

Edexcel GCE

Coursework Guide

**Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Economics
& Business Studies (Nuffield) (8128)**

**Edexcel Advanced GCE in Economics & Business
Studies (Nuffield) (9128)**

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Introduction and Key Features

This coursework guide accompanies the Edexcel AS/Advanced GCE specification for Economics and Business Studies (Nuffield) (8128/9128) and has been designed to help teachers prepare their students for assessment in the two coursework units 6363 (AS) and 6366 (A2).

The guide should be used in conjunction with the specification. It provides sections to help teachers with choosing appropriate tasks, assessing candidates' work and preparing submissions for moderation.

In this specification, the full range of coursework pieces produced by any particular student is known as the Portfolio. Individual pieces are known as 'investigations'.

The exemplar portfolio pieces in this guide have been assessed by Edexcel's senior examiners. Edexcel acknowledges thanks to the schools, teachers and candidates who participated in the production of work for assessment.

Key Features of the Portfolio

The production of the portfolio in this specification:

- is based on the principles of progression, integration and investigation and, therefore, encourages personal initiative and creativity and is integral to the learning process for the module in question
- encourages students to make practical use of concepts and theories which are the knowledge base or 'toolkit' for this subject
- allows students to start with a question or a hypothesis, investigate it through a range of primary and/or secondary sources and reach conclusions based on considered analysis and evaluation
- uses the full available weighting of 30%
- gives ample scope for generating evidence for the assessment of all six key skills.

Structure of The Portfolio

- **Advanced Subsidiary GCE – Unit 3 (available in June only)**

The portfolio is built up over the duration of the course. Candidates will be expected to complete a range of work within their portfolio, from which **two investigations** are to be selected for assessment. One piece must be relevant to Unit 1, the other from Unit 2 or Unit 3.

Each piece of work should be no more than 1,250 words long.

- **Advanced GCE – Unit 6 (available in June only)**

The portfolio is built up over the duration of the course. Candidates will be expected to complete a range of work within their portfolio, from which **two investigations** are to be selected for assessment – one piece from each of the two options studied.

Each piece of work should be no more than 1,500 words long.

In awarding an overall mark, centres should consider the piece of work as a whole as well as the individual assessment objectives. Each investigation must indicate with its title the name of the unit or option to which it relates. The investigation is likely to focus on only a section of the relevant unit or option. The focus of the work at both **Advanced Subsidiary GCE** and **Advanced GCE** needs to reflect the assessment criteria where 25% of the marks are awarded for each assessment objective.

Word Limit

In preparing their investigations, candidates need to adhere to the word limit as given. Candidates who include excessive amounts of non-relevant material could be seen as failing to reach the top application descriptor.

Key Skills

The specification has been designed to provide opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing the key skills of:

- communication
- application of number
- information technology
- improving own learning and performance
- working with others
- problem solving.

See the section headed ‘Key Skills with Economics and Business Studies (Nuffield)’ in the specification for further details on development and internal assessment opportunities for the above key skills through delivery of this specification.

Creating a Portfolio piece

Aims of, and background to, the Portfolio

The aim of the portfolio is to engage students fully in the real world investigation of economic and business phenomena. It allows students to demonstrate a range of capabilities through a variety of outcomes.

An investigation is an integral part of the learning process for the module in question *as well as* an assessment tool. It will use as its starting point a question or a hypothesis that can be tested. It will involve investigation, using a range of appropriate and valid primary and/or secondary sources. The portfolio, *as a whole*, should include investigations using both primary and secondary sources.

Students should include a brief explanation of the approach and methods used in each investigation at the beginning of the piece. Its findings will be explained and analysed using relevant terminology, concepts and theoretical ideas drawn from the course content. Conclusions will be drawn. Overall, the investigation should demonstrate the use of initiative and show some originality. Students are encouraged to be topical in their choice of investigations.

The portfolio takes on a significant role in the development of students' perceptions of the course and their understanding of both the content and skills included in the specification. Students will build up a file of material that both meets the assessment requirements and demonstrates a broad, contextual understanding of the course content.

