



Eastbrook Sixth Form

Independent Study Guide

Business Studies



BUSINESS STUDIES

YEAR 12

Road Map

UNIT 1 – EXPLORING BUSINESS

You will explore the aims and objectives of different types of businesses, including sole traders, partnerships, private and public limited companies, and non-profit organisations. You will investigate stakeholders and their influence, and look at how businesses are organised internally.

HT1

UNIT 1 – EXPLORING BUSINESS

You will analyse the external environment using PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) and assess how it impacts business activity. You'll also look at market competition and how businesses adapt to remain competitive.

HT2

UNIT 1 – EXPLORING BUSINESS

You will investigate how internal departments (e.g. HR, finance, operations) work together, the importance of organisational structure and culture, and how communication supports decision making. You will complete and submit your Unit 1 internal assessment.

HT3

UNIT 2 – DEVELOPING A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

You will begin Unit 2 by exploring the purpose and role of marketing, different types of market research (primary/secondary), and how businesses segment and target their markets using data and research.

HT4

UNIT 2 – DEVELOPING A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

You will analyse the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) and consider how external factors, trends and market conditions shape campaign design. You'll begin working through practice briefs to develop your skills.

HT5

UNIT 2 – DEVELOPING A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

You will complete your preparation for the Pearson-set task by practising how to interpret Part A research and plan your response for Part B. You will also review exemplars and develop your time management skills for the timed task.

HT6

BUSINESS STUDIES

YEAR 13

Road Map

UNIT 3 – PERSONAL AND BUSINESS

FINANCE

You will learn about personal finance, including sources of income and expenditure, financial planning, budgeting, saving, borrowing, and understanding the role of banks and financial institutions.

HT1

UNIT 3 – PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FINANCE

You will study business finance topics, including break-even analysis, cash flow forecasting, financial statements (income statement and statement of financial position), and ratio analysis. You will also practise exam-style questions in preparation for the January assessment.

HT2

UNIT 3 – PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FINANCE (EXAM PREP)

You will revise key topics and complete mock exams ahead of the January assessment. After the exam, you will begin Unit 14 by exploring the purpose of customer service and how it meets customer needs.

HT3

UNIT 14 – INVESTIGATING CUSTOMER SERVICE

You will analyse how businesses train staff, develop policies and procedures, and monitor customer service through surveys, complaints data, KPIs and other feedback tools. You will start preparing your assignment.

HT4

UNIT 14 – INVESTIGATING CUSTOMER SERVICE

You will complete your internal assignment by evaluating how a real business delivers customer service and how it could improve. All coursework and unit evidence should be finalised and submitted by the end of this half term.

HT5

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

In Summer 2, you will take part in career preparation activities, develop life skills, and explore progression options such as university, apprenticeships, or employment.

