
Better Business Cases™: the Five Case Model



Syllabus

July 2021

1. Introduction

Better Business Cases is a systematic and objective approach to all stages of the business case development process that sits alongside, and compliments, HM Treasury's Green Book guidance.

This syllabus is based on the Better Business Cases 'International Guide to Developing the Project Business Case' and 'International Guide to Creating the Programme Business Case', both available to download, free of charge, from the UK Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-international-guidance>. It reflects the Foundation and Practitioner levels of the examination.

The primary purpose of the syllabus is to provide a basis for certification of people involved with the development and assessment of business cases. It documents the learning outcomes related to use of the guidance and describes the requirements a candidate is expected to meet to demonstrate that these learning outcomes have been achieved at each qualification level.

The target audience for this document is:

- Exam Board
- Exam Panel
- Accredited Training Organizations.

This syllabus informs the design of the exams and provides accredited training organizations with a more detailed breakdown of what the exams will assess. Details of the exam structure and content are documented in the Better Business Cases Foundation and Practitioner Exam Designs.

2. Foundation Qualification

2.1 Purpose of the Foundation Qualification

The purpose of the Foundation qualification is to confirm that a candidate has sufficient knowledge and understanding of the guidance to be able to work effectively with, or as a member of, a team to develop a business case using the Five Case Model. The Foundation qualification is also a pre-requisite for the Practitioner qualification.

2.2 Target Audience

This qualification is aimed at anyone involved with, or overseeing, a project to understand the work that is necessary to prove a case for investment within the public sector. This includes:

- Senior Responsible Owners (SROs), Programme Directors and other Directors with responsibility for the successful delivery of programmes and projects
- Project Managers, Project Team members and specialist advisers tasked with delivering a business case for investment
- Officers involved in the scrutiny and review of investment proposals.

2.3 High Level Performance Definition of a Successful Candidate

A candidate should understand the structure and key terminology of the model. Specifically the candidate should understand:-

- The philosophy and underlying rationale of the Five Case Model
- The different types of business case, their purpose, who is responsible for them and when they are required in the development of a spending proposal
- The development of the business case in relation to other recognized and recommended best practice for programme and project management.

3. Practitioner Qualification

3.1 Purpose of the Practitioner Qualification

The purpose of the Practitioner qualification is to confirm whether the candidate has achieved sufficient understanding of the theory and application of the Five Case Model to allow them to effectively develop and produce a business case. A successful Practitioner candidate should be able to start applying the model to a real project.

3.2 Target Audience

This qualification is aimed at anyone involved with, or overseeing, a project to understand the work that is necessary to prove a case for investment within the public sector. This includes:

See 2.2 above.

3.3 High Level Performance Definition of a Successful Candidate

Candidates should be able to apply and understand how to tailor the Five Case Model effectively to the development of a business case within an organization environment supporting the approach. Specifically, candidates should:

- Understand the development lifecycle of a business case and the relationships between the five cases
- Be able to apply the steps in the business case development framework, in order to support the production of a business case, using the Five Case Model, for a given scenario.

4. Learning Outcomes Assessment Model

A classification widely used when designing assessments for certification and education is the Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This classifies learning objectives into six ascending learning levels, each defining a higher degree of competencies and skills. (Bloom et al, 1956, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives).

APMG have adapted this into a four-step variation of the Bloom's model – The APMG Learning Outcomes Assessment Model which defines the standard for each qualification's Learning Outcome Assessment Model. The Model is used as a basis for classifying learning outcomes when developing exam qualification schemes and syllabi.

This structured approach helps to ensure:

- There is a clear delineation in learning level content between different qualification levels
- Learning outcomes are documented consistently across different manual areas
- Exam questions and papers are pitched consistently and appropriately for each of the learning levels.

4.1 Better Business Cases – Five Case Model - Learning Outcome Assessment Model

For Better Business Cases – the Five Case Model - the four levels of learning outcomes are shown below. These learning outcomes are independent of the method used to assess whether a qualification level has been achieved.

Better Business Cases Learning Outcomes Assessment Model				
	1. Knowledge	2. Comprehension	3. Application	4. Analysis
Generic Definition from APMG Learning Outcomes Assessment Model	Know key facts, terms and concepts from the manual/guidance	Understand key concepts from the manual/guidance	Be able to apply key concepts relating to the syllabus area for a given scenario.	Be able to identify, analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate use of the method/guidance for a given scenario situation
Qualification Learning Outcome Assessment Model	Know facts, including terms, concepts, philosophy, steps and actions, documentation, roles and responsibilities from the guidance, and relationships with other recognized and recommended best practice.	Understand the concepts, philosophy, steps and actions, documentation, roles and responsibilities and can explain how these are applied to design and develop a Business Case.	Be able to: (i) Apply the business case development framework appropriately; (ii) Support the production of the Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Case; for a given scenario.	Be able to identify, analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate use of the guidance through appraisal of the inputs, processes and outputs for a given scenario.

