

# **ACCA**

## **Strategic Professional**

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### **Strategic Business Leader (SBL)**

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### **EXAM KIT**

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## INTRODUCTION

The SBL exam is a 3 hour and 15 minutes integrated case study with a single compulsory section and a range of tasks (typically three) and requirements related to one scenario.

The aim of the exam is to demonstrate and test organisational leadership and senior consultancy or advisory capabilities and relevant professional skills, through the context of a 'real world' scenario. The basic structure of each exam will require the candidate to take the role of an organisational leader or as a consultant or adviser to senior management.

The exam thus requires candidates to demonstrate both technical ability but also a range of professional skills demanded by effective leaders in advising or supporting senior management in directing organisations.

This examination kit contains full exam-style case studies to allow practise of exam technique as well as improving technical knowledge.

## CASE STUDY PRACTICE QUESTIONS

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## SPECIMEN AND PAST EXAM QUESTIONS

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# PAPER SPECIFIC INFORMATION

## THE EXAM

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### FORMAT OF THE EXAM

	<i>Number of marks</i>
<b>A range of compulsory questions</b>	100

Total time allowed: 3 hours 15 minutes

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From September 2023, ACCA have introduced changes to the Strategic Business Leader (SBL) exam. ACCA has introduced pre-seen information that will be released two weeks in advance of the SBL exam session. The purpose of the pre-seen is to reflect real business life, where appropriate advice and recommendations are offered in the workplace only after a broader understanding of the industry and the organisation has been established.

Additionally, the pre-seen will help support those students who have English as a second language, have limited business experience, or have had minimal exposure to the industry on which the SBL exam is based.

Since much of the background information is now provided in advance, the SBL exam duration has been reduced from 4 hours to 3 hours and 15 minutes.

In addition, the format of the exam will change to reflect the reduced time available.

### **Format of the SBL exam**

The SBL exam will contain further new information in the form of exhibits, which students should focus on in answering the requirements.

The total number of exhibits has been significantly reduced to reflect the introduction of the pre-seen information. The exhibits in the exam may take a variety of forms including memos, emails, briefing notes, interview extracts, web pages, financial reports etc.

The SBL exam will now have three compulsory tasks, with each task having a varying numbers of parts and total marks.

## Section 1

# CASE STUDY PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**NB: WE RECOMMEND THAT CASE STUDY QUESTIONS ARE ATTEMPTED UNDER EXAM CONDITIONS AND TO TIME**

## 1 DIXON SMITH BURRELL

### PRE SEEN INFORMATION

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Dixon Smith Burrell (known as 'DSB') is one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies. It is based in Geeland and is responsible alone for 12% of Geeland's total stock market value. It employs 130,000 people in many countries and is an internationally renowned brand name.

DSB have a December financial year-end

It is currently February 20X3

#### 2 INDUSTRY INFORMATION

##### REGULATORY OVERVIEW

The marketing and sale of new drugs is highly regulated. In Nearland the relevant industry body is the Drugs Approval and Regulation Authority (DARA). DARA closely monitors the testing of drugs and is responsible for licensing drugs for sale in most developed nations.

DARA has strict rules on claimed efficacy of drugs and performs independent tests to ensure that drugs are safe for use and can do what they claim to do. Advertising of drugs is controlled and monitored and action is taken against companies who try to make unsubstantiated claims on the benefits of developed drugs.

Sales are regulated regardless of the sales route taken by pharmaceutical companies – whether that is selling in bulk to healthcare providers, selling directly to doctors and clinicians or selling through new e-channels.

##### PRODUCTS

Most individuals in Nearland must pay for the drugs prescribed by their doctor. For that reason, many Nearland citizens take out medical insurance, which will cover any medical expenses that might occur. Employees of public organisations have their medical insurance paid for by the government. This is one of the reasons why the government of Nearland are placing pharmaceutical companies who operate in the country under greater scrutiny.

## CHALLENGES & DEVELOPMENTS

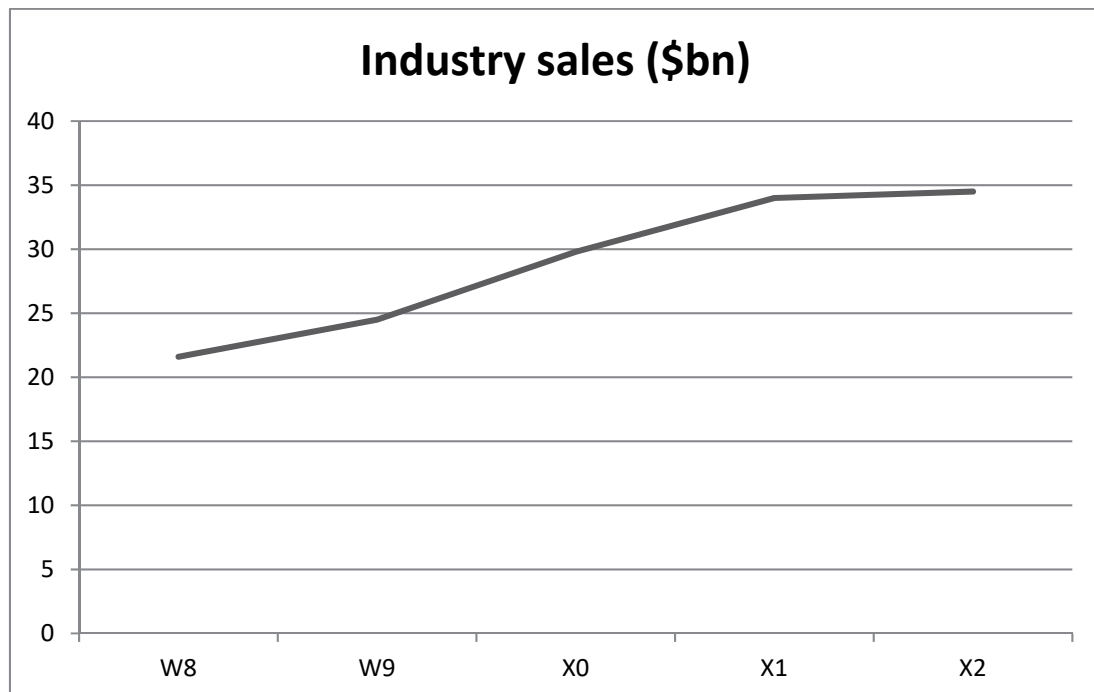
Nearland has recently experienced an economic downturn brought about by weak international demand for products manufactured in the country. This has led to an increase in unemployment which in turn has led to cuts in discretionary expenditure.

In order to sustain the economy the government have implemented measures such as reductions in state pensions, which have had a particular effect on the country's aging population (where a greater proportion of citizens are reliant on state pensions each year). However, the government have aimed to balance this by maintaining free healthcare for all citizens receiving a state pension.

## INDUSTRY SALES

### Industry sales

Total pharmaceutical sales in Nearland over the last 5 years are illustrated as follows:



Source: DARA Industry report December 20X2

## FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

An aging population in the developing world offers many opportunities to the pharmaceutical industry, with people living longer and frequently relying on regular medication and medical advances to maintain a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle.

However, rising drug costs are causing both individuals and governments to question the cost vs benefit of many new medicines and treatments, and research into more cost-effective options is required.

Brand and reputation are key in the industry for any successful company, with many new drugs taking many years and a lot of expense to bring to market. If the treatment then is shown to be ineffective, or worse dangerous then it can spell disaster for the company in question.



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