HT6

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Unit 1: Exploring Business

Summary		Assessment Objectives
This introductory unit examines the purpose of different businesses, their organizational structures, the influence of the external environment, and the need for businesses to be dynamic and innovative to survive. You will gain an overview of what makes businesses successful, how they communicate and operate in various markets, and why innovation and enterprise (with their risks and benefits) are crucial for long-term success		A. Explore the features of different businesses and analyse what makes them successful. B. Investigate how businesses are organised. C. Examine the environment in which businesses operate. D. Examine business markets. E. Investigate the role and contribution of innovation and enterprise to business success
Required Reading List		Additional Reading List
Pearson BTEC National Business Student Book 1 (Pearson, 2016) – Unit 1: Exploring Business chapter (covers business purposes, stakeholders, structures, markets, and innovation)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tutor2u – PESTLE Analysis Overview: Explanation of how Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors form a framework for analysing a business’s external environment.• BBC News (Business) – Explore current business news stories to see real examples of how external factors (like economic changes or new regulations) impact businesses’ success and decisions. For example, changes in consumer trends or technology can significantly affect a company’s strategy.
Self-Study Questions Each question below should take at least one hour to complete and can be tackled independently:		
1. Comparing Business Features: Select two contrasting businesses (e.g. a local sole trader vs a large public limited company). How do their ownership, purpose, and scope differ, and how do these features influence their success? (Use real examples and data in your answer.)		What the mark scheme says? To achieve top marks in this coursework unit, you must go beyond description and demonstrate <i>analysis</i> and <i>evaluation</i> of your research findings. For a Distinction , the work should evaluate the reasons for success of the businesses studied, showing how different features and stakeholder relationships make each business successful. You are expected to conduct in-depth research on the business’s environment, assessing how internal and external factors affect its performance now and in the future. Your evaluation should be supported by evidence, and you should weigh up the benefits and risks of innovation and enterprise in the business, coming to a justified conclusion about their importance to its success. Merit-level work will contain solid analysis of business information and clear explanations, while Pass-level work tends to be more descriptive. Always aim to support arguments with real evidence from the businesses you researched.
2. Organizational Structure in Practice: Research a well-known company (e.g. Google or Tesco) and draw its organizational chart. How do its functional areas (HR, R&D, marketing, etc.) interrelate to support the company’s aims and objectives?		
3. Impact of the External Environment: Using a recent event (e.g. rising inflation or a new regulation), analyse how this external factor has affected a specific business. Consider political, economic, social, and technological influences in your analysis (PEST analysis).		
4. Business Markets and Competition: Identify the market structure of an industry (e.g. supermarkets in the UK – an oligopoly) and examine how this market structure influences one leading business’s pricing and output decisions. Use real market data to support your points.		
5. Innovation and Enterprise Case Study: Investigate a business known for innovation (for example, Dyson or a successful tech start-up). Evaluate how the company has used innovation or enterprise to achieve success and discuss the risks and benefits they faced.		
Where this term links with Career Prospects:	Top Tip from the Department:	
Content from Unit 1 gives you a broad foundation for many business careers. The knowledge of how businesses operate and succeed is relevant to roles such as business management trainee, entrepreneur/start-up founder, business analyst, or marketing and sales associate. This unit also prepares you for higher apprenticeships or business courses in higher education, as it develops transferable understanding of the business world	When researching for assignments, pick real businesses you find interesting. Use up-to-date examples from news or case studies – this not only keeps your study relevant but also shows the examiner you understand current business dynamics. Always relate your findings back to the success of the business, and don’t be afraid to discuss recent changes (like new technologies or market trends) and how businesses adapt to them.	

Unit 2: Developing a Marketing Campaign

Summary	Assessment Objectives
In this unit you will learn how marketing campaigns are developed from start to finish. Marketing is a dynamic field central to business success. You will explore the stages a business goes through – from setting marketing aims and objectives to conducting research on customer needs – in order to plan an effective campaign. Using given market research data, you will practice making recommendations for a marketing campaign for a specific product or service. This unit culminates in designing your own marketing campaign, drawing on knowledge from across your course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of marketing principles, concepts, processes, key terms, data sources and definitions. • AO2: Analyse marketing information and data, demonstrating the ability to interpret the potential impact and influence on marketing campaigns. • AO3: Evaluate evidence to make informed judgements about how a marketing campaign should be planned, developed and adapted in light of changing circumstances. • AO4: Be able to develop a marketing campaign with appropriate justification, synthesising ideas and evidence from several sources to support arguments
Required Reading List	Additional Reading List
<i>Pearson BTEC National Business Student Book 1 (Pearson, 2016) – Unit 2: Developing a Marketing Campaign chapter.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign Magazine/GWI – “16 of the best marketing campaigns to know in 2024”: A review of standout real-world marketing campaigns (e.g. Barbie movie campaign, Nike, KFC) and why they were effective. Reading case studies like these will inspire ideas on creative strategies and use of data in campaigns. • Tutor2u – Marketing Campaign Planning Tips: Check tutor2u resources or blogs for guidance on how to structure a marketing plan and the importance of market research and analysis in campaign development. <i>(For example, look up tutor2u’s checklists for marketing strategy or their analysis of successful campaigns.)</i> • BBC News – Business (Marketing/Advertising section): Stay updated with marketing news. For instance, BBC Business often reports on companies’ marketing moves or advertising trends (such as reactions to a major new ad campaign or how social media trends are influencing marketing). These real examples can provide context on what works in marketing today.
Self-Study Questions Each question below should take at least one hour to complete and can be tackled independently:	
1. Case Study Analysis: Given a Part A research pack for a fictional product (as in the exam scenario), practice identifying the key market research insights. What do the data and customer profiles suggest about how a marketing campaign should be designed for this product? (Focus on segmenting the market and spotting trends in the data.)	
2. Marketing Mix Design: Choose a real product you’re familiar with (e.g. a popular beverage or tech gadget). Outline a mini marketing campaign for a new launch of that product: decide on 2 marketing aims, a target market, and describe the 4 Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) you would use. Justify each decision briefly (why that promotion, why that pricing strategy, etc.).	
3. Budgeting and Scheduling: Look up an example of a company’s advertising spend (many big brands have their marketing budgets reported in news). Based on that, design a simple budget breakdown for a campaign (e.g. what percentage to spend on social media vs TV vs other channels) and create a timeline of campaign activities. Explain how the timing of events (launch, promotions) might impact the campaign’s success (think seasonality or competitor actions).	What the mark scheme says? Unit 2 is assessed by a formal task under exam conditions, and the mark scheme highly rewards the application of your marketing knowledge to the <i>specific scenario</i> given. To excel: use the data from the Part A research pack effectively – base your campaign recommendations on solid evidence from the case study. High-scoring answers demonstrate clear AO2 analysis by interpreting what the market research
4. Adapting to Change: Write a short scenario where midway through your planned campaign, a new competitor product is launched, or customer preferences shift suddenly. How would you adapt your marketing campaign plan? (Consider which elements of the campaign you would tweak – e.g. change the messaging, increase social media engagement, adjust pricing or offers – and justify why.)	