5. Syllabus Presentation

For each of the above learning levels, the syllabus defines the individual learning outcomes required for the qualification. Each learning outcome is then supported by a description of the requirements that a candidate is expected to meet to demonstrate that the learning outcome has been achieved at the qualification level indicated. These are shown as syllabus topics.

All Foundation level requirements are assumed to have been met for Practitioner level and are not directly assessed again, although Foundation level knowledge and understanding will be used when demonstrating Practitioner application and analysis learning outcomes.

Each of the syllabus areas is presented in a similar format as follows:

1. Syllabus Area Unit of learning – e.g. a chapter of the guidance document.
2. Learning Outcome (topic header shown in bold) A statement of what a candidate will be expected to know, understand or do.
3. Level Classification of the learning outcome against the APMG Learning Outcomes Assessment Model.
4. Topic Description of what is required of the candidate to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved at the qualification level indicated

6. Syllabus Areas

Syllabus Area Code	Syllabus Area Title
OV	Overview of the Five Case Model
SC	Developing the Strategic Case
EC	Developing the Economic Case
CC	Developing the Commercial Case
FC	Developing the Financial Case
MC	Developing the Management Case

Syllabus Area Code		Syllabus Area:	Foundation	Practitioner	Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
OV		Overview of the Five Case Model				
Level	Topic					
Know facts, terms and concepts relating to the Five Case Model. Specifically, to recall the:						
01	01	Five key components of a business case and the order in which they are presented	✓		Pg 3-5, 7-10	Pg 2-3, 5-8
01	02	Three key stages in the development of a spending proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the scheme and prepare the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) • Plan the scheme and prepare the Outline Business Case (OBC) • Procure the solution and prepare the Full Business Case (FBC) 	✓			Pg 9-14 Pg 11 Pg 12 Pg 12-13
Understand the terms and concepts relating to the Five Case Model. Specifically, to identify the:						
02	01	Definition of a programme/project and the key differences between programmes and projects	✓		Pg 1	Pg 1
02	02	Different types of programmes – nature and focus	✓		Pg 1-2	
02	03	Advantages of a well-prepared Business Case	✓		Pg 4	Pg 3
02	04	Purpose of programme/project assurance and assurance reviews	✓		Pg 6, 76	Pg 4, 10, 26
02	05	Purpose of Step 1 in the development framework: Determining strategic context	✓		Pg 11-12	Pg 11, 15-16
02	06	Purpose of the key stages in the development and delivery of a spending proposal	✓			Pg 9-14
02	07	Importance and advantages of a Programme/Project Business Case	✓		Pg 3-4	Pg 2-3
02	08	Purpose of a Business Justification Case (BJC) and in what circumstances it should be considered	✓			Pg 14
02	09	Purpose of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC)	✓			Pg 11, 17
02	10	Purpose of an Outline Business Case (OBC)	✓			Pg 12, 41
02	11	Purpose of a Full Business Case (FBC)	✓			Pg 12-13, 83
02	12	Responsibility for the business planning process	✓		Pg 1, 13, 71-72	Pg 1, 17, 97
02	13	Relationship between policies, strategies, programmes and projects and their deliverables	✓		Pg 2-3	Pg 1-2

Syllabus Area Code SC		Syllabus Area: Developing the Strategic Case	Foundation	Practitioner	Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
Level	Topic					
		Understand how the Strategic Case is developed; the steps and the responsibilities involved. Specifically, to understand the:				
02	01	Purpose and core content of a Strategic Case	✓		Pg 7-8	Pg 5, 15
02	02	Purpose of Step 2 in the development framework: Making the case for change	✓		Pg 13-14	Pg 17
02	03	Purpose of SMART robust spending objectives and the key objectives for spend: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, re-procurement and statutory or regulatory compliance	✓		Pg 14-15	Pg 18-20
02	04	Four main categories of benefits criteria and the parties involved in their development	✓		Pg 17-18	Pg 21-22
02	05	Three key categories of risk	✓		Pg 18-19	Pg 22-23
02	06	Definition of constraints and dependencies	✓		Pg 19-21	Pg 23-24
02	07	Difference between direct and indirect benefits	✓		Pg 39	46
02	08	Purpose, objectives, key participants and outputs of Workshop Stage 1 – Case for Change	✓		Pg 20-21	Pg 24
		Be able to apply and tailor the relevant steps and actions of a Strategic Case to a scenario. Specifically, to:				
03	01	Identify appropriate information for inclusion in the recommended composition of the Strategic Case		✓	Pg 7-8, 13-21	Pg 5, 15, 17-24
03	02	Identify the appropriate actions when applying the following steps within the business case development framework: 1. Ascertaining the strategic context 2. Making the case for change		✓	Pg 13-21	Pg 15, 17-24
		Be able to analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate application of the Five Case Model when reviewing the Strategic Case for a scenario. Specifically, to analyse with reasons whether:				
04	01	The Strategic Case, using the recommended composition, is fit for purpose, and whether the correct roles have been involved in its development and maintenance throughout the life of a business case.		✓	Pg 13-21	Pg 17-24

