



**ACCA**

**Strategic Business Leader (SBL)**

Pocket Notes

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## Syllabus

### Aim

To demonstrate organisational leadership and senior consultancy or advisory capabilities and relevant professional skills, through the context of an integrated case study.

### Main Capabilities

On successful completion of this paper, candidates should be able to:

- A Apply excellent leadership and ethical skills to set the 'tone from the top' and promote a positive culture within the organisation, adopting a whole organisation perspective in managing performance and value creation.
- B Evaluate the effectiveness of the governance and agency system of an organisation and recognise the responsibility of the board or other

agents towards their stakeholders, including the organisation's social responsibilities and the reporting implications.

- C Evaluate the strategic position of the organisation against the external environment and the availability of internal resources, to identify feasible strategic options.
- D Analyse the risk profile of the organisation and of any strategic options identified, within a culture of responsible risk management.
- E Select and apply appropriate information technologies and data analytics, to analyse factors affecting the organisation's value chain to identify strategic opportunities and implement strategic options within a framework of robust IT security controls.

- F Evaluate management reporting and internal control and audit systems to ensure compliance and the achievement of organisation's objectives and the safeguarding of organisational assets.
- G Apply high level financial techniques from Skills exams in the planning, implementation and evaluation of strategic options and actions.
- H Enable success through innovative thinking, applying best in class strategies and disruptive technologies in the management of change; initiating, leading and organising projects, while effectively managing talent and other business resources.
- I Apply a range of Professional Skills in addressing requirements within the Strategic Business Leader examination and in preparation for, or to support, current work experience.

### The Examination

The examination is based on an integrated case study containing a number of assignments which will vary at each examination.

These assignments or tasks may require the candidate to take on different roles, depending on the situation. The number of marks allocated to all these assignments or the sub-parts of these will add up to 100 in total.

Within the total marks available, there are 20 Professional Skills marks. Usually each task will contain some professional skills marks which may vary by examination, depending on the requirements. All tasks must be completed.

The examination is of 4 hours duration, but this includes Reading, Planning and Reflection time (RPRT). This time can be used flexibly at any time during the exam.

Number of marks 100

Varying number of tasks

Total time allowed: 4 hours

**NB More detail on exam guidance in Chapter 1**

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chapter

# 1

## Introduction to the SBL exam

### In this chapter

- Overview.
- Being a leader.
- Thinking strategically.
- Communication.
- Commercial acumen.
- Analysis.
- Scepticism.
- Evaluation.



## Overview



## Being a leader

As a leader, you are expected to be able to analyse a business situation and provide and implement appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions.

This means that you can

- be clear and focussed, identifying the key issues in any situation
- analyse and address ethical concerns
- use technical models and quantitative analysis to draw out key issues, establish causality and integrate a wide range of factors into a coherent argument
- make recommendations that meet the needs of users and are 'fit for purpose'.

## Thinking strategically

Having a strategic perspective means that you can do the following:

- Take a **long term** perspective.
- Look at the **whole organisation** as well as individual products /divisions / SBUs.
- Set the direction of the whole organisation and **integrate** its activities.
- Consider the views of **all stakeholders**, not just shareholders.
- Analyse the organisation's **resources** and define resource requirements.
- Relate the organisation to its **environments**.
- Look at gaining a sustainable **competitive advantage**.

## Communication

### Syllabus spec

- (a) **Inform** concisely, objectively, and unambiguously, while being sensitive to cultural differences, using appropriate media and technology.
- (b) **Persuade** using compelling and logical arguments demonstrating the ability to counter argue when appropriate.
- (c) **Clarify** and simplify complex issues to convey relevant information in a way that adopts an appropriate tone and is easily understood by the intended audience.

In summary, this means you have to express yourself clearly and convincingly through the appropriate medium while being sensitive to the needs of the intended audience.

## Commercial acumen

### Syllabus spec

- (a) **Demonstrate awareness** of organisational and wider external factors affecting the work of an individual or a team in contributing to the wider organisational objectives.
- (b) **Use judgement** to identify key issues in determining how to address or resolve problems and in proposing and recommending the solutions to be implemented.
- (c) **Show insight and perception** in understanding work-related and organisational issues, including the management of conflict, demonstrating acumen in arriving at appropriate solutions or outcomes.

In summary, this means you have to show awareness of the wider business and external factors affecting business, using commercially sound judgement and insight to resolve issues and exploit opportunities.

## Analysis

### Syllabus spec

- (a) **Investigate** relevant information from a wide range of sources, using a variety of analytical techniques to establish the reasons and causes of problems, or to identify opportunities or solutions.
- (b) **Enquire** of individuals or analyse appropriate data sources to obtain suitable evidence to corroborate or dispute existing beliefs or opinion and come to appropriate conclusions.
- (c) **Consider** information, evidence and findings carefully, reflecting on their implications and how they can be used in the interests of the department and wider organisational goals.

In summary, this means you have to thoroughly investigate and research information from a variety of sources and logically process it with a view to considering it for recommending appropriate action.

## Scepticism

### Syllabus spec

- (a) **Probe** deeply into the underlying reasons for issues and problems, beyond what is immediately apparent from the usual sources and opinions available.
- (b) **Question** facts, opinions and assertions, by seeking justifications and obtaining sufficient evidence for their support and acceptance.
- (c) **Challenge** information presented or decisions made, where this is clearly justified, in a professional and courteous manner; in the wider professional, ethical, organisational, or public interest.

In summary, this means you have to probe, question and challenge information and views presented to them, to fully understand business issues and to establish facts objectively, based on ethical and professional values.

## Evaluation

### Syllabus spec

- (a) **Assess and use professional judgement** when considering organisational issues, problems or when making decisions; taking into account the implications of such decisions on the organisation and those affected.
- (b) **Estimate** trends or make reasoned forecasts of the implications of external and internal factors on the organisation, or of the outcomes of decisions available to the organisation.
- (c) **Appraise** facts, opinions and findings objectively, with a view to balancing the costs, risks, benefits and opportunities, before making or recommending solutions or decisions.

In summary, this means you have to carefully assess situations, proposals and arguments in a balanced way, using professional and ethical judgement to predict future outcomes and consequences as a basis for sound decision-making.