<p>5. Real Business Example – Campaign Evaluation: Research a recent marketing campaign by a real business (for example, Coca-Cola’s Christmas campaign or a social media campaign by Gymshark). Evaluate its effectiveness: What were the campaign’s objectives, and how successful was it in achieving them? What evidence of success can you find (sales figures, social media engagement, brand awareness metrics)? What might you have done differently?</p>	<p>information means for the business’s marketing strategy (e.g. identifying target customer segments and their needs) and strong AO3 evaluation by weighing different campaign options.</p> <p>For example, you should justify <i>why</i> you are choosing a particular promotional method or marketing message and discuss alternatives or potential risks. To hit AO4, ensure you present a <i>coherent campaign plan</i> with all elements (message, media, timing, budget) logically connected and fully justified.</p>
<p>Where this term links with Career Prospects:</p> <p>This unit gives you a taste of marketing roles. Skills from Unit 2 link directly to careers in marketing and advertising, such as <i>Marketing Assistant, Social Media Coordinator, Advertising Account Executive</i>, or <i>Market Research Analyst</i>. It is also excellent preparation if you’re considering specialising in marketing at a higher level or in an apprenticeship. The experience of developing a campaign can help you build a portfolio for roles in marketing agencies or in-house marketing departments. According to the specification, this insight will “<i>enable you to make an informed choice as to whether you want to specialise in marketing in employment, training or higher education</i>”.</p> <p>Roles in digital marketing, brand management, and public relations also draw on the creativity and analytical thinking you practice in this unit.</p>	<p>The mark scheme expects a professional-style marketing proposal: include <i>marketing aims</i>, a summary of the <i>marketing mix</i>, and justification with theory and evidence.</p> <p>Remember that top band answers will also consider possible changes in circumstances – for instance, how the campaign could be adjusted if something in the market changes (showing adaptability and thorough planning).</p> <p>Clarity and structure count too: use headings for each section of your campaign (e.g. <i>Objectives, Target Market, Key Message, Promotion Plan, Budget</i>) and ensure your recommendations flow from the analysis.</p> <p><i>In short: demonstrate knowledge (AO1) of marketing concepts, apply them to the scenario (AO2), analyse the data and situation (AO3), and produce a well-argued campaign plan (AO4).</i></p>
<p>Top Tip from the Department:</p> <p>Practice with past papers - specifically, practice analysing Part A research packs and writing Part B reports within the time limit. Our department advises using the 2-hour research window to jot down a structured outline (bullet points for each section of your campaign) so that in the 3-hour write-up you can focus on elaboration. Also, get comfortable with marketing terminology (e.g. <i>USP, segmentation, target audience, conversion rate</i>); using the correct terms can earn you marks (AO1) and makes your campaign proposal sound professional. Finally, always keep the <i>customer</i> in mind – the best campaigns are customer-centric. Show the examiner that every decision in your plan is based on meeting customer needs and expectations identified in the case study.</p>	

