



Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



A Journey into **Business**

Name:.....

Keep this booklet in a safe place

Introduction

Business degrees attract more applicants than any other degree subject, therefore, it is important to assess the balance between theoretical studies and hands on approaches offered by courses. The journey starts in Year 12 with a genuine interest in the business world and undertaking work experience.

This small booklet will help you make the best application, demonstrating your understanding of the required skills and attributes needed to be successful.

Work Experience

Practical experience in a business related organisation will provide a range of opportunities for you to reflect on its structure and its contribution to the specific sector. Consider:

- Part time work in the retail or hospitality sector. It will enable you to observe customer service protocols, staff management, team work, stock control, purchasing, marketing etc
- Work in the Care sector
- Voluntary work in the Charity sector: Shops, Food Bank, Participating in fund raising activities
- NCS Programme: social action challenge
- Practical skills gained from labouring for trade persons
- Visits to large manufacturing plants: JLR 's new Product Creation Centre at Gaydon
- Shadowing Business Personnel: eg, Business Manager
- Barclay's Life Skills programme can bring work experience opportunities
- Bespoke Widening Opportunities programmes, for example Pathways to Banking and Finance or Into University support programme
- Refer to the Work Experience Booklet, page 2 for Business and Finance Contacts.

Prior to applying

University Business Schools look for applicants who have the personal attributes that can be developed into the skills for employability and a pathway to a successful business career. Consider your attributes in the following areas:

- Motivation to study Business; genuine interest and can articulate what fascinates you about the world of Business
- Communication skills, the ability to discuss ideas, exchange information, write reports, plan and deliver presentations
- Critical thinking skills; the ability to question ideas and be inquisitive
- Ethical Awareness; an understanding of sustainability responsibility
- Creative thinking skills; business entrepreneurs have energy to fuel big ideas.
- Mathematical competence; understanding statistical and data analysis
- Leadership; express ideas confidently. Make decisions and motivate others.
- Teamwork; can work collaboratively
- Organisational skills; work is likely to be time sensitive
- Self Confidence; emotionally intelligent

Reflect on the list and ask yourself questions of how you have acquired these attributes.

Refer to your Enrichment Booklet.

Think of the examples which would demonstrate these qualities. Use the STAR technique when structuring your thoughts. (Situation, Task, Action, and Result/Reflection)

Action

Take time to research the different Business and Management Professional Organisations.

- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: www.cip.co.uk
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations: www.cipr.co.uk
- Chartered Management Institute: www.managers.org.uk
- Communications Advertising and Marketing Education Foundation: www.camfoundation.com
- ICSA: The Governance Institute, www.icsa.org.uk
- Institute of Administrative Management: www.instam.org
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy
- Institute of Consulting: www.iconulting.org.uk
- Institute of Export and International Trade: www.export.org.uk
- Institute of Practitioners in Advertising: www.ipa.co.uk
- Institute of Sales Management: www.isproffessional.com
- Skills CFA: www.skillscfa.org

Choosing a Business degree will require in-depth research. Categories include: Business Studies, Business Economics, Business Finance, Business Law Studies, Business Management, Business Marketing, International and European Business and Management courses as well as more specialised degrees linked to Hospitality and Event Management, Human Resource Management, Leisure and Recreation Management, Retail Management and many more.

Choosing your University, questions to help:

- Type and length of course
- Course structure: consider how the teaching and research is underpinned by business collaborations.
- Is it an industry-accredited degree which will lead to professional qualifications.
- Placements, internships, Year in Industry,

- Sponsorships
- Research opportunities
- Size and location
- Super-curricular activities
- Student support system

Investigate:

- Entry requirements and A Level profile criteria
- What are they looking for in a personal statement?

Work experience, hands-on skills. Specific interest in financial aspects, personnel work, marketing, language expertise. Aware of recent Business Innovation. Hobbies, participation in competitions and the ability to think creatively. Appreciation of successful Business Organisations or Business Leaders. Understanding of local, regional or national business issues.

