A Level Economics Edexcel Specification B

Curriculum Intent:

Do the following questions fascinate you? Why were politicians so keen to open up the economy post Covid? Why did the global economy crash in 2008? Were bankers to blame? Why was there such strong feeling on both sides of the Brexit argument? What does the EU even do? Does it matter that most of the stuff we buy is not made in the UK? Why is it big news if the Bank of England changes base interest rates? I could go on.....An A level in Economics will answer all this and much more. Never has Economics been more relevant to study than now. Rarely a day goes by without the economy being mentioned in the news and the importance of an economic recovery, post Covid. The main political parties had economic growth as a central feature of their manifestos in the 2024 General Election. An A level in Economics will help you to make sense of the current economic situation by understanding the relevant theories and concepts which underpin much of this story. Economic thinking has been critical to the recovery of nations after seismic events such as world wars, stock market crashes, natural disasters and more. Economics is a subject that we study as an academic subject, but which we can contextualise into our lives today and in the recent past.

The aims and objectives of the Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Economics B which we follow enables you to:

- develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject
- appreciate the contribution of economics to the understanding of the wider economic and social environment
- develop an understanding of a range of concepts and an ability to use those concepts in a variety of different contexts
- use an enquiring, critical and thoughtful approach to the study of economics and develop an ability to think as an economist
- understand that economic behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives
- develop analytical and quantitative skills, together with qualities and attitudes that will equip them for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult and working life.

There are four themes that students will study during the year:

Students are introduced to economics through building knowledge of core microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts, and by investigating economic theory through real-world businesses and the environments in which they operate. Breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding with applications to more complex concepts throughout the course of study.

Students will need to apply their knowledge and understanding to both familiar and unfamiliar contexts in the assessment and demonstrate an awareness of current economic events and policies.

Theme 1: Markets, consumers Theme 2: The wider economic and firms environment Students will develop an understanding Students will develop an understanding of: of: scarcity, choice and potential business growth and competitive conflicts advantage firms, consumers and elasticities enterprise, business and of demand the economy introducing the market productive efficiency the role of credit in the economy life in a global economy failure the economic cycle market and government intervention introduction to macroeconomic revenue, costs, profits and cash. policy.

Theme 3: The global economy

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 2. Students will develop an understanding of:

- globalisation
- economic factors in business expansion
- impact of globalisation on global companies
- impact of globalisation on local and national economies
- global labour markets
- inequality and redistribution.

Theme 4: Making markets work

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 1. Students will develop an understanding of:

- competition and market power
- market power and market failure
- market failure across the economy
- macroeconomic policies and impact on firms and individuals
- risk and the financial sector.

We do not enter students for an AS examination at the end of the first year of study so there is no necessity to teach all of theme 1 and theme 2 in the first year. This means that the way that we have organised the teaching of the course follows a logical order rather than shoehorning the teaching into a constrained time. This sequence of topics is our current approach but as with all the best teaching schemes, it can and is reviewed in order that the subject makes the most sense to students. We don't simply plough through theme by theme but follow a logic that enables deep learning and understanding to take place. The nature of economics also means that real life events may mean that we may take a minor detour to another topic if a logical opportunity to activate some prior learning or learn something new in a topical context.

Curriculum implementation

There are two teachers teaching A level economics and they have their own topics that have been planned to follow a logical sequence and across the two year some of the content covered by one teacher is reactivated in the second year, for example macroeconomic policy, as this is a difficult concept that needs revisiting more than once to ensure deep understanding.

Year	Term		Content		
			Teacher 1 3 hours	Teacher 2 2 hours	
12	Autumn	1	Introduction to macroeconomics and macroeconomic objectives.	The economic problem	
			This is the starting point so that students get an early introduction to macroeconomics and usually have some basic knowledge of some of these concepts from popular news, if nothing else. This gets students quickly enthused by the subject as they can see its relevance as a real subject as well as an academic study.	This is the fundamental starting point for any economics course to understand the 'economic problem' of scarcity and allocating finite resources; this underpins so many following concepts. a) The problem of scarcity (where there are unlimited wants and finite resources)	
			The main macroeconomic objectives: Economic growth Stable inflation Low unemployment Balance of payments – reduce deficit Reduce income inequality Understanding of the economic cycle What GDP is. How it is measured. Why it is the main measure of a successful economy. Touch on idea of inequality. Which markets are firms in that thrive/suffer at different stages of the economic cycle? Understand UK GDP compared to other economies, developed, and	 b) Choices and potential trade-offs c) The importance of opportunity costs to consumers, producers and government, PPF curve. • Role of an entrepreneur in the economy • Creative destruction (organising factors of production to create and set up an enterprise) • Making decisions to operate, expand and develop a business • Selling the output for more than the cost of the inputs (adding value) • Entrepreneurial motives • Profit as an incentive • Non-financial motives: ethical stance, social entrepreneurship, 	
			developing. Characteristics of a boom Characteristics of a recession Implications for firms of fluctuations in economic activity The multiplier effect	independence, home working. Limited versus unlimited liability Business Objectives- a) Different business objectives and reasons for them: profit maximisation sales maximisation	
			It is deliberate that much time is spent on the above learning as it is essential that students have time to understand these concepts; they are reactivated over and over as the economics course builds, particularly	 satisficing Other objectives: survival market share cost efficiency return on investment 	

