International Qualifications Awarding Body - IQAB

UK REGULATED QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (RQF)

LEVEL 7 DIPLOMA IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP (BUSINESS MANAGEMENT)

Comprehensive Study Booklet & Module Framework



- **Entry Requirements:**
  i.) A relevant RQF/QCF Level 6 Diploma, Bachelor's Degree with Honours, or recognized equivalent UK/international undergraduate qualification.
  ii.) **Mature Managers:** Candidates aged 21 or over who possess substantial, verifiable senior management or corporate leadership experience (subject to portfolio review and institutional approval).
  iii.) **English Language Proficiency:** Advanced command of academic and professional English (e.g., CEFR C1, IELTS 6.5, or equivalent institutional verification) for non-native speakers.
  iv.) High-level digital and information literacy, including independent navigation of digital research repositories, executive virtual learning environments (VLEs), and enterprise collaboration tools.
- **Course Type:** Executive self-paced flexible learning model, supported by doctoral-level academic supervisors and industry practitioners. Includes synchronous virtual masterclasses, strategic workshops (via Google Meet, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams), peer executive networking, detailed formative feedback, and rigorous anti-plagiarism authentication.
- **Delivery Method:** Online / Blended Executive Delivery
- **Duration:** 6 Months to 1 Year (Flexible Fast-Track or Standard Professional options)
- **Registration Dates:** Open continuous enrollment throughout the academic year
- **Assessment:** 100% coursework-assessed through strategic leadership portfolios, executive case analyses, corporate consulting reports, and thesis/dissertation, advanced applied research assignments (no formal written exams).
- **Total Credits:** 120 RQF Credits (Equivalent to Postgraduate Master's Degree level, providing direct advanced standing progression to a full MBA Top-Up).

1. Qualification Overview & Learning Objectives

Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership -Business Management (RQF) Overview

Welcome to the **Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (Business Management)**. This postgraduate-level qualification is equivalent to a Master's degree standard in terms of academic rigor and cognitive challenge. It is specifically designed for directors, senior executives, and aspiring corporate leaders who want to master organizational transformation, strategic financial control, and high-level global governance. Successful completion grants direct entry into the final dissertation or project stage of an MBA or Master of Science (MSc) top-up program at cooperating UK and international universities.

*(Note: In the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework, a **Level 7** diploma is equivalent to a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, or a Master of Business Administration (MBA) core stage. It is designed for senior executives, directors, and strategic leaders).*

> **ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:** Ensure all learners complete the induction module and sign their individual learning plans within the first two weeks of enrollment.

Under the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), a **Level 7 Diploma in Business Management** is equivalent to a **Master's Degree** (such as an MBA core stage, Master's in Business, or Postgraduate Diploma).

At this pinnacle level, the learning outcomes shift away from standard operational execution or academic description toward **original thought, strategic vision, visionary leadership, and executive decision-making** in highly complex, global, and uncertain environments.

Core Learning Outcomes (RQF Level 7)

Upon successful completion of a Level 7 Diploma in Business Management, learners are expected to demonstrate mastery across the following four domains:

1. Advanced Knowledge and Critical Understanding

- **Strategic Mastery:** Demonstrate a critical, comprehensive understanding of advanced business theories, modern corporate governance, and cross-border macroeconomic forces.
- **Cutting-Edge Insight:** Critically evaluate contemporary academic research, management philosophies, and disruptive industry trends (e.g., AI integration, global sustainability shifts, geopolitical volatility).
- **Holistic Systems View:** Understand how complex global business functions—finance, strategic marketing, human capital, and operations—interact dynamically at the executive level.

2. Cognitive, Analytical, and Synthesis Skills

- **Managing Ambiguity:** Formulate strategic decisions and innovative solutions when faced with incomplete, contradictory, or high-stakes business data ("wicked problems").
- **Critical Evaluation:** Critically appraise organizational strategies, risk exposures, and financial proposals (such as M&A transactions or major capital allocations) for long-term viability.
- **Originality and Creativity:** Apply lateral thinking and advanced problem-solving methodologies (such as systems thinking) to redesign business models and secure competitive advantage.