Keep a Diary or use your Enrichment Logbook:

- Participation in any projects
- Articles read and the challenges that face different business areas. Think about the creative business energy required to secure products during the pandemic. The challenges faced by businesses post Brexit.
- Use of social media in marketing/social influencer
- Record your own part time work
- Record of discussions with business personnel
- Books you have read

Reading/ Podcasts/ Lectures

- The Ascent of Money by Niall Ferguson, a history of banking, giving insights into the birth of globalisation.
- Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrialisation by Alfred Chandler which gives a thorough analysis of the origins of large organisations.
- Future Learn courses. For example: Business Management and Leadership, a two week course by Kent University. Or Business Ethics by Dublin City University, which provides an introduction to ethics for business personnel.
- Gresham Lectures: <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures>
- Speakers for Schools: speakersforschools.org
- Podcasts: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts>
- Ted Talks. For example, Jean Burdardt's talk on " How we can curb climate change by spending two percent more on everything

Making the Application

Choices

- **Five choices:** Remember that there are many combinations of Engineering degrees that can be considered as well as a single honours degree
- Aim to have your application ready to be submitted by October half term.

Completing the UCAS form

- Fill in the form carefully and completely
 - Declare accurately all certified and pending results
 - Explain gaps in education.
- Personal statement structure
 - Address the required qualities of business professionals (pages 4/5)
 - Use your personal statement workshop notes to help
 - Remember it is your opportunity to convince the university to offer you a place. It needs to include work experience, voluntary work, academic commitment and super curricular activities
 - Grammatically correct illustrating excellent communication skills
 - Confidentiality and ethical awareness.
- Advice from admissions offices
 - Do not plagiarise
 - Discuss articles which interest you on your application
 - Try to visit a business organisation relevant to your choice of specialism.
- Academic reference is a personalised reference which will highlight general and specific ability.
 - Personal qualities and contribution to the school and community
 - Mitigating circumstances
 - Students preparation for the application (anything that address the specific criteria for business)
 - Credibility in predicted grades.

Interviews

Not all universities use interviews. Some interview as a matter of process, while others only interview where clarification of the application may be required. Remember your A Level background plays an important part in

providing a foundation for business courses. Therefore if called for interview it is probable that questions will be asked on the application of these subjects.

How to prepare:

- Know about the course and location on the University campus
- Research Business Alumni who are linked to the Business School and the specific collaborations with industrial partners
- Re-read your personal statement
- Re-read any reflection diaries
- Keep up to date with news and business developments
- Think about the possible questions you might be asked and prepare a few of your own questions
- Examples of questions:
 - Where does your interest in Business stem from?
 - Discuss the impact of the pandemic on Business Parks and superstores?
 - Do ethics ever play a part in business decisions?
 - What is a cash-flow system? What problems can it cause?
 - What makes a good Manager?
 - Can you explain EDI/XML communications?
- Remember at an interview you will need to demonstrate:
 - Academic ability
 - Capacity to deal with the rigours of the course
 - Commitment to a career in Business
 - Logic and reasoning ability
 - Knowledge and enthusiasm for the Business specialism.

Read the invite carefully, locate any documents that you might need

- Contact the university immediately if there are any issues
- Check the location, the campus and travel directions
- Travelling on the day? Have you allowed for travel delays?
- Create a file to take to interview:
 - Copy of original email letter inviting you to interview
 - Emergency contacts for the university
 - Original certificates and/or copies
 - Photo ID
 - Work experience log book / diary.

Key advice

Start Early

- Interview preparation starts with your **work experience**. Identify what you want to achieve from it and reflect on what you did achieve (record in diary).

- Talk to business students, reflect on open days, taster days, summer schools, online forums
- Developing confidence
 - Being well prepared
 - Activities to develop depth of thinking and response.

Example: consider the following questions. Can your response demonstrate an understanding of business as well as your skills and aptitude for the subject and profession?

- During work experience what was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- Why did you choose the Business School and university?
- What element of Business/ Business Finance/Business Marketing/ International Business/ interests you most?