when studying policy again in year 13. After the overview of the macroeconomy, students are now ready to learn more about the individual objectives and their accompanying theories. Interest rates are taught here as their understanding underpins much subsequent leaning. Implications for firms of changes in: interest rates How they are set and their

significance

exchange rates/Balance of payments

Understand the implications of a strong and weak currency on importers and exporters

Inflation provides an opportunity to learn why numerical values may be presented in index form, which appears throughout the course.

Inflation

Inflation, what it is and the two types. How it is measured using the CPI. Show how an index is used

Conversion of nominal to real values

The concept of nominal v real values crops up often in data in questions so is taught early in the course.

Calculating and interpreting index numbers

consumers purchasing power

Introduction to supply and demand side policy to support understanding of how macroeconomic objectives may be achieved.

- employee welfare
- customer satisfaction social objectives

Stakeholders (economic agents) and their objectives

- a) Stakeholders (economic agents)
- b) Stakeholder objectives
- c) Stakeholder conflicts
- d) Corporate social responsibility

Students now have the basic knowledge of business forms and the different objectives they may pursue so now learn the fundamentals of supply and demand, which are essential concepts which are reactivated many times over the course.

Markets- how they differ

- **Demand- The distinction** between movements along a demand curve and shifts of a demand curve
- The factors that may cause a shift in the demand curve (non-price determinants)

Autumn

Taxation

2

Taxation - direct/indirect, income, corporate, VAT. Be aware of UK levels compared to other countries and impact on firms if they change.

Supply

The distinction between movements along a supply curve and shifts of a supply curve

Unemployment

Unemployment, types/causes and touch on solutions as it depends on cause

Introduction to Policy

Aggregate demand and aggregate supply.

How these two sides of the economy can be affected by changes in levels of tax and interest.

Look in depth at the specific components of aggregate demand.

Supply side policy Demand side policy fiscal, monetary, exchange rate policy

This work is reactivated again in Year 13; policy is an essential topic to understand so it is revisited and retrieved many times.

 The factors that may cause a shift in the supply curve (the conditions of supply)

Producer Surplus
The Equilibrium

- Equilibrium price and quantity and how they are determined
- The use of supply and demand diagrams to depict excess supply and excess demand
- The operation of market forces to eliminate excess demand and excess supply

The use of supply and demand diagrams to show how shifts in demand and supply curves cause the equilibrium price and quantity to change in real-world situations Price Mechanism

- Functions of the price mechanism to allocate resources:
- rationing
- incentive
- signalling

Supply and demand need deep understanding before students can learn and understand the various elasticities, which now follow.

PED

- Understanding of price elasticity of demand
- Use formulae to calculate PED
- Interpret numerical values of PED (Elastic, inelastic and unitary)
- The factors influencing elasticities of demand
- The significance of elasticities of demand to firms and government in terms of:
- the imposition of indirect taxes
- The relationship between price elasticity of demand and total revenue (including calculation)

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Pages Policy is reactivated again next year. YED Spring Students are now ready to consider Understanding of income economic activity in a global context. elasticity of demand Use formula to calculate YED The Characteristics of globalisation: Interpret numerical values of increased investment flows world trade rising as a Factors influencing YED proportion of world Gross The significance of the values Domestic Product (GDP) Changes in real income increased migration Competition and market research Having studied the impact of price on Factors contributing to globalisation demand, this knowledge can be used in the last 50 years: when learning about the different • trade liberalisation pricing strategies a firm may use. capital market liberalisation **Competing on price** political change resulting in the opening up of -Pricing strategies: China and the former cost plus (calculating mark up on **Soviet Union** unit cost) reduced cost of transport price skimming and communications penetration increased significance of global (transnational) predatory companies competitive psychological Indicators of growth: GDP per capita literacy Factors that determine the most health appropriate pricing strategy for a **Human Development Index** particular situation: (HDI) number of USPs/amount of differentiation Characteristics of developed price elasticity of demand (mature), emerging and developing economies amount of competition strength of brand Mean and median incomes stage in the product life cycle This gives another opportunity to costs and the need to make a reactivate learning on index numbers profit and nominal v real. Changes in pricing to reflect Growth rate of the UK and BRIC social trends (online sales and (Brazil, Russia, India price comparison sites) and China) economies since 2000 Types of non-price competition Growing economic power of: product differentiation o Asia (China and India) o advertising and other promotional Africa methods distribution methods