Organising Coursework

Referencing

A set of portfolio investigations should contain a balance between the use of primary and secondary data. It is not necessary for all four investigations to include primary source material - good work often exploits the possibility of making comparisons between local and regional or national data.

Students should use a range of different types of source material – large amounts of textbook matter without appropriate evaluation will not score high marks.

All sources of information must be named, including textbooks, organisations, electronic media, etc.

Questionnaires, data, articles, etc which are integral to the investigation can be presented in the Appendix. The Appendix provides useful evidence of the investigation process but the content should be relevant.

Student Involvement and Outcomes

The creation of an investigation is a highly student-centred activity. Students should be encouraged to:

- focus on topics or contexts that interest them
- start with a question or hypothesis
- explain briefly the purposes/objectives of the investigation
- present a summary of the findings from primary and/or secondary sources
- relate evidence to the relevant concepts, using these to analyse findings
- evaluate the evidence
- draw conclusions.

The portfolio encourages an approach that leads towards a range of objectives for students:

- the development of personal ownership
- a questioning ethos
- a problem-solving approach
- an ability to apply theories and ideas
- an evaluative approach
- an understanding of varying perspectives
- an ability to interpret media comment critically
- a willingness to explore a range of resources
- a more detailed focus on topics that interest them.

Selecting titles

Investigations should start with either a question or a hypothesis - this is crucial to their success. Without this, it is difficult for students to structure the investigation in a way that encourages an appropriately evaluative and critical approach. The nature of a hypothesis test may need to be explained.

Initially, there may be a need for quite a substantial amount of teacher guidance – teachers may direct all students to undertake a similar piece of primary investigation. Students would then be expected to devise their own ways of carrying it out. As their independence grows, students can be expected to identify questions for investigation by themselves. Questions should not attempt to cover the whole of the content of a particular unit – it would be too broad a question to work effectively.

Where a group of students all undertake the same investigation, it is unlikely that they will be able to demonstrate the independence of mind and creativity required to reach level 4 in the assessment criteria.

Sample titles

The success of an investigation is directly related to a candidate's engagement, involvement and sense of ownership of it. Titles will ideally be selected by candidates themselves. However, more guidance is needed in the early part of the course. These examples are not prescriptive, merely suggestions meant to stimulate thought. Where candidates elect to select identical titles, care must be taken to ensure that each individual's piece of work retains its own identity. Candidates cannot submit groupwork. Student interest and potential research assets are likely to influence the choice of titles.

The selection of a title which guides the work is important, even if the grammar or the wording leaves something to be desired; it is the spirit in which it is undertaken that yields the dividend of a valuable learning experience.

Titles in the form of a question or a hypothesis to be tested tend to work well as they require a candidate to use knowledge and understanding, apply it to the issue, analyse the problem and evaluate and assess when making judgements and proposing solutions. Titles which are open ended and descriptive such as "Unemployment in my home town" should be avoided.

The best work is often linked to titles with a discrete scope. 'Big' and open questions often result in sweeping assertions rather than detailed, logical analysis. A narrow focus can successfully set up skills use. Careful planning can help to ensure that there is scope to employ the four assessed skills (see sample planning sheet on page 46).

Module 1

In what ways has firm X gained/kept/lost competitive advantage?

Is it best for Mr/s Y to run his/her business as a sole proprietor?

What factors have underpinned the changes in effective demand for mobile phones/Z cafe/other?

Why do my friends/family work?

How far do the attitudes of local people/factory A workers/B Management/my relatives support Maslow's theoretical hierarchy?

What is responsible for changed (un)employment levels in our town?

Do union activities in business C reflect a changing role?

Why does farm D need subsidies?

Why has agriculture changed in this area?

How significant/genuine is the ethical stance of E plc?

What are the most important ways in which company F adds value?

How much has market research helped G?

How does small business I (i) manage its cash flow OR (2) satisfy its stakeholders?

Modules 2 – 3

How far do management and workers at firm/school J agree about the corporate culture/leadership style?

Why are there evident differences in motivation between people in firms K and L?

How successfully has M plc cut costs/invested in new technology?