A skill that is required for a successful interview is ACTIVE LISTENING

- Hearing what is said
- Interpreting the message
- Evaluating the message
- Responding to the message
- Whole body listening
- Controlling emotional triggers

The interview

Interviews can be a structured panel interview or a more informal one to one interview.

Interview day

- Make sure you know the venue and arrive early
- Smart but comfortable clothes; if there is a dress code, follow it
- Listen carefully/ follow instruction
- Try to relax and be yourself
- Demonstrate appropriate body language
- Be calm, appropriate preparation means you have a good chance
- Be respectful
- Reflect
- Be aware of 'Competition'

Post Interview

Students often have to wait until March before receiving the outcome from all their applications. You will be able to attend further Applicants Days or Subject specific days. Remember that only 2 days can be taken during school time.

The Sixth Form team will support you throughout the process.

Career Note

Many institutions offer sandwich courses and firms also offer valuable sponsorships. Graduates can also use their degree towards gaining accreditation towards business professional qualifications.

Personal Statement: Business and Management

Observing my mother's creative skills as owner and sole trader of Casann Accessories inspired my interest in Business. She made jewellery, developed a website and marketed her products successfully. I attended diverse events where she promoted and sold her work and could appreciate the challenges and energy needed to grow her business. Ever since my mother passed in 2013, my passion to study Business Management has grown and developed from my A level background.

Studying Business has allowed me to learn the advance ways in which business operate. It has highlighted the decision making involved in marketing and improving operational performance. Reflecting on case studies, I have researched different strategies for larger companies when considering their global situation. It has been interesting to understand sources of finance and the difficulties faced in the current Covid-19 pandemic. The crisis has seen dramatic changes in the ways in which businesses have been administrated, and how some have found strategies to survive. I have developed the skills to analyse and interpret data to consider their performance and how globalisation affects different organisations. Sociology has given me a theoretical perspective of society, and I can appreciate the inequalities that exist, which affect employment. I am able to construct essays to communicate clear ideas and arguments from resource materials. Studying English A level has further developed my essay writing skills and enabled me to construct reflective arguments clearly. Presenting ideas to debate in class has also given me confidence to use different ways to engage an audience.

In Year 12, I have took the opportunity to act as a business co-manager with my brother in law who organises the event 'Live Loud Cov.' It involved securing the venue, adhering to the health and safety guidelines for the music bands to perform safely. I monitored the social platform to see how our marketing strategy was working and I was held responsible for both managing the sale of tickets as well as the revenue. Promoting the event and ensuring it ran smoothly were key factors in the successful outcome. Providing such entertainment for a large group of people was rewarding; an experience that further motivates my interest in Business Management. Reading the article 'Yesterday's Education for Tomorrow's Business: Visions, Directions and Understanding' by Professor Tom Cannon reminded me of the competitive nature of business and that one has to have the determination to be the best to compete with the best. Also, I had a weekly work experience at All Souls Catholic Primary School which gave me leadership responsibilities. Working with small groups of children to support their learning in literacy and numeracy activities required patience and the ability to build confidence with the class. It was also interesting to observe the organisational aspect of the school and the challenges faced by funding shortages in education budgets. Having two older siblings who work in the Department of Education has allowed me to gain deeper understanding of this, as one of my sister's responsibilities involves the leading of complex enquiry management for the funding directorate. Observing my sister act as a leader in such an imperative job role has heightened my desire to work in Business Management. I am looking forward to the challenges of studying at university.

Personal Statement: Business and Marketing

Business is how we all make a living and builds a country's economic stability. Marketing is key to business success as it is important to understand how customers think. Studying a Business Marketing degree will deepen my knowledge of market research and employability and give me a contextualised understanding of the global business environment. I want to learn about enterprise and the creative aspect of business which I find fascinating.

