calculation of the overall qualification grade is based on the learner's performance in all units to the value of 40 credits. All units in the qualification must be attempted and contribute to your final grade. A minimum of Pass is required for all units in order to complete the qualification.

ABE Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Business

Grade	Boundary points threshold
Distinction	280-400
Merit	220-275
Pass	160-219
Fail	0 – 159

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			
0-39 Fail	40-54 Pass	55-69 Merit	70-100 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; lack of ability to apply concepts to a relevant context.	Adequate knowledge and understanding of most key areas of the subject matter and of appropriate theory, but with some minor gaps; sometimes able to apply to a relevant context.	Good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory; understands how to apply them to a relevant context.	Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and of appropriate theory; consistently able to apply to a relevant context.
Information gathering, use of sources and data			
Lack of, limited or only partially completed evidence of information gathering; limited use of data and of relevant sources.	Adequate evidence of information gathering, use of sources and data; some use of data and of relevant sources.	Clear evidence of a range of information gathering, use of sources and data, used to support answers; good use of data and of relevant sources.	High level of evidence of information gathering, use of sources and data, all of which is relevant and used consistently to support answers.
Application, analysis and interpretation			
Lack of or limited interpretation and application of theory and concepts; weak or missing analysis, justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Adequate interpretation and application of theory and concepts; adequate analysis, justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Good interpretation and application of theory and concepts; generally supported analysis, justifications and recommendations where relevant.	Outstanding interpretation and application of theory and concepts; analysis justifications and recommendations are thorough and consistently supported where relevant.
Professional communication			
Poor or inappropriate standard of presentation, structure and editing; several presentation errors, lacking in relevant	Adequate and logical presentation, structure and editing; minor errors, generally using relevant examples where appropriate; referencing	Good standard of presentation, structure and editing; limited number of errors, using relevant examples where appropriate; work is	Excellent standard of presentation, structure and editing; well-structured and no errors, using highly relevant and topical examples where

examples; poorly referenced.	is generally adequate but inconsistent.	accurately referenced throughout.	appropriate; high quality referencing throughout.
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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 Diploma, 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.

Unit specifications

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

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.

Unit Type: Mandatory

Level: 3

Credits: 10

GLH: 50

Assessment Method: Timed Open Book Exam

This unit is designed to provide an understanding of different types of business organisations, sectors and legal structures for businesses.

The aim is to introduce the function of business organisations in different contexts and how business organisations meet the needs of their various stakeholders. It also introduces the key concepts of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards and ethics in business organisations.

On completion of this unit, you will understand the legal and regulatory requirements faced by different types of business organisations, and the environmental, social and governance factors that can impact different types of business organisations. You will also be able to discuss the main internal and external factors applicable to business organisations and the impact these might have. You will also understand different tools that you can use to assess the internal and external environments of business organisations.

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 <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>	Weighting
1. Understand the different types of business organisations	1.1 Explain the different types of business organisations and their key aims and objectives 1.2 Describe the main sectors within which organisations operate, and their functions 1.3 Explain the legal structures of different types of businesses 1.4 Explain how different types of business organisations meet the needs of stakeholders	33%
2. Understand legal, regulatory, ethical and social factors in relation to business organisations	2.1 Describe and understand the impact of the legal and regulatory requirements that can be encountered by different types of business organisations 2.2 Explain the environmental, social and governance (ESG) and ethical factors, and their impact on different types of business organisations 2.3 Explain the risks to business organisations of failing to meet legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements	34%
3. Understand the factors that can affect business organisations	3.1 Explain and understand the impact of the internal and external factors that can affect business organisations 3.2 Discuss the ethical responsibilities that can be faced by business organisations 3.3 Explain how situational analysis can be undertaken using recognised tools to assess an organisation's business environment	33%

Unit Type: Mandatory

Level: 3

Credits: 10

GLH: 50

Assessment Method: Assignment

This unit is designed to provide an understanding of a variety of business management and control concepts, that are applicable to organisations of all types, structures and sizes. It is also designed to provide you with tools to help undertake effective business management and control activities.

