



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Business and Communication Systems 3126 2009

Material accompanying this Specification

- Specimen and Past Papers and Mark Schemes
- Reports on the Examination
- A Teacher's Guide

SPECIFICATION

The specification will be published annually on the AQA Website (www.aqa.org.uk). If there are any changes to the specification centres will be notified in print as well as on the website. In the case of any difference between the printed and the website version of the specification, the version with the highest number, as currently published on the AQA Website, is the definitive one.

| Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the specification published for 2008.

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Background Information

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The General Certificate of Secondary Education

Following a review of the National Curriculum requirements, and the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework, all the unitary awarding bodies have revised their GCSE syllabuses for examination in 2003.

1.1 Introduction

Key Skills

All GCSE specifications must identify, as appropriate, opportunities for generating evidence on which candidates may be assessed in the “main” Key Skills of *Communication*, *Application of Number* and *Information Technology* at the appropriate level(s). Also, where appropriate, they must identify opportunities for developing and generating evidence for addressing the “wider” Key Skills of *Working with Others*, *Improving own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving*.

Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural, environmental, health and safety and European Issues

All specifications must identify ways in which the study of the subject can contribute to an awareness and understanding of these issues.

ICT

The National Curriculum requires that students should be given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT skills through the use of ICT tools to support their learning. In each specification candidates will be required to make effective use of ICT in ways appropriate to the needs of the subject.

Tiering

In most subjects the scheme of assessment must include question papers, targeted at two tiers of grades, ie A* - D and C - G.

A safety net of an allowed Grade E will be provided for candidates entered for the higher tier who just fail to achieve Grade D. The questions will still be targeted at A* - D.

Citizenship

From 2002, students in England are required to study Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject. Each GCSE specification must signpost, where appropriate, opportunities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship.

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Specification at a Glance

Business and Communication Systems

This is the only specification in this subject offered by AQA. There are two tiers of Assessment: Foundation (C-G) and Higher (A*-D).

Foundation Tier
3126F
Higher Tier
3126H



GCSE 3126	
Theory Paper	33% of total marks
Foundation Tier (3126/1F)	1 hour
Higher Tier (3126/1H)	1 hour
Questions requiring short answers and extended writing – to be answered on the question paper testing the candidate’s knowledge and understanding of the Subject Content.	
Controlled Test	67% of total marks
Foundation Tier (3126/2F)	2 hours
Higher Tier (3126/2H)	2 hours
An externally-set controlled test requiring the use of computers.	
Requirements of Centres	
Centres will need to provide:	
Appropriate computer hardware and software to meet the requirements of the Subject Content	
+	
One or more printers to produce hard copy	

Subject Content
The Business Environment, Workplace Organisation, Human Resources, Communication, ICT in the Business Environment, Computer Applications in the Business Environment
Additional Information
AQA will provide confidential Teachers Notes prior to the controlled test for teachers to key in data to create files. Candidates will retrieve these files during the controlled test.

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Availability of Assessment Units and Entry Details

3.1 Availability of Assessment Units	Examinations based on this specification are available in the June examination series only.
3.2 Entry Codes	<p>Normal entry requirements apply, but the following information should be noted.</p> <p>The Subject Code for entry to the GCSE award is 3126.</p>
3.3 Classification Codes	<p>Each specification is assigned to a national classification code, indicating the subject area to which it belongs.</p> <p>The classification code for this specification is 7460.</p>
3.4 Private Candidates	<p>This specification is available for private candidates. Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of the “<i>Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates</i>”.</p>
3.5 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration	<p>AQA pays due regard to the provision of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in its administration of this specification.</p> <p>Arrangements may be made to enable candidates with disabilities or other difficulties to access the assessment. An example of an access arrangement is the production of a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment. Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Further details can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: <i>Access Arrangements and Special Consideration Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination GCE, AEA, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level & Key Skills</i> This document can be viewed via the AQA web site (www.aqa.org.uk)</p> <p>Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.</p>
3.6 Language of Examinations	<p>All assessment will be through the medium of English. Assessment materials will not be provided in Welsh or Gaelige.</p>

Scheme of Assessment

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Introduction

4.1 National Criteria

This AQA GCSE in Business and Communication Systems complies with the following:

- the GCSE, GCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice April 2007;
- the GCSE Qualification Specific Criteria;
- the Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria.