3. Professional Practice, Leadership, and Communication

- **Transformational Leadership:** Exhibit high-level leadership competence, fostering inclusive global talent, psychological safety, and ethical organizational cultures.
- **Executive Communication:** Synthesize and communicate complex strategic proposals, financial risks, and operational roadmaps persuasively to board-level directors, investors, and diverse elite stakeholders.
- **Consultancy & Research Execution:** Design and execute independent, rigorous executive research or consultancy projects using appropriate qualitative/quantitative frameworks to drive real-world business impact.

4. Autonomy, Accountability, and Ethics

- **Absolute Autonomy:** Exercise complete independence and self-direction in framing strategic goals, managing organizational resources, and taking full personal responsibility for corporate outcomes.
- **Ethical and Sustainable Governance:** Demonstrate a deep commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR), global ethical standards, sustainability (the Triple Bottom Line), and compliance across international jurisdictions.

Progression Routes After Level 7

- **Academic Progression:** Direct entry into the final dissertation or project phase of a full **Master of Business Administration (MBA)** or an **MSc** top-up degree at a UK university, or progression toward doctoral studies (DBA / PhD).
- **Career Progression:** Qualification for C-suite executive positions (CEO, COO, CFO), senior management consultancy, multinational directorships, or entrepreneurial scaling of global enterprises.

2. Core Unit Structure & Syllabus (120 Credits Total)

The qualification comprises four mandatory core units, designed to build essential commercial competencies:

Core Syllabus Structure

Core Syllabus Structure (Level 7)

A typical 120-credit RQF Level 7 program focuses on macro-level strategic agility, international competition, executive leadership, and advanced organizational governance:

1. **Strategic Direction and Leadership:** Formulating corporate vision, driving organizational transformation, and managing global stakeholder dynamics at the C-suite level.
2. **Global Business Strategy:** Cross-border expansion, international trade theories, geopolitical risk management, and competitive positioning in multinational markets.
3. **Financial Governance and Strategic Control:** Advanced financial oversight, corporate valuation, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), and capital budgeting for sustainable growth.
4. **Strategic Marketing Management:** Global brand equity, multi-channel ecosystem strategies, customer lifetime value architecture, and disruption marketing.
5. **Human Capital and Organizational Development:** Global talent management, workforce agility, executive coaching, and organizational psychology in high-stakes environments.
6. **Advanced Business Research Methods / Consultancy Project:** Independent executive research, complex problem-solving framework design, and board-level reporting.

Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Value
BM325	Strategic Direction and Leadership	20 Credits
BM326	Global Business Strategy	20 Credits
BM327	Financial Governance and Strategic Control	20 Credits
BM328	Strategic Marketing Management	20 Credits
BM329	Human Capital and Organizational Development	20 Credits
BM330	Advanced Business Research Methods/ Consultancy Project	20 Credits

If you are looking for an alternative area for study:

A **Level 7 Diploma in Business Management (RQF)** is fully focused on **business management, strategic leadership, corporate governance, and executive decision-making** (equivalent to a Master's degree or an MBA core stage).

However, under the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), Level 7 qualifications are not restricted solely to general business management. There are many other specialized areas and courses available at RQF Level 7 depending on your career goals.

Alternative Specialized Areas & Courses at RQF Level 7

If you want a Master's-equivalent qualification in a different or more focused discipline, you can pursue Level 7 Diplomas in fields such as:

- **Strategic Management and Leadership:** Focuses heavily on executive board leadership, change architecture, and macro-organizational design without the broader operational business modules.
- **Accounting and Finance:** Focuses on corporate financial governance, investment appraisal, risk management, and financial control.
- **Logistics and Supply Chain Management:** Centers on international trade networks, procurement strategies, sustainable supply chain operations, and global logistics.
- **Human Resource Management (CIPD-aligned):** Focuses on advanced global talent management, employee relations, organizational psychology, and strategic HR architectures.
- **Marketing and Digital Strategy:** Focuses on multi-channel global marketing ecosystems, brand equity, consumer behavior analytics, and digital transformation.
- **Project Management:** Focuses on complex program governance, risk models, agile leadership, and large-scale project execution frameworks.

