

Curriculum Intent

Curriculum Vision 1; Economics

Economics is everywhere. We are living through the syllabus day-to-day. What could be more important to our students than understanding the world around them and their future role in it?

Economics is major social science. We intend for all our students develop individual critical understanding, to discover their own voice as an economist, to interact with all aspects of the subject with confidence, interest and a growing sense of the value of their potential as an economist to shape their future.

The following core features underpin our approach in the Business & Economics Department.

- A **challenging and relevant** curriculum
- The **active promotion of agency**
- The **creative use of assessment** to squeeze the process of learning for cognitive and measurable development
- **Expert and relentlessly positive teaching**, which is sufficiently strident to inspire, question and motivate

Although Economics is only assessed in written examinations, learning as an economist requires students to think, listen, read, speak and write as an economist. Our curriculum covers the requirements of the EdExcel 9ECO specification, which we have selected as it enables us to provide richest contextual understanding of economics at A Level and an assessment structure which is also strongly linked to examples, data and extracts. We extend this further in ways which are distinctive to provide a high level of challenge and rich individual and shared experiences for our students, which prepare them for further study or employment in economics-related areas or to navigate their future lives with critical and informed viewpoints.

The big ideas are live

Our curriculum provides students with a stimulating journey through the fundamentals of economic theory, both in micro and macroeconomics, in the UK and global contexts and through a number of over-arching themes - developing a critical view of how economics and economists can tackle current problems such as market failure, poverty and inequality and sustainability.

Wherever possible, economics should be learned/taught from ‘first principles’ and discovered, rather than being provided in a series of bite-sized chunks that are partly pre-digested to ease consumption. Economic theory may be complicated and some of it is pretty old, but the big questions and ideas are presented ‘as live’ in class to derive theory from exploratory questions or to seek generalisations from patterns in data, to give students’ thinking the notice and freshness it deserves and to support the development of genuine subject expertise and their voice as an economist over time.

Economics involves range of skills which we organise as Strategic, Social and Speculative thinking. The curriculum is geared towards the development of these core skills, rather than by the assessment objectives of the specification.

Strategic thinking	Independent Interested Knowledgeable Expert Reflective Literate Nurate	Precise Analytical Evaluative Reasoning Commentary Critical
Social thinking	Interdependent Intuitive Empathetic Collaborative Vocal	Responsive Active Self-aware Articulate Confident
Speculative thinking	Inventive Curious Risk-taking Experimental	Inquisitive Observant Questioning Creative

For example, in order to work efficiently in the exam, students need to be able think quickly and fluently – to be able to recall and use knowledge quickly and accurately (strategic), to understand and interpret a question (speculative), to interact with the content using analysis and evaluation skills (strategic) and to be able to construct a response (speculative and strategic) to be interpreted and understood by an audience (social) with full control of their style (strategic).

Curriculum Intent

Curriculum Vision 2

Authentic learning

Key to successful engagement and achievement are authentic learning experiences. We provide our students with all the body of knowledge that they require in the form of course notes which are bespoke to our course and resourced from authoritative sources. This frees up a great deal of time for learning to be more active and for us to **start with analysis, not knowledge**. Students will progressively annotate and curate these notes as they work through the course. This also supports our principle of **starting from 100%**, which relies on the ability to treat knowledge as a given – either as an input or an outcome or both.

We present students with a wide variety of sources to deepen their understanding but also to demonstrate the relevance and imperative for their learning. For example, we make great use of the Houser of Commons Library resources to ground students' thinking at the limits of current responses to wider economic issues and challenges which are part of the current political discourse.

Guided reading is a focus in Year 12, where we set weekly reading tasks over terms 1-3, which progressively enable students to engage with the wider economic world. Starting with class-based reading and modelling these tasks will increasingly be expected to be completed by student in their supervised private study periods or in their own time. Through this we engage them with the **voices of authority in economics** and as this process is actively mediated it involves all three S's, but particularly the development of social and speculative thinking.

The importance of agency

Agency is the capacity to speculate, to make positive choices and to take risks with learning and to make active choices to seize opportunities and for students to have faith in their ability to handle a wide range of tasks and situations. The endpoint of any piece of analysis in economics is a critically-informed judgement. The capacity to arrive at this destination in a challenging subject is hard-won. A **sense of agency** is particularly important in economics, not least to escape the conclusion that all an economist can usefully do is to point how awful things are; hence, the term 'the dismal science'. But also to support the development of students' resilience, to cope with the challenges of a new subject (for most) and to see and appreciate the value and return to and from their hard work.

We actively promote agency in our curriculum because it is relevant and up-to-date, problem-based and supported by resources which our students can readily appreciate have been created specifically to stretch, challenge and motivate them.

Academic Language and Literacy

As a social science, economics is awash with terminology. Our curriculum is language rich – there are upwards of a thousand words with specific meanings and purposes in the A Level curriculum. Formal English increasingly looks and sounds like a second language to many students, even those in a selective school environment, so the role of language in knowledge acquisition and transfer is fundamental. Precision in the use of language, conceptual and mechanical understanding and in enabling students to develop these skills for themselves is a prominent feature of our curriculum and in classroom practice. This should be evident on a word, concept, sentence, argument and text level throughout.

A specific function of the repeated exposure of students to curricular content is the development of the quality of students' explicit ability to reason and to think. This referred to as **teaching language through thinking**. Our curriculum provides a significant and distinctive emphasis on this twin-tracked approach to the development of curricular knowledge and skill.

Economics

EXAM
FINAL EXAM

Exam
preparation

The global
economy in data

Economic
policy

PPE 3-
Paper 3 - Micro
and Macro

Synoptic skills

Labour
markets

Development
economics

Year 13

In microeconomics we look at Business Economics, exploring issues such as business growth, how firms compete, how we model costs, revenue and profit and how firms behave in different market structures, such as perfect competition and oligopoly and how labour markets work.

Macroeconomics expands to consider the global economy – we look at trade, globalisation, competitiveness, economic development and engage with challenging issues such as poverty and inequality. You will find your voice as an economist who can confidently explain, present and argue, based on strong understanding and your own informed viewpoint.

YEAR
13

Cost, revenue
and profit

Market
structures

How firms
compete

The global
economy

PPE 2
Paper 1 & 2

Business Growth

PPE 1a –
Macroeconomics

Macroeconomic
issues

PPE 1 -
Microeconomics

Aggregate supply
and demand
analysis

Macroeconomic
objectives

Government
intervention

Market failure

How markets work

YEAR
12

Year 12

Year 12 will give you a strong body of economics knowledge and an understanding of the UK economy.

In microeconomics we study how markets work, how they may fail (e.g. in relation to climate change) and what economists and governments can do about this

We move on into macroeconomics to explore how economists model how the whole economy works and explore issues such as economic growth, unemployment and inflation and government policies such as fiscal and monetary policy