4.2 Rationale

A course based on this specification will introduce candidates to various aspects of the world of business and encourage them to consider the impact of the business environment, workplace organisation, human resources management and effective communication on the running of businesses.

The recent rapid advances in the use of ICT have given businesses access to a wealth of information, enabled more efficient communication and reduced the time and effort required for many administrative tasks. Candidates will be encouraged to reflect on these benefits, as well as issues such as the need for safe use of ICT equipment and the importance of the security of data.

Students will acquire useful practical skills in a wide range of computer applications in business contexts.

This course of study will be of practical use and personal value in building a foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills, which could form a basis for further study and assist in future employment.

The majority of the Key Stage 4 programme of study in ICT is covered, with the exception of points 2c and 4c.

4.3 Prior level of attainment and recommended prior learning

No prior learning or level of attainment is necessary for candidates to undertake a course of study based on this specification. However, candidates will be expected to demonstrate skills of literacy and numeracy commensurate with having followed a programme of study at Key Stage 3.

4.4 Progression

This qualification is a recognised part of the National Qualifications framework. As such, GCSE provides progression from Key Stage 3 to post-16 studies.

It lays an appropriate foundation for further study of Business Studies, ICT and/or other related subjects, and for the world of work.

In addition, a course based on this specification will be of practical use and personal value to candidates of various ages and from diverse backgrounds in terms of general education and lifelong learning.

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Aims

A course based on this specification should enable candidates to develop:

- a. knowledge and broad understanding of aspects of workplace organisation and the business environment;
- b. knowledge and broad understanding of a range of information and communication systems and their applications in the workplace and an understanding of their capabilities and limitations;
- c. the ability to choose, design and use information and communication systems to carry out a range of tasks and solve business problems in a variety of contexts, eg communicating with customers and suppliers, storing and processing financial data, storing data about staff and existing and potential customers;
- d. communication skills, by composing, in good English, appropriate and coherent responses to business problems from given outline information;
- e. capacity for making reasoned judgements about the selection, presentation and interpretation of data so as to ensure the effective communication of information;
- f. awareness of the importance of layout and design in the workplace and their implications for health and safety.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in using information and communication systems to carry out tasks and solve problems under examination conditions.

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Assessment Objectives

6.1 Assessment Objectives

Candidates will be required to:

1. demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the specified subject content, using appropriate terms, concepts and methods effectively;
2. use, design and implement appropriate information systems to organise and present outcomes which are fit for their purpose;
3. select, organise, interpret and use information from various sources to analyse problems and issues;
4. reflect critically on their own and others' use of ICT and other business and communication systems and their wider implications and effects, and make reasoned judgements, presenting conclusions accurately and appropriately;
5. present relevant information in a form that suits its purpose, ensure text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear, and use specialist terms appropriately.

6.2 Quality of Written Communication

Where candidates are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. Candidates will be required to:

- present relevant information in a form that suits its purposes;
- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that the meaning is clear.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in both the theory paper and the controlled test.

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Scheme of Assessment

7.1 Assessment Units

The Scheme of Assessment comprises two components.

Foundation Tier

Theory Paper (3126/1F) 1 hour

33% of the marks 80 marks

Candidates will be required to sit a theory paper, which is a short answer test with some extended writing, answered on the question paper, covering all aspects of the subject content. This component will cover Assessment Objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Controlled Test (3126/2F) 2 hours

67% of the marks 100 marks

All candidates must sit a terminal, controlled test using a computer. The controlled test will comprise four to seven compulsory practical tasks, which together will cover all of the Assessment Objectives 1 to 5.

Higher Tier

Theory Paper (3126/1H) 1 hour

33% of the marks 80 marks

Candidates will be required to sit a theory paper, which is a short answer test with some extended writing, answered on the question paper, covering all aspects of the subject content. This component will cover Assessment Objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Controlled Test (3126/2H) 2 hours

67% of the marks 100 marks

All candidates must sit a terminal, controlled test using a computer. The controlled test will comprise four to seven compulsory practical tasks, which together will cover all of the Assessment Objectives 1 to 5.