Syllabus Area Code EC		Syllabus Area: Developing the Economic Case	Foundation	Practitioner	Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
Level	Topic					
Understand how the Economic Case is developed; the steps and the responsibilities involved.						
Specifically, to understand the:						
02	01	Purpose and core content of an Economic Case	✓		Pg 8, 23	Pg 6, 25
02	02	Purpose of Step 3 in the development framework: Exploring the preferred way forward	✓		Pg 23	Pg 25
02	03	Purpose of critical success factors and the key critical success factors based upon the Five Case Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic fit and business needs • Potential value for money • Potential achievability • Supply-side capacity and capability • Potential affordability 	✓		Pg 23-24	Pg 25-26
02	04	Purpose of the long list options and how to generate options and undertake SWOT analysis	✓		Pg 24	Pg 26
02	05	Purpose of the Options Framework and how it is used to generate the long list and the short list options	✓		Pg 25-33	Pg 27-33
02	06	Minimum four short list options, how they are derived and what they should include (Reference Project/Public Sector Comparator (PSC))	✓		Pg 32-33	Pg 34
02	07	Difference between the preferred way forward and the preferred option	✓		Pg 23, 32	Pg 25, 34
02	08	Purpose, objectives, key participants and outputs of Workshop Stage 2 – Identifying and assessing the options	✓		Pg 34	Pg 38
02	09	Purpose of Step 4 in the development framework: Determining potential value for money	✓		Pg 35	Pg 41
02	10	Rules that should be followed for the treatment of costs and benefits	✓		Pg 36-38	Pg 43
02	11	Key differences between economic appraisals and financial appraisals	✓		Pg 37	Pg 43-44
02	12	Concept of 'Optimism bias'	✓		Pg 43-44	Pg 35
02	13	Purpose of sensitivity analysis	✓		Pg 44, 46, 52	Pg 55-56
02	14	Factors considered when selecting the preferred option	✓		Pg 50-53	Pg 55-58
02	15	Purpose, objectives, key participants and outputs of Workshop Stage 3 – Assessing the short-listed options	✓		Pg 54	Pg 58

02	16	Purpose of Step 8 in the development framework: Procuring the VFM solution	✓		Pg 83-86
Be able to apply and tailor the relevant aspects of an Economic Case to a scenario. Specifically, to:					
03	01	Identify appropriate information, using the recommended composition, for inclusion in an Economic Case		✓	Pg 8, 23-54 Pg 6, 25-58
03	02	Identify appropriate actions when applying the following steps within the business case development framework: 3. Exploring the preferred way forward 4. Determining potential value for money 8. Procuring the VfM solution Including appropriate techniques i.e. Cost Benefit Analysis, Multi-criteria analysis, risk assessment and sensitivity analysis		✓	Pg 23-54 Pg 25-58
Be able to analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate application of the Five Case Model when reviewing the Economic Case for a scenario. Specifically, to analyse with reasons whether:					
04	01	The Economic Case, using the recommended composition, is fit for purpose, and whether the correct roles have been involved in its development and maintenance throughout the life of a business case.		✓	Pg 23-54 Pg 25-58

Syllabus Area Code CC		Syllabus Area: Developing the Commercial Case	Foundation	Practitioner	UK Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
Level	Topic					
Understand the terms and concepts of the Commercial Case. Specifically, to identify the:						
02	01	Purpose and core content of a Commercial Case	✓		Pg 9, 55	Pg 7, 38, 59
02	02	Purpose of Step 5 in the development framework: Preparing for the potential deal	✓		Pg 55	Pg 59
02	03	Guiding principles when apportioning risk between the contractual parties	✓		Pg 57-59	Pg 60-61
02	04	Purpose of payment mechanisms	✓		Pg 58-60	Pg 61-64
02	05	Purpose, objectives, key participants and outputs of Workshop Stage 4 – Developing the deals	✓		Pg 61-62	Pg 65
02	06	Purpose of Step 9 in the development framework: Contracting for the deal	✓			Pg 87-88
Be able to apply and tailor the relevant aspects of a Commercial Case to a scenario. Specifically, to:						
03	01	Identify appropriate information, using the recommended composition, for inclusion in a Commercial Case		✓	Pg 9, 55-62	Pg 7, 38, 59
03	02	Identify appropriate actions and responsibilities when applying the following steps within the business case development framework: 5. Preparing for the potential deal 9. Contracting for the deal		✓	Pg 55-62	Pg 59-65 Pg 87-88
Be able to analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate application of the Five Case Model when reviewing the Commercial Case for a scenario. Specifically, to analyse with reasons whether:						
04	01	The Commercial Case, using the recommended composition, is fit for purpose, and whether the correct roles have been involved in its development and maintenance throughout the life of a business case.		✓	Pg 55-62	Pg 59-65 Pg 87-88