Currently, I am working part-time at O'Tooles Café, a small business located in a busy suburb popular with students. Its target market also includes non-mobile elderly, and young parents. During COVID-19 there has been a sharp decline in footfall and sales. The owner has adapted to these conditions by marketing their products online and on social media. I am aware that my role working in the fast paced environment to respond efficiently to customers is paramount, as their on-line feedback promotes the café. This trend of decline has been mirrored up and down the country in the media showing the challenges that businesses are facing. Listening to Simon Sinek's TED talk about the Golden Circle model, which is a pathway used by inspirational leaders, to get to the crux of what's important to their target customer rather than what's important to the organisation, was enlightening. It struck me as a very simple and credible way of thinking to keep the customer at the forefront of any organisation. I try to use the model as I do my job by keeping the customers' needs top priority. I want to take my knowledge and understanding of this and other models to another level.

Business A-level has influenced my choice to study Business Marketing at university. It has shown me there are many elements involved in getting the product to the customer. The choice of pricing strategies are very interesting, for e.g. Apple's use of price skimming to pick up sales in every stage in the longevity of the product. Brand loyalty is another critical element as one can see from retailers such as Boots, where the Advantage card is designed to give customers an incentive to shop in their stores. Reflecting on these approaches I can recognise the psychological thinking that is used in the world of Business. A Level Psychology has given me an understanding of the cognitive reasons why one acts in response to certain stimuli. The theory of Social proof is illustrated by how fans buy the Nike T-shirt their favourite footballer wears or how one buys makeup that influencers promote. My human geography studies have vastly increased my knowledge and understanding of trade local and global and how marketing strategies are tailored to specific demographics. Rebranding in geography has taught me that changing the perception of a location can bring new business. My geography coursework required research on how pedestrianisation has rebranded Coventry. The practical field work helped to find statistical data to analyse and evaluate how footfall and quality of business can be affected by pedestrianisation. A similar issue is being addressed in Barcelona, where Lldedones Cerda an urban planner, is trying to take the roads back from the cars and make 77 percent of the road's pedestrian friendly in an attempt to increase footfall to businesses that have been negatively affected by the pandemic. During the sixth form I volunteered to support a Pilgrimage to Lourdes by accompanying a group of sick and disabled people. I helped raise funds for the trip by organising cake sales at local churches and running a school tuck shop. Although the trip was cancelled, due to COVID-19 monies raised went to charities helping hospitals. Using my enrichment time, I have been able to support younger students in the school community. Working alongside a Year 8 class teacher has been rewarding.

In conclusion, I see my future career in business and marketing. These are subjects I am passionate about and want to learn more.

Personal Statement: International Business

Having witnessed the rapid changes and uncertainty in the business world as a consequence to the recent Covid-19 outbreak, it has been interesting to see how different businesses have adapted and mitigated the problems caused as a result. In particular multinational businesses such as Adidas who have had to operate and survive in different global economies despite some being in a recession. By identifying that China have an emerging economy, Adidas were able to invest into e-commerce and this consequently allowed the company to generate sales despite of the Covid-19 alterations. Studying this degree would provide me with the opportunity to learn more about the organisational behaviours of multinational businesses but it would also provide me with financial and quantitative business skills which are vital in the global society.

Studying both A-Level Business and Geography has provided me with key knowledge and a background to the business practises on a local and global scale. In particular, the module on Human Resource Management was invaluable in understanding how to supervise and manage staff effectively. This was particularly relevant for my future, as I have ambitions to become a leader and manager within a well-established business. By having coherent and clear communication throughout a business hierarchy it allows for effective strategic operations on a local and even a global scale.

In terms of my geography study, I thoroughly enjoyed studying about the development gap between global powerhouses such as America and poorer countries such as Indonesia. This topic highlighted the inequality and injustice between these countries and shown how the integration of countries globally have both positive and negative impacts across its wide range of stakeholders. I am very passionate about travel, as learning about new and ever changing cultures inspires me; I hope in the future to have the opportunity to study abroad and experience new businesses and lifestyles.

I explored my interests in International Business through reading the Financial Times Guide to Banking by Glen Arnold. It introduced me to the factors of how International Banks operate and gave me an overview on the influences of cross-border money flows and the importance of modern banking to international development. For example, Interest rates are considerably higher in countries such as India due to its emerging economy however banks can offer low interest rates to stable economies in countries such as Switzerland. Studying A Level Maths has developed my analytical and problem-solving skills. Through statistics I use my critical thinking skills to interpret data. I can appreciate the business skills required to anticipate forecasting patterns such as customer trends and economic factors such as employment rates.