7.2 Weighting of Assessment Objectives

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table:

Assessment Objectives	Component Weightings (%)		Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Theory Paper	Controlled Test	
Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the specified subject content, using appropriate terms, concepts and methods effectively (AO1)	11	12	23
Use, design and implement appropriate information systems to organise and present outcomes which are fit for their purpose (AO2)	-	24	24
Select, organise, interpret and use information from various sources to analyse problems and issues (AO3)	7	21	28
Reflect critically on their own and others' use of ICT and other business and communication systems and their wider implications and effects, and make reasoned judgements, presenting conclusions accurately and appropriately (AO4)	13	7	20
Present relevant information in a form that suits its purpose, ensure text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear, and use specialist terms appropriately (AO5) [Quality of written communication]	2	3	5
Overall Weighting of Units (%)	33	67	100

Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

Subject Content

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Summary of Subject Content

The themes that make up the subject content are:

- The Business Environment;
- Workplace Organisation;
- Human Resources;
- Communication;
- The use of ICT in the Business Environment;
- Computer Applications in the Business Environment:
 - File Management;
 - Word processing;
 - Spreadsheets;
 - Charts;
 - Databases;
 - Graphics and Clipart;
 - Composition.

(Teachers should note that further guidance on the teaching of the Subject Content can be found in the Teachers' Guide.)

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The Business Environment

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- aims and objectives in business; the criteria for judging success, eg profitability; wealth creation, job creation, market share, cash flow, considered from the viewpoint of all stakeholders, but with particular emphasis on staff;
- the way in which and the degree to which the wishes and interests of various stakeholders impose constraints on a business, eg the need for profitability, customer satisfaction, government legislation, employee organisations;
- the way businesses are organised to meet their objectives, eg the roles of managers in businesses.

The topics above serve to provide a context for the use of information and communication systems, and criteria by which to evaluate their use.

Workplace Organisation

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- different kinds of working environment, eg open plan and cellular offices, and how the type of office layout is influenced by the nature and needs of the organisation and the demands of the task;
- modern developments in working practice, eg “hot-desking”, teleworking, flexible working;
- ergonomics: how design may influence physical comfort and working conditions and may maximise efficiency;
- the importance of health and safety in the workplace and its impact on the working environment; an awareness of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations and the responsibilities of employers and employees in that context;
- the importance of accuracy in the preparation, storage and retrieval of information within the workplace, including computer files;
- the importance of the security of data (including personal and financial) within the workplace and the need to be mindful of hazards, both physical and in relation to data such as viruses; methods of protecting data; current data protection legislation;
- the effective use of human resources, the effective use of other resources, eg issues of wastage and recycling.

With regard to all of the above topic areas, candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding. They should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate situations, to investigate advantages and drawbacks and to suggest improvements and solutions.

Human Resources

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- methods of internal and external recruitment of staff, eg notice boards, careers services, job centres, agencies, advertisements, eg in newspapers, periodicals and the internet;
- methods of selection: evaluation of application forms and curricula vitae ("CVs"), short listing;
- interviews: the importance of preparation and the setting, interview techniques;
- contracts of employment; job descriptions/person specifications;
- training: induction; staff development; in-house, external, on-the-job and off-the-job training;
- forms of remuneration: wages and salaries; time rates, piece rates, overtime, bonus, commission, performance-related pay, fringe benefits, gross and net pay; (Candidates should be able to carry out simple calculations.)
- employment rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities: outline knowledge of current legislation relating to Equal Pay, Sex Discrimination, Race Relations and Disability Discrimination, and the significance of European Union legislation;
- termination of employment: dismissal, redundancy, resignation and retirement.

With regard to all of the above topic areas, candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding. They should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate situations, to investigate advantages and drawbacks and to suggest improvements and solutions.