Summary

If your goal is to master general corporate strategy, cross-functional leadership, and executive governance across various industries, the **Level 7 Diploma in Business Management** is the ideal choice. If you prefer to specialize in a specific corporate function, you can choose a targeted Level 7 diploma in finance, HR, logistics, or marketing.

3. Assessment Framework & Practice MCQs

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) & Answers (Level 7 Standard)

Level 7 assessment requires evaluating complex corporate scenarios, high-level strategic reasoning, and board-room decision-making under uncertainty.

Q1. Global Business Strategy

When a multinational enterprise (MNE) chooses a "transnational strategy" according to Bartlett and Ghoshal's International Strategy Framework, what are they primarily trying to balance?

- A) Maximum local responsiveness with strict centralized home-country control
- B) High global integration/efficiency with high local responsiveness across diverse markets
- C) Low production costs with zero supply chain redundancies
- D) Purely domestic market protectionism against foreign competitors

Answer: B) High global integration/efficiency with high local responsiveness across diverse markets *Explanation:* A **transnational strategy** seeks the "best of both worlds"—achieving global efficiency through economies of scale while simultaneously tailoring products and operations to local cultural and regulatory preferences.

Q2. Financial Governance and Strategic Control

In the context of corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&A), what term describes the financial benefit or synergy created when the combined value of two merging companies is greater than the sum of their individual independent values?

- A) Economies of Scale
- B) The 2 + 2 = 5 Effect (Synergy)
- C) Capital Rationing
- D) Transfer Pricing

Answer: B) The 2 + 2 = 5 Effect (Synergy) *Explanation:* **Synergy** represents the operational, financial, or strategic advantages (such as cost reductions or revenue cross-selling) that materialize because of a merger, conceptually described as 2 + 2 = 5.

Q3. Strategic Direction and Leadership

Which leadership approach emphasizes a leader's authentic self-awareness, moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing of information to build long-term trust and ethical organizational culture?

- A) Transactional Leadership
- B) Autocratic Leadership

- C) Authentic Leadership
- D) Laissez-Faire Leadership

Answer: C) Authentic Leadership *Explanation:* **Authentic leadership** centers on deep self-awareness, transparency, internal moral standards, and unbiased processing of data, fostering high levels of trust and psychological safety among senior teams.

Q4. Strategic Marketing Management

What strategic metric measures the total net present value of the profit streams a company expects to generate from a customer over the entire duration of their business relationship?

- A) Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)
- B) Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)
- C) Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI)
- D) Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Answer: B) Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) *Explanation:* **Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)** is a critical Level 7 marketing metric that shifts focus from short-term transaction revenue to long-term relationship profitability, guiding resource allocation and retention strategies.

Course : Human Capital and Organizational Development

Q1. Global Talent Management

In strategic global talent management, what distinguishes an "inclusive" talent pool strategy from an "exclusive" talent pool strategy?

- A) Exclusive focuses only on expatriates, while inclusive focuses on host-country nationals.
- B) Exclusive targets a small elite segment of high-potential ("HiPo") employees, whereas inclusive develops the skills and potential of the entire workforce.
- C) Inclusive is restricted to remote workers, whereas exclusive is strictly office-based.
- D) Exclusive relies on automated recruitment algorithms, while inclusive relies entirely on peer nominations.

Answer: B) Exclusive targets a small elite segment of high-potential ("HiPo") employees, whereas inclusive develops the skills and potential of the entire workforce. *Explanation:* At the executive level, HR architects must balance an **exclusive** approach (identifying and investing heavily in a select group of top-tier talent) with an **inclusive** approach (fostering capability across the broader employee base to prevent alienation and boost organization-wide engagement).