Unit 3: Personal and Business Finance

<p>Summary</p> <p>This unit covers crucial aspects of both personal finance and business finance. On the personal side, you will learn why money management is important for individuals – for example, budgeting, saving, and how financial decisions (like taking loans or insurance) can impact your future security.</p> <p>On the business side, you will be introduced to fundamental accounting concepts and documents. The unit explains the purpose of key financial statements (such as Statements of Comprehensive Income and Financial Position) and financial planning tools like cash flow forecasts and break-even analysis.</p> <p>You will develop skills in calculating and interpreting profitability, liquidity, and solvency ratios to measure business performance. Overall, Unit 3 provides knowledge to manage personal finances wisely and a foundation in business finance and accounting that will be valuable in further study or employment</p>	<p>Assessment Objectives - Unit 3 is an externally examined 2-hour written paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business and personal finance principles, concepts, key terms, functions and theories. • AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of financial issues and accounting processes to real-life business and personal scenarios. • AO3: Analyse business and personal financial information and data, demonstrating the ability to interpret the potential impact and outcomes in context. • AO4: Evaluate how financial information and data can be used, and interrelate, in order to justify conclusions related to business and personal finance
<p>Required Reading List</p>	<p>Additional Reading List</p>
<p><i>Pearson BTEC National Business Student Book 1 (Pearson, 2016) – Unit 3: Personal and Business Finance chapter.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tutor2u – Break-even Analysis (Strengths and Limitations): A concise review of how break-even analysis works and its pros and cons for business decision-making. This will reinforce your understanding of one of the key tools in business finance (and help in exam questions about break-even charts or calculations). • BBC News – Personal Finance Section: Follow current personal finance news on BBC (often found under “Your Money” or Business news). For example, articles on budgeting during the cost-of-living crisis, changes in interest rates, or financial products (loans, mortgages) can give real-world context to topics like interest calculations or financial planning. Understanding what’s happening in the real economy can help you apply your knowledge in scenario questions. • MoneySavingExpert (Martin Lewis) – Guides: While not officially in the spec, MoneySavingExpert’s guides (e.g. “Budget Planning” or “Credit Card Tips”) are highly practical and UK-focused. They can deepen your personal finance understanding. (For instance, knowing how credit scores work or tips for saving money could contextualize unit content on personal financial planning.)
<p>Self-Study Questions Each question below should take at least one hour to complete and can be tackled independently:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Budget Planning: Create a monthly personal budget for a hypothetical scenario (e.g. you are an apprentice earning £1,200/month). List all income and essential expenses (rent, food, travel, etc.), then decide how to allocate any surplus to savings or leisure. What choices might you have to make if some costs rise (like an increase in utility bills)? This exercise will help you practice applying personal finance principles (budgeting, managing cash flow). 2. Comparing Financial Products: Research two different financial products for saving or borrowing – for example, compare a savings account vs an ISA, or a personal loan vs a credit card. Make a table of their features (interest rates, risk, accessibility of funds or repayment terms). Which would you recommend for someone looking to save £5,000 over 2 years, and which for someone needing to borrow £5,000, and why? 3. Cash Flow and Break-Even: Take a small business scenario (e.g. a café or a smartphone reseller). Draft a one-month cash flow forecast with projected inflows and outflows. Identify any potential shortfall. Then calculate the break-even point for this business given its costs and selling price (make reasonable assumptions for numbers). What does the break-even output tell you about how many sales are needed, and what strategies could the business use if they are not reaching that break-even point? 	