To gain a first-hand experience of working within a Charity sector business, I volunteered at a Myton Hospice charity shop. I was given responsibility for using the till and restoring the sales to enable accurate stock control. However, this job also tested and improved my social and organisational skills.

Aside from my academic interests, I am very passionate for sports and participated in many of the sporting opportunities available for me in school, including Captaining the school handball team and participating in the school football team. Being part of the school sporting community, I have also managed the Year 7 football team. This involves planning and leading weekly football training session and attending football fixtures. I am determined to succeed as an undergraduate and use my leadership and sporting history to become an active member of the University community through participation in various challenges and events.

Personal Statement: Business and Finance

My interest in Business stems from listening to my father practice presentations in Poland to negotiate various deals whilst working for a wholesaler in order to supply smaller markets with products. Studying A-Level Business helped me understand the organizational and operational assets of running a successful enterprise. In Year 12 I was given a place on the Sutton Trust Pathways to Banking and Finance which has motivated my university application. I acknowledged that business always need to be competitive, which may be difficult when the economy is unstable. Currently, the UK are facing additional negotiations with the undergoing Brexit situation.

While regularly attending Warwick University which facilitated the Pathways program, I gained a vast insight into the academic environment. I learned about various financial institutions and attended a PWC coaching day In Birmingham. The theme focused on their motto- "Building trust in society and solving important problems". In a group we were tasked to consider scenarios where a financial advisor had to solve issues. Teamwork included collaborating ideas, to resolve the problems which were then pitched back to the PWC personnel and discussed. I gained additional insight of financial sector during the Deutsche Bank insight day whilst meeting staff in their London headquarters. Networking with the professionals helped me appreciate the skills needed for this division. The world of business is dynamic and constantly changing. My hobby of observing the stock market allows me to understand those changes and in return learn how global events such as a pandemic can affect the economy. Businesses such as Zoom Video Communications Inc saw their share price rise over 400% in a few months. In addition to this, A-Level Business has further enhanced both my business terminology and understanding. The topic of "Managing Business activities" has shown me how important cash flow forecasts are needed to plan future business actions and strategies.

Psychology has given me an extensive understanding of various human behaviours. I can recognize how useful this is for a business when managing people, marketing and making accurate predictions for their target market. I have used own my knowledge of behavioural finance to successfully perform arbitrage by leading a small fashion enterprise. By investing in a number highly anticipated yet limited clothing pieces, I can generate a reliable profit by selling them online.

As a mathematician, I am confident in using statistics and can interpret and evaluate data sheets. The Pure mathematical element taught me how to think logically to solve complex problems. Polish language studies have given me an understanding of the complex history of Poland and the legacy following World War 2. I follow Poland's economic situation with interest and enjoy regularly watching live debates between politicians and economists in the "SEJM" government body.

A Business and Finance degree will give me the knowledge to pursue a career in the financial sector.

Personal Statement: Football Business

The heart of every successful business lies in marketing. I have always been fascinated with how society engages with the marketing concept and the vast amount of creativity in every media platform. Marketing is no longer limited to billboards and print ads in newspapers and magazines. Technology advances have revolutionised the way business' can operate. Studying for a Business Marketing degree will develop a knowledge of the strategic principles involved and a deeper understanding of the skills required for a business professional to operate in a range of organisations.

A level Business has deepened my enjoyment of the subject. I appreciate its complex but intriguing nature. Learning the background of a company gives me an appreciation of other functional areas such as HR operations and Finance. I successfully applied to participate in the Social Mobility Business Partnership scheme in the summer which proved an invaluable insight of the business world. Visiting high profile firms such as Barclays Bank, Gowling WLG and PWC as well as a session with Wasps Rugby Club gave me a commercial awareness and the insight of the managerial skills necessary to run a productive company. Workshops highlighted the people skills that are involved in team work, interview techniques and building relationships. I also observed how resilience is a key factor in goal planning and negotiation. I was given a presentation task to pitch, similar to the Dragon's Den scenario, to the PWC representatives which enabled me to deliver my ideas for revision materials. I enjoyed sharing my business idea in front of the representatives which demonstrated to them, as well as myself, the flair I have for the marketing sector of the business world. The feedback given was very useful as it focused on key strengths and ways to improve my public speaking.