Communication

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the significance of effective communication in meeting the aims and objectives of a business. The following themes should be addressed:

- the benefits of effective internal and external communication, eg staff are motivated and well-informed leading to efficient working, customers are satisfied leading to repeat orders, good company image giving potential for increased profitability, the significance of effective marketing in creating and maintaining customer interest;
- effects of poor internal and external communication, eg poor working relationships leading to demotivation, misinformation and misinterpretation in dealing with suppliers resulting in loss of clients, etc;
- the difference between formal and informal communication;
- verbal communication: discussions, meetings, video conferences, telephone, voicemail;
- documentation, including business letters, agendas, minutes, memoranda, reports, messages, notices, newsletters;
- electronic communication: mobile phones, pagers, fax, information services;
- the internet and its role in business, as a source of information, a means of communication and a tool for marketing and selling (e-commerce), eg e-mail, web sites, on-line catalogues and booking services;
- the impact of the growth of e-commerce on businesses and their customers.

With regard to all of the above topic areas, candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding. They should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate situations, to investigate advantages and drawbacks and to suggest improvements and solutions.

ICT in the Business Environment

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the purposes of the main data input devices, eg keyboard, scanner, OMR, pointing devices, digital camera;
- the purposes of the main data storage devices, eg hard drive, floppy disk drive, CD/DVD drive, high capacity storage devices;
- the purposes of the main data output devices, eg printer (dot matrix, ink jet, laser), communication hardware;
- the characteristics and uses of applications software, eg word processing, presentation software, spreadsheets, database, graphics and DTP and their value for particular tasks;
- the use of local and wide area networks including intranet and the internet.

With regard to all of the above topic areas, candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding. They should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate situations, to investigate advantages and drawbacks and to suggest improvements and solutions.

Computer Applications in the Business Environment

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to applications of a computer in a business environment, with particular reference to word processing and/or desk top publishing packages, spreadsheets, databases, charts and graphics. Candidates should be encouraged to use their judgement to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of processes and outcomes.

Candidates will be expected to select and use appropriate business software to capture and store data, taking into account the need for retrieval and ease of analysis, design appropriate means of presenting data, using a variety of diagrams, graphs and text, which will meet the specific requirements of a given task and use appropriate business software to carry out a given range of tasks and evaluate the outcomes.

14.1 File Management

Candidates should be able to:

- create, save, retrieve, edit and delete files for all applications;
- print hard copy;
- import and export data between applications.

14.2 Word Processing

Candidates should be able to:

- operate the computer to produce accurate copy;
- identify and correct unmarked errors, including errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar as well as in the conventions of layout and display;
- display text in an appropriate manner, including blocked or indented styles, line spacing, centring, justification, enumeration, bullet points;
- make effective use of display features including closed capitals, spaced capitals, boldening, italics, a variety of fonts and different font point sizes;
- correctly carry out given amendments, to printed or handwritten material, in the form of balloons, arrows, deletions, insertions, etc;
- rearrange material in alphabetical, numerical and chronological sequence;
- use search and replace facilities;
- move text, using cut, copy and paste functions;
- understand how mail merge can be used in conjunction with a database file;

- use appropriate page layouts, including headers, footers, page numbers, columns;
- show a knowledge of, and act upon, the common conventional correction symbols used in word processing and printing;
- add borders around sections of text.

14.3 Spreadsheets

Candidates should be able to:

- design and create a spreadsheet to fulfil a specified task;
- make appropriate use of rows and columns to meet the demands of a given task, including inserting, deleting and re-sizing;
- insert, amend and delete labels, values and formulae within a spreadsheet;
- replicate values and formulae where necessary;
- format cell entries appropriately, eg alignment, number of decimal places, currency, style;
- display and print formulae;
- Sort rows in numerical, alphabetical or chronological order.

14.4 Charts

Candidates should be able to:

- import data series from spreadsheets to create charts;
- use a variety of chart formats to meet the needs of a given situation, eg line diagram, bar or pie chart;
- insert title and data legends.

14.5 Databases

Candidates should be able to:

- design and create an appropriate data capture sheet for use with a database;
- design and create a database with appropriate fields and records to meet a specified need;
- identify appropriate data types, eg alphabetic, numeric, alphanumeric;
- add and edit fields, eg headings, widths and data types;
- insert, edit and delete records;
- search, sort and select records based on specified criteria to meet a given need;
- modify layouts for specific purposes, eg list, form, mailing labels.