Q2. Workforce Agility & Organizational Psychology

When evaluating organizational psychology in high-stakes, high-stress corporate environments, what term describes a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking and error reporting?

- A) Groupthink
- B) Psychological Safety
- C) Emotional Dissonance
- D) Bureaucratic Inertia

Answer: B) Psychological Safety *Explanation:* Popularized by Amy Edmondson, **psychological safety** is a critical metric in high-stakes environments (like aviation, healthcare, or corporate turnaround). Without it, employees conceal errors and suppress innovative ideas out of fear of negative career consequences.

Course : Advanced Business Research Methods / Consultancy Project

Q1. Problem-Solving Framework Design

When designing a rigorous problem-solving framework for an executive consultancy project dealing with complex, ambiguous, and ill-structured organizational problems, which methodology is most appropriate?

- A) Conducting a simple univariate descriptive statistical test on secondary sales logs.
- B) Utilizing Systems Thinking and Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) to map multiple stakeholder perspectives and root causes.
- C) Executing a tightly controlled, closed laboratory experiment with isolated variables.
- D) Relying entirely on intuition and executive consensus without empirical mapping.

Answer: B) Utilizing Systems Thinking and Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) to map multiple stakeholder perspectives and root causes. *Explanation:* Real-world consultancy projects at Level 7 involve "wicked problems" where objectives and variables are poorly defined. **Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)** and systems thinking help structure complex, multi-stakeholder environments by capturing diverse viewpoints and systemic interactions.

Q2. Board-Level Reporting

When communicating strategic research findings and recommendations in a formal executive report to a corporate board of directors, what is the primary structural requirement?

- A) Providing a chronological diary of every day spent conducting the research.
- B) Focusing heavily on raw, unformatted statistical data tables without interpretation.
- C) Delivering a concise synthesis highlighting strategic risks, financial implications, actionable recommendations, and ROI.
- D) Avoiding any mention of project limitations or counter-arguments to maintain absolute certainty.

Answer: C) Delivering a concise synthesis highlighting strategic risks, financial implications, actionable recommendations, and ROI. *Explanation:* Board-level reporting

demands executive brevity and strategic focus. Directors require clear sight of the commercial impact, risk exposure, and implementation roadmap rather than dense academic minutiae.

4. Case Study

Case Study

Here are practical, high-level case study topics with model answers tailored for the **Level 7 Diploma in Business Management (RQF)** (equivalent to a Master's Degree or MBA core stage). These scenarios test C-suite strategic thinking, M&A governance, global leadership, and systemic problem-solving.

Case Study 1: Global Business Strategy & Market Entry

Scenario: *Vanguard Motors*, a major European electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer, wants to enter the Southeast Asian market. The region features high economic growth, but local markets have vastly different regulatory compliance standards, fragmented supply chain infrastructures, and entrenched local EV competitors backed by state subsidies. The board is debating whether to enter via a wholly-owned greenfield subsidiary, an export model, or a joint venture with a prominent local industrial conglomerate.

Questions & Model Answers:

- **Q1: Evaluate the strategic trade-offs between a wholly-owned greenfield subsidiary versus a joint venture in this context.**
  - *Model Answer:* A **wholly-owned greenfield subsidiary** grants Vanguard complete operational control, proprietary technology protection, and 100% of profit capture, but it carries massive capital exposure, slow speed-to-market, and high regulatory risk in navigating unfamiliar legal landscapes. Conversely, a **joint venture** with a local conglomerate provides immediate market access, established distribution networks, political capital, and shared risk, but it risks intellectual property leakage, cultural friction, and conflicts over strategic control.
- **Q2: Applying international strategy frameworks (such as Bartlett and Ghoshal), what posture should Vanguard adopt?**
  - *Model Answer:* Vanguard should pursue a **transnational or localized multi-domestic strategy**. Given the distinct local regulations and consumer preferences in Southeast Asia, pure global integration will fail. Partnering through a localized joint venture or acquiring a minority equity stake in an existing local player allows Vanguard to balance global product efficiency with high local responsiveness.