As a keen football player I appreciate the passion for sport. Playing Sunday League as well as representing my primary and secondary's football team has given me an opportunity to gauge a very detailed understanding of the game. I have learnt about different strategies and tactics which are vital to winning and losing, whilst also realising how important team work is to succeed. I have received many sporting accolades, which I am very proud of, throughout my years of participating in sport such as 'Player of the Season' and "Player's Player of the Season' which underpins my value of collaborating with others. Volunteering to help organise the annual Sports Day has given me even more experience of demonstrating leadership and communication skills. Taking responsibility to ensure the day ran as smoothly as possible involved being acutely aware of the risks assessment necessary to eliminate hazards that could cause an injury.

I believe I am an aspiring entrepreneur who has the enthusiasm for Marketing. The opportunity to further develop my studies would prove invaluable as I would gain a profound understanding of the skills needed to operate in the ever changing Business world. As the first in my family to apply for university, I look forward to the challenge of undergraduate study.

Personal Statement: Business Economics

Calculated risks as well as safe investments are two key elements for businesses to increase their finances and maximise profits. Current financial and economic news are having detrimental effects on businesses and their financial positions. A recent article highlighted how the High Street is caught in a Black Friday trap. It illustrated in particular the problems that small businesses face on with more than two thirds of sales being made online, bricks and mortar retailers are fighting a losing battle trying to keep up. Furthermore, political change is an important aspect for businesses and economics, especially with the ongoing Brexit policy. This is leaving an uncertain future for the British economy and negatively affecting UK businesses due to a decrease in British trade and a scarcity of resources on the rise.

Insurance is one of the many branches of finance which appeals to me. I took the initiative and found a work experience placement at a commercial insurance brokers. It gave me an insight of what the world of finance is all about and how it operates. I learnt how brokers liaise between clients and other insurance companies. I observed the negotiating skills needed to secure a contract. Although the brokers find the best possible deal for insurance cover, it was apparent that the cheapest option wasn't always the greatest. I undertook admin tasks, filing reports, both written and numerical; these were important documents as they were a summary of the cover that the clients were getting. I had to demonstrate good time management and analytical skills. Furthermore, shadowing the boss of the company was another activity I regularly did, observing how he improved his relationships with his clients and how they negotiated future terms and conditions. Moreover, I often looked at case studies of clients and their situations and answered questions related to this, highlighting my skills of accuracy and attention to detail.

Volunteering and developing professional skills are a key criterion in life and society, as it is a way of giving back to people who have supported you or people who are in need of aid, and I have been able to benefit from such activities to enable me to have a professional attitude and mind-set. Being charitable has helped me over the years and developed some key skills. Supporting with open days and evening events in school, as well as participating in fundraising activities has helped me see how institutions market themselves. Outside of my school environment, I play football for a Sunday League team which has provided me with leadership skills, taking the role as captain when necessary. I have also had responsibility for filling in for the manager's absence and know how to create a winning atmosphere. My passion for football has made me aware of the business models that lay behind football teams. There has been an increasing occurrence of unstable football clubs due to poor business management and financial issues, as in the case of the demise of historical club Bury FC, and Bolton Wanderers who were very nearly facing liquidation.

Studying A-Levels has increased my independent study and the ability to research source materials. Using case studies is a valuable way to evaluate evidence. I enjoy problem solving and use IT competently to analyse data. I have also completed a Future Learn course in social media and technology which developed my understanding of businesses. It showed me how businesses can use social media to promote themselves by advertising on apps and websites such as LinkedIn and Instagram. A reminder of how companies need to be pro-active in marketing strategies. I am looking forward to acquiring a deeper awareness of the skills necessary to work in a business environment in the future. The challenge of degree study is exciting.

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