14.6 Graphics and Clipart

Candidates should be able to:

- create simple freehand shapes and/or draw geometrical shapes for a given need;
- make effective use of shading and patterns;
- make effective use of a range of line styles, eg broken;
- combine text and graphics, where appropriate;
- edit graphics, using cut, copy and paste facilities, align shapes and text appropriately;
- re-size and move graphics and/or clipart.

14.7 Composition

Candidates should be able to:

- design/compose a response to given source material, in the form of, for example, a letter, memorandum, notice, advertisement or note, using information from one or more sources within the question paper taking account of the purpose and audience/recipient of the document.

Key Skills and Other Issues

15

Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

15.1 Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of *Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology*.

The units for the ‘wider’ Key Skills of *Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these ‘wider’ Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification.

Copies of the Key Skills Units may be downloaded from the QCA web site (<http://www.qca.org.uk/keyskills>).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- A What you need to know.
- B What you must do.
- C Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this Specification for Business and Communication Systems can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of *Application of Number, Communication, Information Technology, Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving*. Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted below.

15.2 Key Skills Opportunities in Business and Communication Systems

The signposting in the following twelve tables represent opportunities to acquire and produce evidence of the Key Skills which are possible through the specification. There may be other opportunities to achieve these and other aspects of Key Skills via this specification, but such opportunities are dependent on the detailed course of study delivered within centres.

Communication Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content				
Section	9	10	11	12	13
C1.1 Take part in discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C1.2 Read and obtain information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C1.3 Write different types of documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communication Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content				
Section	9	10	11	12	13
C2.1a Contribute to discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C2.1b Give a short talk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C2.2 Read and summarise information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C2.3 Write different types of documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Application of Number Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content				
Section	9	10	11	12	13
N1.1 Interpret information from different sources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N1.2 Carry out calculations	-	✓	-	-	✓
N1.3 Interpret results and present findings	-	✓	-	-	-

Application of Number Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
N2.1 Interpret information from different sources		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N2.2 Carry out calculations		-	✓	-	-	✓
N2.3 Interpret results and present findings		-	✓	-	-	-

Information Technology Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
IT1.1 Find, explore and develop information		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT1.2 Present information, including text, numbers and images		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Information Technology Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
IT2.1 Search for and select information		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT2.2 Explore and develop information and derive new information		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT2.3 Present combined information, including text, numbers and images		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Working with Others Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
WO1.1 Confirm what needs to be done and who is to do it		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO1.2 Work towards agreed objectives		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO1.3 Identify progress and suggest improvements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Working with Others Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
WO2.1 Plan work and confirm working arrangements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO2.2 Work cooperatively towards achieving identified objectives		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO2.3 Exchange information on progress and agree ways of improving work with others		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improving Own Learning and Performance Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
LP1.1 Confirm short-term targets and plan how these will be met		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP1.2 Follow plan to meet targets and improve performance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP1.3 Review progress and achievements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improving Own Learning and Performance Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
LP2.1 Help set short-term targets and plan how these will be met		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP2.2 Use plan and support from others, to meet targets		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP2.3 Review progress and identify evidence of achievements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Problem Solving Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
PS1.1 Confirm understanding of given problems		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS1.2 Plan and try out ways of solving problems		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS1.3 Check if problems have been solved and describe the results		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Problem Solving Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content					
	Section	9	10	11	12	13
PS2.1 Identify problems and come up with ways of solving them		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS2.2 Plan and try out options		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS2.3 Apply given methods to check if problems have been solved and describe the results		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

15.3 Further Guidance

More specific guidance and examples of tasks that can provide evidence of single Key Skills, or composite tasks that can provide evidence of more than one Key Skill are given in the AQA specification support material, particularly the Teachers' Guide.

16

Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

16.1 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

Candidates following a course based on this specification will investigate the interaction between human beings and their workplace and how the wellbeing of the individual contributes to the success of an organisation. They will reflect on the meaning of equal opportunities in the workplace.

Candidates will also consider the privacy implications of ICT and the need for data protection.