Case Study 2: Financial Governance, M&A, and Synergy Valuation

Scenario: *Nexus Telecom* is planning a $1.2 billion acquisition of a rising artificial intelligence software firm, *DataMind*, to bolster its enterprise cloud offerings. During due diligence, Nexus's financial committee discovers that DataMind's projected revenue growth relies heavily on three key software engineers who have non-compete clauses expiring six months post-acquisition. Furthermore, the expected financial synergies (cost savings and cross-selling) are projected at $150 million annually, though historical M&A failure rates in tech point toward severe culture clashes.

Questions & Model Answers:

- **Q1: Explain the financial concept of "Synergy" and analyze the primary valuation risk in this M&A deal.**
    - *Model Answer:* **Synergy** represents the incremental value created when two companies are combined that exceeds the sum of their individual values (the 2 + 2 = 5 effect). The primary valuation risk here is **key-person risk and integration failure**. If DataMind's core engineering talent departs post-acquisition, the proprietary intellectual property engine stalls, destroying the foundational assumptions behind the $150 million synergy projections and resulting in a multi-million-dollar goodwill write-down.
- **Q2: What governance and structuring mechanisms should Nexus implement to protect the transaction value?**
    - *Model Answer:* Nexus should structure retention packages (such as performance-vested stock options and earn-outs) tied directly to multi-year post-acquisition milestones for the core engineers. Additionally, they must establish an integration steering committee focused on cultural retention rather than immediate cost-cutting.

Case Study 3: Strategic Leadership, Talent Management, & Organizational Psychology

Scenario: *Global Pharma Corp* recently appointed a new CEO tasked with executing a radical digital transformation across a conservative, highly regulated global workforce. Middle managers are exhibiting deep psychological resistance, clinging to legacy paper-based compliance protocols out of fear of audit failures. Morale is plummeting, and cross-border project teams are experiencing toxic friction due to a lack of psychological safety.

Questions & Model Answers:

- **Q1: Apply the concepts of "Psychological Safety" and "Transformational Leadership" to diagnose the organizational barrier.**
    - *Model Answer:* The organization lacks **psychological safety**, meaning employees fear the career and legal consequences of making errors during the digital transition. Traditional, compliance-driven pharma environments breed risk aversion. The new CEO must transition from a transactional leadership style to **transformational leadership**, building trust, inspiring a shared vision, and reframing digital errors as learning opportunities rather than punishable offenses.

- **Q2: Recommend a high-level strategic talent architecture to drive this turnaround.**
    - *Model Answer:* Leadership should implement an inclusive talent architecture that features "change champion" networks across regional offices, executive coaching for middle managers to alleviate anxiety, and recognition systems that reward digital experimentation alongside compliance adherence.

Case Study 4: Advanced Consultancy Project & Complex Problem Solving (Wicked Problems)

Scenario: An international port authority is facing a "wicked problem": cargo congestion is choking supply chains, carbon emission regulations are tightening, local municipality groups are protesting noise pollution, and unionized dockworkers are threatening strikes over automation plans. The board commissions an independent executive consultancy project to deliver a strategic recommendation framework.

Questions & Model Answers:

- **Q1: Why is this situation classified as a "wicked problem," and why do traditional linear problem-solving frameworks fail here?**
    - *Model Answer:* It is a **wicked problem** because it involves multiple interdependent stakeholders with contradictory objectives (profit vs. environment vs. labor vs. community), no definitive "correct" answer, and high political volatility. Linear analytical tools fail because solving one variable (e.g., automating port operations to reduce congestion) exacerbates another (triggering union strikes and job losses).
- **Q2: Propose an appropriate methodological framework for an executive-level consultancy report addressing this scenario.**
    - *Model Answer:* The consultancy team should utilize **Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)** combined with **Multi-Stakeholder Value Modeling**. Instead of assuming a fixed objective, SSM maps out diverse stakeholder worldviews, builds rich pictures of the systemic conflict, and facilitates iterative, negotiated consensus models that balance automated efficiency, environmental compliance, and labor protection.