<p>4. Financial Ratios in Context: Obtain summary financial figures of a well-known company (annual report or news might give, say, revenue, profit, current assets, current liabilities, etc., for Company X). Compute two ratios: a profit margin (e.g. net profit margin) and a liquidity ratio (current ratio). Suppose Company X's net profit margin is 10% and current ratio is 1.5:1 – interpret these. What do these ratios suggest about the company's profitability and liquidity? Compare to an industry benchmark if possible. This will practice analysis and evaluation of financial data.</p>	<p>What the Mark Scheme Says: In this examined unit, success comes from a combination of <i>accurate calculations</i>, <i>clear understanding</i>, and <i>effective evaluation</i></p> <p>Show all your workings for calculations. Whether it's a break-even point, ratios, or interest, correct calculations gain marks and even if you make a minor arithmetic slip, you can get method marks if your process is clear. Double-check your use of formulas (you'll have a formula sheet, but you need to know when and how to use each formula).</p>
<p>5. Exam-Style Evaluation Question: "XYZ Ltd is considering taking a bank loan to improve its cash flow, as it's facing cash shortages. Evaluate the extent to which a bank loan is the best solution to XYZ's cash flow problems." – Plan an answer to this (or write a short essay). Be sure to discuss alternatives (e.g. overdraft, owner's capital, better credit control) and use the concepts of cash flow, cost of finance, risk, etc. Practice structuring your answer with an introduction, pros/cons, and a conclusion. This mirrors the longer evaluative questions in the exam where you must justify a recommendation.</p>	<p>Apply answers to the scenario. The exam often gives a context (like a case study of a person or business). In written answers, refer to that context – e.g. "If the interest rate rises, this individual's mortgage payments would increase, making their personal budget tighter." or "The business's current ratio of 0.8:1 indicates liquidity issues, meaning Company XYZ may struggle to pay short-term debts."</p> <p>Generic knowledge won't score as well as contextualized points.</p>
<p>Where this term links with Career Prospects:</p> <p>Mastering Unit 3 content is excellent preparation for careers in finance and accounting. For example, knowledge of financial statements and ratios is directly relevant to roles like <i>Accounts Assistant</i>, <i>Finance Apprentice</i>, or <i>Investment Banking Analyst</i>. Personal finance knowledge is valuable for careers in <i>financial advisory</i> or <i>banking</i> (e.g. working as a personal banker or mortgage advisor, where you need to understand financial products). The skills from this unit also provide a foundation if you plan to pursue professional accounting qualifications (such as AAT, ACCA) or degrees in finance. According to the specification, Unit 3 "<i>will give you the knowledge and understanding to manage your personal finances and ... a background to business finance and accounting as you progress to employment or further training.</i>"</p>	<p>Command words and AO targets: If a question says "Assess" or "Evaluate," the examiners expect a balanced argument and a justified conclusion – this addresses AO4, the higher-order skills. For example, an "evaluate" question on sources of finance should compare options (loan vs overdraft vs equity) and then conclude which is best for that scenario, with reasons. The mark scheme awards the highest marks when you justify your conclusions with evidence (figures from the case or well-explained reasoning)</p>
<p>Top Tip from the Department:</p> <p>Set aside time each week to do a few financial math problems – e.g. calculate interest, complete a mini cash flow, or compute some ratios from a textbook exercise. This builds speed and accuracy. Remember that in Section A of the exam (personal finance) you might get scenario questions about choosing financial products or the advantages/disadvantages of different payment methods – use revision flashcards for the features, benefits and drawbacks of things like credit cards, loans, mortgages, etc. A handy memory aid from the department: "DIRTI" for personal finance – Debts, Inflation, Risk, Time, Income – keep these in mind when evaluating personal financial decisions (e.g. when discussing investments or savings, consider risk and inflation's effect). And during the exam, manage your time: the paper has a mix of short answers and essays – don't spend too long on the 2-mark questions so you have enough time for the 8 and 12 mark evaluations. Lastly, check your calculator batteries beforehand and familiarize yourself with the layout of the formulae sheet, so you're not scrambling during the test!</p>	