To what extent has N plc achieved efficiency/been effectively managed?

How good a picture of O plc does the balance sheet and the profit and loss account give?

What is responsible for P's ability to charge premium prices?

How competitive is industry Q locally/nationally/globally?

How well are external costs controlled in . . . ?

Has government action on (eg railways or FMD) improved the situation for consumers/workers/the community?

How much has structural change in industry R had an impact on this area?

How significant has the introduction of the euro been for firm S?

How successfully has T plc planned/innovated/marketed/exported?

How far does the budget/statement reflect current government priorities?

Option 1

What are the major attractions/strengths and weaknesses of U emerging market?

How important is inward investment to country V?

How can UK/Country W attract more inward investment?

How secure is Italy/X's competitive advantage in tiles/?

Why are the traditional trade links in Y changing?

Why are gains from international trade shared unequally?

How important is it for MNC Z to behave ethically/ Has MNC Z's presence benefited a host country?

Was WTO right to . . . ?

How significant is the growth of ethical trading?

Option 2

How useful is/are Ansoff's box/projections/economic indicators to ... ?

How much have changing expectations influenced ... ?

Was business Z right to finance its expansion by ... ?

How important is training to A plc/this region?

Why did workers at B win a C% pay rise/accept a pay cut?

Why are interest rates falling/so low/rising/so high?

Why did Enron/D fail?

Why has the pattern of employment changed in area E/F plc?

How effectively has unemployment caused by closure of G been tackled?

Why has the distribution of income in the UK/H changed?

Option 3

Are internet music sharing services such as Napster unethical/doomed?

What has been the impact of patents on I?

What are the significant consequences of growth for the workers/community in ?

To what extent has interdependence/ recent industrial action influenced relationships in the J industry/supply chain?

What is revealed by the accounts of K plc?

How significant is environmental accounting/social auditing?

How is power shared in business L?

How far are the salaries of M plc directors justified?

Assessment Guidelines

Assessment of the portfolio – AS criteria – Unit 3

The marking criteria for the Advanced GCE Subsidiary reflect the level of sophistication a candidate will have reached in the first year of a two year course.

AS students will write some investigations while their ‘toolkit’ of concepts and theories is in the early stages of construction and the assessment of these investigations should reflect this. The assessment of these investigations should reflect the students’ stage of development.

The higher levels awarded for assessment criterion 1 require wide-ranging knowledge that is relevant to the question. Similarly, in assessment criterion 2, the level refers to the relevance of a wide range of concepts and ideas. For assessment criterion 3, candidates will be rewarded for wide-ranging analysis of economic and business problems. In assessment criterion 4, the candidate needs to evaluate in respect of the content of the piece, **not** in respect of whether the piece has met the objectives it has set.

Knowledge 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has shown wide-ranging knowledge of relevant concepts and ideas.	The level 4 mark descriptor is relative to the point reached in students’ evolving mastery of the subject toolkit – this is particularly important for module 1 investigations in term one. Quality of understanding is at least as significant as quantity of concepts mentioned. A candidate who shows a thorough grasp of relevant early concepts and ideas in Unit 1 should have a level 4 mark (19-25).
13 – 18	Has shown a good knowledge of concepts and ideas.	For level 3, students work will show a reasonably good grasp of relevant ideas and concepts. One indicator of this level of performance is work with ideas linked to each other rather than seen in isolation.
7 – 12	Has shown knowledge of concepts and ideas in a generalised way.	Level 2 work might have concepts and ideas which are mentioned without clear evidence of understanding, eg this could include simple repetition of material from textbooks, handouts, the internet, etc.
0 – 6	Has shown some elements of knowledge.	A level 1 mark should be given where there is some attempt to demonstrate knowledge but understanding is clearly weak.