The aim is to outline why it is important for business organisations to implement effective controls and measure business performance, and how these can be achieved. It also provides an outline of important financial aspects of running a business, in particular understanding profit and a number of different pricing methods. It considers a range of factors that influence pricing decisions. It also explores the different functions and structures of businesses, including the benefits and challenges of cross-functional working.

On completion of this unit, you will understand the different tools and techniques used in performance management and measurement including service level agreement (SLAs), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the balanced scorecard.

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 <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>	Weighting
1. Understand the importance of control within a business and how to measure performance	1.1 Explain why an organisation needs effective control and how it is achieved 1.2 Describe how business and functional objectives are determined in business organisations 1.3 Explain the use of performance measures within an organisation 1.4 Discuss the use of balanced scorecards in performance management	34%
2. Understand relevant financial aspects in relation to business management	2.1 Explain the importance and calculation of profit in a business 2.2 Describe the importance of revenues for a business 2.3 Explain the importance of pricing products and services and how prices are determined 2.4 Discuss different pricing methods	33%
3. Understand the functions and structures of business organisations	3.1 Describe the key functions of businesses, what they do and how they contribute to business success 3.2 Explain the benefits for an organisation of cross-functional working 3.3 Explain common organisational structures and how they impact on business operations	33%

Unit Type: Optional

Level: 3

Credits: 10

GLH: 50

Assessment Method: Assignment

This unit is designed to provide an introduction to the fundamental concepts of marketing.

The aim of this unit is to introduce the role of marketing in business, different marketing strategies and their uses and how businesses can target customers.

On completion of this unit, you will understand the different elements of the marketing mix and stages of the product lifecycle. You will be able to explain the factors that should be considered when planning a marketing campaign and evaluate the influences that may affect the success of a marketing campaign.

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 <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>	Weighting
1. Understand the role of marketing	1.1 Explain the role of marketing 1.2 Discuss the marketing mix (7Ps) and its importance 1.3 Explain product management and the stages of the product lifecycle 1.4 Discuss segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP)	33%
2. Understand different marketing strategies and their uses	2.1 Describe the differences between outbound and inbound marketing strategies 2.2 Explain different marketing tools and strategies 2.3 Explain how to select the most appropriate marketing tools and strategies for specific purposes	33%
3. Understand how to plan a marketing campaign	3.1 Explain how to prepare for a marketing campaign 3.2 Describe the stages of the marketing campaign process 3.3 Discuss the factors that should be considered for effectively implementing a marketing campaign 3.4 Explain how the effectiveness of a marketing campaign can be measured	34%

Unit Type: Optional

Level: 3

Credits: 10

GLH: 50

Assessment Method: Assignment

This unit is designed to give you an understanding of the basics of Project Management and provide the knowledge of the fundamental concepts of project management.

The aim of this unit is to equip the learner with a structured approach to the lifecycle and enable them to deliver various business projects.

On completion of this unit, you will understand the importance of project management in business. You will know the fundamental concepts in project management and understand the overarching approach to managing projects. You will be able to apply some of the widely adopted methods of project management and the visual tools to communicate important information. In addition, you will learn about the traits needed for a project leader, the importance of a team and clear communication in the effective completion of the project.

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 <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>	Weighting
1. Know the fundamental concepts in project management	1.1 Define the term 'project' in business 1.2 Describe the key characteristics of a project 1.3 Discuss the purpose of project management 1.4 Explain the triple constraints framework of project management	25%
2. Understand the overarching approach to effective project management	2.1 Describe the project organisation framework for achieving outcomes 2.2 Explain the phases in a project lifecycle 2.3 Discuss the importance of risk management 2.4 Explain the risk management process	25%
3. Understand project management methodologies	3.1 Explain the meaning of interdependency of activities in a project 3.2 Explain different methodologies that can be used for managing a project 3.3 Describe different visual tools to communicate key project information 3.4 Explain how a project can be reviewed and evaluated	25%
4. Understand the importance of leadership in project management	4.1 Evaluate the roles of a project manager and a project leader 4.2 Examine the importance of developing a functional project team 4.3 Discuss the importance of effective communication for achieving project outcomes	25%