Unit 14: Investigating Customer Service

Summary	Assessment Objectives -
<p>This unit is all about the importance of customer service and how it contributes to business success. You will learn why keeping customers satisfied is cheaper and more beneficial to a business than constantly trying to attract new ones. The unit covers how businesses build relationships with customers by identifying and meeting their needs and expectations. You will study the procedures for dealing with customer enquiries and complaints and understand the communication and people skills needed to deliver excellent service.</p> <p>A practical aspect of Unit 14 is that you will get to demonstrate customer service skills in different scenarios – handling requests, resolving issues, and adapting your behaviour to meet customer expectations. You'll also see how companies gather feedback and measure their customer service performance to make improvements. In the end, you will evaluate your own customer service performance and create a development plan to improve your skills</p>	<p>A. Explore how effective customer service contributes to business success.</p> <p>B. Investigate the methods used to improve customer service in a business.</p> <p>C. Demonstrate customer service in different situations, using appropriate behaviours to meet expectations</p>
Required Reading List	Additional Reading List
<p><i>Pearson BTEC National Business Student Book 1 (Pearson, 2016) – Unit 14: Investigating Customer Service chapter.</i></p> <p>Self-Study Questions Each question below should take at least one hour to complete and can be tackled independently:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Case Study: Good vs Poor Service: Identify one company famous for excellent customer service (e.g. John Lewis, Ritz-Carlton hotels) and one instance of notably poor customer service (e.g. a utility company or airline that had a scandal). Compare: What specific practices does the good company use to delight customers? What were the consequences of the poor service incident (e.g. social media backlash, loss of customers)? This will help you explore Learning Aim A by using real examples to illustrate how customer service affects success or failure.</i> <i>Measuring Customer Satisfaction: Design a simple customer service feedback survey for a business of your choice (could be your school's canteen or a local shop). Include 5 questions that measure satisfaction (for example: rating staff helpfulness, product knowledge, speed of service, resolution of problems, overall experience). Think about what method you'd use to collect this (online, paper, etc.). After designing, explain how the business could use the survey results to improve its customer service (Learning Aim B).</i> <i>Role-Play Practice: Create a script or role-play scenario for two challenging customer service situations: (a) a customer is angry about a faulty product and wants a refund, (b) a customer needs information about a service that you're not sure about. Write how you, as the customer service representative, would handle each situation. Include the exact words or phrases you would use to show empathy, remain professional, and either solve the problem or escalate it appropriately. Practising this will prepare you for the practical part (Learning Aim C) where you need to demonstrate appropriate behaviours.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute of Customer Service – “Customer service as a business asset”: An article by the UK's Institute of Customer Service highlighting how strong customer service drives business resilience and loyalty. For example, it notes that companies excelling in service outperform peers in customer retention and financial metrics. This reinforces Learning Aim A, linking good service to success. Institute of Customer Service – UKCSI Reports: Look at summaries of the UK Customer Satisfaction Index. Recent findings (2025) show customer satisfaction levels and how service failures cost businesses money, but also that over 20% of customers have increased spending with companies because of good service. Such data can be used in assignments to support points on why service matters. Tutor2u / Business Case Studies – Customer Service Examples: Search for case studies of well-known businesses (like John Lewis or Amazon) focusing on their customer service strategies. Many educational resources outline how these companies train staff or use technology for service. Tutor2u's Business Reference Library or blog may have quick reads on “customer service tips” or examples of handling complaints effectively. BBC News – Business (Companies and Consumer): Reading news stories about customer service triumphs or failures can provide real examples. For instance, a BBC article on a major airline's handling of a service crisis, or a retailer winning an award for customer service. Such stories make good discussion material for how customer service impacts reputation.