5. Thesis / Dissertation

At the **RQF UK Level 7** (Postgraduate/Master’s equivalent) standard, a dissertation or major project must reflect high-level critical thinking, independent empirical or secondary research, and direct application to contemporary business challenges. It should bridge complex academic theory with practical organizational strategy, leadership, or governance.

Suitable dissertation and major project titles for a **Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (Business Management)** are categorized by core corporate themes:

1. Strategic Leadership & Organizational Change

These focus on executive behavior, culture, restructuring, and leading through disruption.

- "Evaluating the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Engagement and Retention Within Post-Merger Tech Startups."
- "A Critical Analysis of Change Management Strategies During Enterprise-Wide Digital Transformation in Traditional Banking Sectors."
- "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Crisis Leadership: A Comparative Study of Executive Decision-Making Post-2025."
- "Managing Organizational Resilience and Corporate Culture in Remote and Hybrid Work Environments."

2. Corporate Sustainability & ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance)

Highly relevant to modern executive strategy, balancing profitability with ethical governance.

- "Integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Criteria into Long-Term Corporate Strategy: Barriers and Enablers in Manufacturing."
- "A Critical Evaluation of Greenwashing Risks on Brand Equity and Consumer Trust in the Global Fashion Industry."
- "Assessing the Financial Viability and Strategic Benefits of Circular Economy Business Models for Logistics Multinationals."

3. Strategic Financial Management & Corporate Governance

Focused on financial decision-making, risk mitigation, and executive accountability.

- "The Impact of Macroeconomic Volatility and Inflationary Pressures on Capital Budgeting Strategies in Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs)."
- "Board Diversity and Corporate Financial Performance: A Critical Examination of FTSE 100 Governance Structures."
- "Risk Management Frameworks in Global Supply Chains: Strategic Responses to Geopolitical Disruptions."

4. Global Marketing Strategy & Consumer Behavior

Explores market expansion, competitive positioning, and data-driven marketing decisions.

- "The Strategic Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Predictive Analytics on Personalized Omnichannel Retail Marketing."
- "Market Entry Strategies for Emerging Economies: Evaluating Risks and Competitive Advantage for SaaS Companies."
- "The Influence of Social Commerce and Influencer Marketing on Generation Z Brand Loyalty."

5. Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Digital Disruption

Centred on scaling ventures, disruptive business models, and technological integration.

- "Evaluating the Critical Success Factors of Corporate Venture Capital (CVC) in Fostering Disruptive Innovation."
- "The Strategic Adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools to Optimize Knowledge Management and Productivity in Consulting Firms."
- "Business Model Innovation: Transitioning from Product-Centric Sales to Subscription-Based Services in Industrial Markets."

Key Characteristics of a Level 7 Title

When formulating or adjusting a title, ensure it meets postgraduate criteria by including:

1. **An Action or Analytical Focus:** Using words like *Evaluating, Assessing, A Critical Analysis, Investigating,* or *The Impact of*.
2. **Context:** Specifying the industry, market, or organizational type (e.g., *in the banking sector, within SMEs*).
3. **Variables:** Clearly defining what is being measured or analyzed (e.g., *Transformational Leadership* on *Employee Retention*).

6. Student Action Plan & Progress Log

Use this section during tutorial sessions to track module completion, assignment submissions, thesis, and tutor feedback with results or grades

Module Code	Target Completion	Status	Tutor Initials
BM325	Month 2	Not Started	
BM326	Month 4	Not Started	
BM327	Month 6	Not Started	
BM328	Month 8	Not Started	
BM329	Month 10	Not Started	
BM330	Month 12	Not Started	

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