

Pearson Higher Nationals in Business

PEARSON-SET THEME & TOPIC RELEASE

UNIT: 11 Research Project Theme 2017

For use with the Higher National Certificate and
Higher National Diploma in Business

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Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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1.1 Introduction to theme

The Pearson-set theme for use with Level 5 Unit 11: Research Project is

The impact of digital technology on business activity

Digital technology has revolutionised the way we conduct business. Over the last decade it has dramatically changed traditional business models and transformed business activities. The use of digital mobile technology has provided businesses with a wealth of choice and opportunity. This has enabled existing products to become more profitable and innovative new products to be developed, leading to increasingly diverse product portfolios. Its impact is evident at the core of all key business systems:

- Administration - cloud technology enables effective filing, storage and sharing of information.
- Communication - social media and mobile technology allows businesses to connect, communicate, collaborate and build relationships on a global scale.
- Storage and Distribution - 'The Internet of Things' is connecting and integrating systems throughout business structures.
- Production - Artificial intelligence and big data analytics are driving Innovation and product growth.

However, changes in the way we work are not without their challenges as businesses have to adopt and deal with change management, recruit and sustain creative talent, invest in new technologies and respond to an increasingly competitive environment.

This unit will enable students to examine the impact of digital technology on how we conduct business through the context of their chosen research objective. This will provide the opportunity for students to contextualise the implications of digital technology in the workplace and how it is shaping the future workforce. It will also enable them to explore both the challenges and opportunities rapid technological advances represents for businesses.

1.2 Choosing a research objective/question

Students are to choose their own research topic for this unit. Strong research projects are those with clear, well focused and defined objectives. A central skill in selecting a research objective is the ability to select a suitable and focused research objective. One of the best ways to do this is to put it in the form of a question. Students should be encouraged to discuss a variety of topics related to the theme and from here to generate ideas for a good research objective.

The range of topics discussed could cover the following:

- The stages that organisations have to go through for digital transformation
- The challenges of integrating emerging technologies within organisations
- The implications of digital technology on SMEs
- E-commerce and how it drives business success
- Engaging with stakeholders through digital technology

The research objective should allow for students to broaden their understanding and widen their perspectives by being able to explore, argue, prove, and disprove a particular objective. They should be feasible, novel, ethical, relevant and ultimately of interest to the student.

Guidance for tutors is available in the Pearson-set Sample Assessment Material (SAM) for Unit 11: Research Project and templates are provided for both the research proposal and ethics form.

Please note that if reasonable adjustments are necessary to meet a specific individual student need you are able to adjust internal assessments to take this into account. Any adjustments must be considered in relation to the centre's policies on equality & diversity and student support.

Further details on how to make adjustments for students with protected characteristics are given in the document '*Pearson Supplementary Guidance for Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration in Vocational Internally Assessed Units*' available on our website (<http://qualifications.pearson.com>).

1.3 Project Evidence / Outcomes

It is important to recognise that project work is reliant on gathering information/data that can be analysed. The scale of the project means that there must be time for both primary and secondary research. An advised model would be to use secondary research to provide a context for the students to conduct and interpret primary data collection. The project could then yield data that could be compared with the findings of secondary research information.

In assessing the project, the assessor should be able to see a rationale for the project title, an identification of controversial aspects of the title and of the relevant literature/data sources. This will be based primarily on the student's research proposal. Student research should outline the literature/theories that supports the identified research objective/s and include critical evaluation of central arguments paying attention to whether or not the arguments are logically valid. Throughout their research students should be aware of the importance of clear and consistent use of language and the use of a consistent reference system. Engagement in reflective study of the research process should be

evident, with students explaining how their ideas have developed, the significance of results and what they have learnt about the methodology of research. Well edited, focused writing and presentation, where the key decisions, developments, lines of argument and salient research are explained succinctly, is preferable to unstructured writing and presentation where little attempt to select or edit material has been made.

It is important to recognise that there are many different presentation formats and it is important that students think carefully about the suitability of any presentations for their target audience, if this is a chosen format. Their presentations should be appropriate to the audience, both in terms of the nature and level of material they use and also in terms of length. Students should be guided to produce research that gives a succinct account of the main arguments or developments from their project. The question and answer session should address issues raised by the presentation, but also give students an opportunity to review their work.

Students are to submit as evidence for the unit in addition to their project findings, the **research proposal and ethics form**. The research proposal sets out the plan for how the students will achieve the intended research objective and shows whether the objective will be feasible, ethical and achievable in the time scale. It sets out how secondary research supports the research objective, how the research will be conducted, how the research will be evaluated. Students will need to gain ethical approval before commencing their research, this will be discussed with the tutor during the research proposal.

1.4 Employer engagement

It is advisable that centres look at the Pearson-set Assignment as an appropriate unit to embed employer engagement, although this is not a mandatory requirement. Developing and establishing links with employers enhances the teaching and learning experience and improves students' employability. Where possible, identifying links with employers as part of the delivery of the Pearson-set Assignment could lead to enhancing and supporting student learning. Real-life projects provide students with the opportunity to develop and acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise required by employers.

1.5 Sharing of good practice

The Pearson-set Assignment unit will be a sampled unit by the centre appointed External Examiner (EE) as part of the annual Pearson EE centre visit. The focus will be on standardisation of student assessed work and sharing of good practice. The EE will review and identify exemplars in all aspects of good practice. Good practice will focus on current themes that align to QAA Higher Education Reviews:

- Innovation
- Digital literacy

- Student employability and entrepreneurial skills
- Employer engagement
- Quality of assessment feedback.

The Sample Assessment Material (SAM) for Unit 11: Research Project should be read in conjunction with the theme and topic release. It provides advice and guidance for both tutors and students.

For any further additional support or queries regarding this document, please email btecdelivery@pearson.com.