<p>4. Customer Service Improvement Plan: Imagine you are the customer service manager for a mid-sized retail store. Identify three methods you could use to improve customer service in your store. For each method, detail what it involves and how it helps. (E.g. training staff in active listening, implementing a new ticketing system for complaints to ensure none get missed, introducing a loyalty program to reward repeat customers.) This corresponds to Learning Aim B – methods of improvement.</p>	<p>What the Mark Scheme Says: In this examined unit, success comes from a combination of <i>accurate calculations, clear understanding, and effective evaluation</i></p> <p>For written assignments (Learning Aims A & B): To reach Distinction, you must provide a thorough, well-researched analysis of how customer service contributes to success, with examples and evidence. According to the spec’s grading guidance, a <i>Distinction</i> for Learning Aim A expects you to “<i>give details of what is required to ensure that good customer service leads to business success,</i>” supported by research.</p> <p>For the practical (Learning Aim C): You will be marked on the demonstration of skills. The success criteria here are typically: <i>professional communication, appropriate tone and behaviour, problem-solving, and ability to follow procedures</i>. To excel (Distinction level), you should “<i>demonstrate initiative</i>” and show you can handle customer interactions independently and effectively. For example, after the role-play, you might need to produce a report or reflection. The spec indicates that for Distinction you should create a detailed development plan for your own skills after the role-play, with realistic and specific improvements identified. So, the marker will look for how insightfully you evaluate your performance and how concrete your improvement actions are.</p> <p>Marking of Role-play: Examiners/teachers will have a checklist – did you greet appropriately? Use positive language? Listen and clarify the customer’s issue? Apologize sincerely if needed? Offer a solution or alternative? And do all this while maintaining professional posture and tone. One success criterion is often meeting or exceeding customer expectations in the scenario – so aim to <i>delight</i> the “customer” in your role-play (for instance, by going an extra mile, like following up later if appropriate).</p> <p>Evidence: If you can get any <i>witness statements</i> or screenshots (for example, if you did a real customer service activity in a part-time job), include them in your portfolio. They strengthen your evidence for meeting the criteria. However, ensure you still explain in writing what they show about your skills.</p>
<p>5. Reflection on Your Own Skills: Think of a time you personally provided customer service (if you have work experience in a shop, café, etc., or even an example from a school event). Write a short reflection: what did you do well, and what could you improve? If you haven’t had that experience, then after doing some role-play practice, evaluate your performance – did you speak clearly, did you stay calm and polite, did you achieve a resolution? Then outline a <i>personal development plan</i> with two specific actions to improve (e.g. “<i>Practice handling difficult customers by reviewing scenario scripts and feedback with a mentor</i>”). This aligns with Learning Aim C and will help in your assignment where you need to evaluate your own customer service skills.</p>	
<p>Where this term links with Career Prospects:</p> <p>Unit 14 skills are directly applicable to any role involving customer interaction. Obvious career paths include Customer Service Advisor, Call Centre Operator, or Retail Sales Associate – where your understanding of customer expectations and communication skills will shine. Excellent customer service is also crucial in hospitality jobs (like hotel front-desk, restaurant management) and public sector roles (e.g. customer support in local government services). Many employers across industries value the soft skills you learn here: active listening, patience, problem-solving, and professionalism. If you are considering a career in marketing or sales, remember that customer service is part of the overall customer experience – happy customers become repeat buyers and brand advocates. This unit also gives a taste of roles like Customer Experience Manager or Client Relationship Manager; positions you might aspire to with further experience. Moreover, should you progress to higher education, degrees in business or hospitality management will build on these fundamentals of delivering quality service. In short, as the spec notes, this unit “supports further training, study or employment in a business environment.”</p>	
<p>Top Tip from the Department:</p> <p>Our department’s top tip is to observe and emulate pay attention to how experienced staff (in shops, in school reception, anywhere you receive service) handle customers. What phrases or techniques do they use when dealing with a difficult question or a complaint? You can pick up great practical tips this way (“I understand how you feel, let’s see how I can help...”). Also, get comfortable with role-play – it might feel awkward at first, but practicing scenarios with a friend or family member acting as the customer can really boost your confidence. When it comes to coursework, don’t just say what good customer service is – demonstrate it in action (use examples like: “<i>For instance, when a customer’s order was delayed, I called them proactively and offered a discount – this helped retain their loyalty.</i>”). Lastly, always keep in mind the “customer perspective”: if you were the customer, what would you expect or appreciate? Using that perspective in your assignments and practical assessments will help you naturally deliver better service.</p>	