Application 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has used a wide range of relevant concepts and ideas.	The best work is likely to apply concepts perceptively and appropriately, even in early investigations. Quality is again as significant as quantity. Where application of concepts is convincingly and accurately related to the material being investigated, level 4 is appropriate.
13 – 18	Has used a relevant selection of concepts and ideas.	Sound application, perhaps without the depth of insight of the best work, should earn level 3.
7 – 12	Has used some concepts and ideas.	Level 2 application will typically be characterised by limited development of simple statements.
0 – 6	Has attempted to use some concepts and ideas.	Attempts at application which are significantly flawed should be marked at level 1.
Analysis 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has used wide-ranging analysis of economic and business problems.	Good analysis combines concepts/ideas with logical development to build up explanations and/or arguments, using evidence effectively. Where concepts/ideas are employed well and development of ideas is logical and convincing, a level 4 mark is appropriate.
13 – 18	Has used good analysis of economic and business problems.	Analysis at level 3 is likely to be less well developed whilst still building an explanation. Ideas are likely to be coherently linked but perhaps fail to develop into a fully substantiated view.
7 – 12	Has used some relevant analysis.	Level 2 analysis frequently has concepts/ideas a little tangled. Use of evidence or explanation/development lacks the coherence seen at higher levels.
0 – 6	Has made a limited attempt to use analysis.	Level 1 analysis is frequently characterised by unsupported assertions: stating as a ‘fact’ something that has not been developed or substantiated.

Evaluation 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has evaluated effectively, reaching conclusions that are original.	Level 4 evaluations consider a range of evidence appropriate to the investigation, show balance between conflicting points where appropriate, and draw convincingly on the evidence to reach their own conclusions.
13 – 18	Has evaluated well and reached organised conclusions.	Level 3 evaluations have judgements leading to reasoned conclusions, based on a narrower or less balanced use of evidence.
7 – 12	Has evaluated partially and reached some simple conclusions.	Conclusions at level 2 might be simple, ignoring some evidence or stressing points of limited relevance.
0 – 6	Has attempted to evaluate.	Level 1 evaluation is likely to rush to judgement, making little use of evidence or over-generalising from assertions.

Assessment of the Portfolio: Advanced GCE criteria – Unit 6

The higher levels awarded for assessment criterion 1 require detailed, accurate and wide-ranging knowledge that is relevant to the question. Similarly, in assessment criterion 2, the level refers to the relevance of concepts, theories and methods. For assessment criterion 3, candidates will be rewarded for logical analysis, appropriate to the nature of the investigation. In assessment criterion 4, the candidate needs to evaluate in respect of the content of the piece, **not** in respect of whether the piece has met the objectives it has set.

Assessment criteria

Knowledge 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has demonstrated detailed, accurate and wide-ranging knowledge of concepts, theories and contexts, relevant to the investigation.	This level requires the integration of a wide range of relevant concepts (perhaps some from AS as well as A2 modules), plus clear understanding of the concepts used.
13 – 18	Has demonstrated a good knowledge of relevant areas, selecting appropriately.	Clear understanding of concepts, perhaps shown by linking them rather than treating them in isolation. ‘Toolkit’ knowledge shown is relevant to the title but perhaps of limited breadth.
7 – 12	Has demonstrated relevant knowledge in a generalised way.	Uses concepts in ways hinting at incomplete understanding or simple repetition of material from books, handouts or websites should have a level 2 mark.
0 – 6	Has demonstrated some elements of knowledge and understanding.	Attempts to demonstrate relevant knowledge with only limited valid elements. Commonly, some sound understanding will be combined with muddled or incorrect ideas.
Application 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has applied a wide range of relevant concepts, theories and methods, integrated them and used them in a creative and original way.	Perceptive and appropriate selection and use of concepts and theories. Effective application of abstract ideas which ‘fit’ to shed light on the investigation, possibly good appreciation of why a ‘fit’ is partial in some contexts.
13 – 18	Has applied a selection of concepts, theories and methods, integrating economic and business terminology.	Relevant ideas, methods and terminology are applied, perhaps in a standard and less imaginative way.