Syllabus Area Code FC		Syllabus Area: Developing the Financial Case	Foundation	Practitioner	Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
Level	Topic					
Understand the terms and concepts of the Financial Case. Specifically, to identify the:						
02	01	Purpose and core content of a Financial Case	✓		Pg 9, 63	Pg 7, 39, 67
02	02	Purpose of Step 6 in the development framework: Ascertaining affordability and funding requirement	✓		Pg 63	Pg 67
02	03	The financial statements required for all projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget statement • Cash flow statement • Funding statement 	✓		Pg 64	Pg 68
02	04	The possible impacts to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and revenue implications • Impact on the income and expenditure account and the organization's charges for services • Impact on the budget, other sources of available funding and any shortfalls • Impact on the balance sheet 	✓		Pg 65-69	Pg 69-73
Be able to apply and tailor the relevant aspects of a Financial Case to a scenario. Specifically, to:						
03	01	Identify appropriate information, using the recommended composition, for inclusion in a Financial Case		✓	Pg 9, 63-69	Pg 7, 39, 67
03	02	Identify appropriate actions and responsibilities when applying the following steps within the business case development framework: 6. Ascertaining affordability and funding requirement		✓	Pg 63-69	Pg 67-73
Be able to analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate application of the Five Case Model when reviewing the Financial Case for a scenario. Specifically, to analyse with reasons whether:						
04	01	The Financial Case, using the recommended composition, is fit for purpose, and whether the correct roles have been involved in its development and maintenance throughout the life of a business case.		✓	Pg 63-69	Pg 67-73

Syllabus Area Code MC		Syllabus Area: Developing the Management Case	Foundation	Practitioner	Programme Business Case Guidance 2018	Project Business Case Guidance 2018
Level	Topic					
Understand the terms and concepts of the Management Case. Specifically, to identify the:						
02	01	Purpose and core content of a Management Case	✓		Pg 10, 71	Pg 8, 39, 74
02	02	Purpose of Step 7 in the development framework: Planning for successful delivery	✓		Pg 71	Pg 74
02	03	Purpose of a programme/project management strategy, framework and plan	✓		Pg 71-73	Pg 74-75
02	04	Purpose of a change management strategy, framework and plan	✓		Pg 73-74	Pg 75-76
02	05	Purpose of a benefits realization strategy, framework and register/plan	✓		Pg 74-75	Pg 76-77
02	06	Purpose of a risk management strategy, framework and register/plan	✓		Pg 75-77	Pg 77-79
02	07	Purpose of a post programme/project evaluation strategy, framework and plan	✓		Pg 78	Pg 80
02	08	Purpose, objectives, key participants and outputs of Workshop Stage 5 – Successful delivery arrangements	✓		Pg 79	Pg 81
02	09	Purpose of Step 10 in the development framework: Ensuring successful delivery	✓			Pg 89
02	10	The use of the following products throughout the life of a project/programme: 1. Benefits register 2. Risk register 3. Contingency plan	✓		Pg 74-78	Pg 90, 76-80
Be able to apply and tailor the relevant aspects of a Management Case to a scenario. Specifically, to:						
03	01	Identify appropriate information, using the recommended composition, for inclusion in a Management Case		✓	Pg 10, 71-78	Pg 8, 39, 74
03	02	Identify appropriate actions and responsibilities when applying the following steps within the business case development framework: 7. Planning for successful delivery 10. Ensuring successful delivery		✓	Pg 71-78	Pg 74-81 Pg 89-90
Be able to analyse and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate application of the Five Case Model when reviewing the Management Case for a scenario. Specifically, to analyse with reasons whether:						

04	01	The Management Case, using the recommended composition, is fit for purpose, and whether the correct roles have been involved in its development and maintenance throughout the life of a business case.		✓	Pg 71-78	Pg 74-81 Pg 89-90
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