16.2 European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers.

Candidates will gain an awareness of European Union legislation concerning employment.

16.3 Citizenship

Candidates will study the responsibilities of employers under the various aspects of employment law. They will also consider the rights and responsibilities of employees. They will develop the skills of information gathering and analysis and contribute to class discussions evaluating the impact of ICT in the workplace.

16.4 Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and associated specimen papers to avoid bias of any kind.

16.5 Health and Safety

Candidates will study the health and safety hazards of the workplace, particularly those associated with the use of computers. They will also learn how these hazards can be minimised and will develop good habits in their own computer use. They will study the impact of health and safety regulations on the workplace and learn about the responsibilities of both employers and employees under the law.

Awarding and Reporting

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Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

17.1	Qualification Titles	The qualification based on this specification has the following title: AQA GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.
17.2	Grading System	<p>The qualification will be graded on an 8-point grade scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade G will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.</p> <p>Candidates must be entered for either the Foundation Tier or Higher Tier. For candidates entered for the Foundation Tier, grades C–G are available. For candidates entered for the Higher Tier A*–D are available. There is a safety net for candidates entered for the Higher Tier, where an allowed Grade E will be awarded where candidates just fail to achieve Grade D. Candidates who fail to achieve a Grade E on the Higher Tier or Grade G on the Foundation Tier will be reported as unclassified.</p>
17.3	Re-Sits	Individual components may not be retaken but candidates may retake the whole qualification more than once.
17.4	Minimum Requirements	Candidates will be graded on the basis of work submitted for assessment.
17.5	Awarding and Reporting	This specification complies with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the current Code of Practice.

Appendices

A

Grade Descriptions

The following grade descriptors indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the given grade at GCSE. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at each specific grade. The descriptors should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (as in Section 6) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

- Grade A** Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the full range of specification content. They will apply this knowledge and critical understanding, using terms, concepts, theories, processes and methods effectively to address problems and issues. They will select and organise information and interpret and use this information effectively. They will also evaluate evidence, making reasoned judgements and presenting conclusions accurately and appropriately, which are supported by evidence.
- Grade C** Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of most aspects of the specification content. They will apply this knowledge and understanding, using terms, concepts, theories, processes and methods appropriately to address problems and issues. They will select, organise, interpret and use information and show the ability to organise and communicate it in an accurate and logical manner. They will also make reasoned judgements and present conclusions which are supported by evidence.
- Grade F** Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of some aspects of the specification content. They will begin to apply this knowledge and understanding, using some terms, concepts, theories, processes and methods to address problems and issues. They will show some ability to select, organise, interpret and use simple information and to organise and communicate it in a logical manner. They will also make judgements and present simple conclusions.

B

Overlaps with other Qualifications

Some of the subject content of this specification can be found in other AQA GCSEs. To enable some co-teaching, this appendix outlines subject content areas which match. However, credit cannot be transferred between the GCSE examinations. No marks or grades relating to the assessment of completed units can be transferred.

Link with AQA GCSE Business Studies (Specification A)

Section 12: People in Organisations

Section 11	Human Resources (remuneration, training)
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Link with AQA GCSE Business Studies (Specification B)

Section 13.4: Role of Personnel Management

Section 11	Human Resources (recruitment, employment legislation and training)
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Links with AQA GCSE Information and Communication Technology (Alternative A)

Section 9.4: Hardware Components

Section 13	ICT in the Business Environment (input/storage devices)
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Section 9.8: Applications Software

Section 14	Computer Applications in the Business Environment (understand and use business software)
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Section 9.10: Networks and Communications

Section 13	ICT in the Business Environment (developments in communication including computer networks)
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Section 9.14: Security of Data

Section 10	Workplace Organisation (Security of Data)
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Section 9.21: The Data Protection Act

Section 10	Workplace Organisation (the Data Protection Act)
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Links with AQA GCSE Information and Communication Technology (Alternative B)

Section 9.5: Software and Hardware

Section 13	ICT in the Business Environment (input/storage devices)
Section 14	Computer Applications in the Business Environment (understand and use business software)

Section 9.7: The Effects of Using ICT – Security

Section 10	Workplace Organisation (Security of Data)
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