7 – 12	Has applied some concepts, theories and methods with an attempt at integrating economic and business terminology.	Some appropriate application with only limited development in the context, or very limited range of ideas used.
0 – 6	Has attempted to apply some concepts, theories and methods.	Attempts at application with limited validity or significant flaws
Analysis 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has used logical and perceptive analysis of economic and business problems as an integral part of the investigation.	Explanations and/or arguments are logical, perceptive and convincing. Concepts/ideas are integrated well with the evidence used in the process of building analysis.
13 – 18	Has used logical analysis of economic and business problems relevant to the investigation.	Ideas are coherently linked in sound analysis. There is a clear emphasis on explanation, which is relevant to the investigation, rather than assertion. The range/quality of analysis is sound but less complete/convincing.
7 – 12	Has used some relevant analysis in the investigation.	There is logical development in analysis with some relevance to the investigation, but development is partial, perhaps leaving gaps which are unexplained.
0 – 6	Has made a limited attempt to use analysis.	Some merit in attempts at analysis but dubious assumptions or logic. Level 1 analysis frequently muddles opinion with fact and leaves assertions unexplained.
Evaluation 25 marks	Marking criteria	Additional guidance on marking criteria
19 – 25	Has evaluated convincingly, using independence of mind to reach conclusions that are logical, balanced and original.	Conclusions reached in the best investigations give insights on the question or hypothesis which are convincing and are clearly based on the range of appropriate evidence and analysis developed. Awareness of contrasting views/evidence is combined with sound personal judgment.
13 – 18	Has evaluated effectively and reached conclusions in an organised and coherent manner.	Evaluation reaches relevant and reasoned conclusions, perhaps drawn from narrower use of evidence.
7 – 12	Has evaluated partially and reached simple conclusions.	There are conclusions relevant to the title for which partial support is given, perhaps ignoring significant areas or constructed in a less convincing way.
0 – 6	Has attempted to evaluate and reached unsupported conclusions.	Attempts at evaluation are made but are significantly flawed, perhaps generalising from assertions or from poorly interpreted evidence.

Coursework Moderation Procedures

1. The marks submitted to Edexcel for coursework will be moderated in accordance with the requirements of the mandatory Code of Practice.
2. An approved moderator will be assigned to each centre by Edexcel.
3. The moderator will be responsible for standardising marks across several centres.
4. Centres must ensure that there is full and effective internal standardisation of the assessments made by different teachers and of different teaching groups within a centre. This will establish an overall order of merit for all students in the centre. Centres are required to verify that internal standardisation has taken place. Standardisation within the centre must involve an examination of the student's work to ensure that the marking criteria have been consistently applied. This process should also include an arithmetical check of the marks and the transfer of the correct marks to the Optical Teacher Examiner Marks Sheets (OPTEMS).
5. Edexcel may provide professional guidance and training on coursework guidance and marking.
6. Final moderation will be conducted by post. Centres should ensure that certificates of posting, or the equivalent for courier firms, are retained. It is strongly advised that centres keep a back-up copy of each candidate's work.
7. Edexcel will specify which candidates' work will be required for moderation; further samples of work may be requested by the moderator. The moderation will consist of a detailed scrutiny of the sampled work in relation to marks awarded.
8. The material to be used for moderation must be available near to the examination on a date to be specified by Edexcel.

It will consist of:

- (a) the completed Optical Teacher Examiner Mark Sheets (supplied by Edexcel, listing the candidates entered)
- (b) the record sheet for each pupil
- (c) samples of each pupil's assessed coursework, plus teacher's notes, eg listing any assistance given.

(These materials must be retained, for possible use in moderation and in enquiries about results, until 30th September of the examination year).

9. Bulky appendices such as magazines or large numbers of questionnaires should NOT be posted to moderators. A mention in the teacher's notes that they have been seen is quite sufficient.
10. Normally, moderation will not affect the order of merit established by a centre. However, Edexcel will take appropriate action in cases where there is evidence of inconsistent assessment or other departure from specification requirements, in order to align standards. Where such action results in changes in the order of merit, centres will be notified when possible. If necessary, such centres will be directed to review their assessment before moderation can be completed.
11. Edexcel will provide centres with the results of moderation of their coursework assessment as soon as possible after the examination. A moderator's report on the assessment will be sent to each centre.

12. The Mark Scheme and Examiners' Comments will contain a section on coursework. It will cover the main points arising from the coursework assessment and provide guidance on good practice.