other emerging markets

individuals and

Implications of economic growth for

Devising appropriate marketing

approaches

		Rey Stage 3 Carricala	
		firms: o trade and rationalisation opportunities for firms o shifting employment patterns c) Rising incomes	All of the above learning is an opportunity to reactivate learning on the impact that price has on demand. How small firms compete -product differentiation and unique selling points (USPs) -flexibility in responding to customer needs -customer service -targeting niche markets -achieving competitive advantage through relationships with stakeholders
Spring	4	Trade and growth Imports and exports: visibles and invisibles Impact of cheap imports on standards of living	Research and development (R&D) and innovation -Competitive advantage through innovation -Incentive to increase market power
		Learning on economic growth [RGDP], employment, keeping inflation low and disposable incomes can be reactivated here.	-Product and process innovation -Role of state funding -Product life cycle and extension strategies
		Specialisation and international trade: Increasing trade liberalisation The role of specialisation and increasing specialisation by country	Productivity This is a concept that appears throughout economics at both micro and macro levels. It reactivates learning on the PPF curve and is now introduced as a crucial factor in a firm being competitive and being able to profit maximise.
		Trade liberalisation and economic growth reactivate RGDP knowledge Foreign direct investment (FDI) and link to growth	 -Productivity (output per unit of input in a given time period): factors influencing productivity link between productivity and
		Reactivate knowledge of the circular flow of income. Trade creation and trade diversion	 competitiveness productivity and wages productivity and economic growth
		Expansion of trading blocs: o EU and the single market o ASEAN o NAFTA Impact on firms of trading blocs	Distinction between labour and capital intensive production Capacity utilisation -Full capacity and spare capacity -Capacity utilisation:
		, 1111	

Growing interdependence

The learning on trade and trade blocs gives many opportunities to reactivate learning on growth, real incomes, exchange rates and inflation, hence they are studied early in the course.

- Current output (divided by) maximum possible output (as a percentage)
- -Implications of under- and overutilisation of capacity
- -Ways of improving capacity utilisation

Efficiency and competitiveness using lean production

- -Quality: control, assurance, Total Quality Management (TQM)
- -Continuous improvement (Kaizen)
- -Just in time (JIT) management of stock
- -Competitive advantage from lean production
- -Impact on costs and sales revenue
- -Impact on average costs
- -Minimising waste of resources
- -Competitive advantage of short product development lead times

The following work reactivates learning on supply and demand in markets.

How the digital economy affects markets and firms

Market information in the digital economy:

- -price comparison sites
- -viral marketing
- -social media

The supply-side:

- -micromarketing
- -online retailing and online distribution
- -recruiting and training staff with digital skills

The demand-side:

- -satisfying consumers with the long tail
- -wider geographical markets
- -Impact on markets and firms:

T T	Key Stage 5 Curriculum Pages					
			-impact on costs, prices, profit and loss			
			-firm creation and destruction in a new business environment			
Summer	5	Understanding globalisation and trade blocs enables students to understand why some countries may pursue protectionist measures. This reactivates learning supply and demand for the tariff diagram.	Learning on the objectives of firms is reactivated here and the degree to which growth may further enable a firm to profit maximise.			
		Trade policy and	Methods of growth			
		trade negotiations	-Organic and inorganic growth			
		Protectionism:				
		o tariffs and import quotas (with diagrammatic	-Horizontal, vertical and conglomerate integration			
		representation)	2.1.1 – Growth			
		o other trade barriers	a) Objectives of growth:			
		o government legislation and domestic subsidies	• to achieve economies of scale (internal and external)			
		International trade negotiations:	 increased market power over consumers and suppliers 			
		O role of G20	• increased market share and			
		o role of international institutions	brand recognition			
		(World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank)	increased profitability Peactivate learning on productivity			
			Reactivate learning on productivity when learning about diseconomies of scale.			
		Changes in evehance rates	Problems arising from growth:			
		Changes in exchange rates Exchange rates were studied earlier	-diseconomies of scale			
		in the context of their impact on	-internal communication			
		demand for imports and exports and	-potential skills shortages			
		therefore the balance of payments, so this learning is reactivated and	What is finance and what do we need			
		built on by learning about the	it for?			
		effective exchange rate.	 Types of credit- loans, overdrafts, trade credit. 			
		Impact of changing exchange rates on firms	- Sources of credit- banks and other firms			
		Interpretation of exchange rate data	- Other types of finance-			
		Interpretation of effective exchange rates	venture capital, share capital, leasing.			
		The following reactivates learning from term one on the wider economic environment.	- Other sources of finance- personal savings, retained profit, sale of assets,			
		Impact of changes in exchange rates and the possible	individual investors, online collaborative funding.			
		effects on:	Challenges in obtaining credit			
		o the current account and the balance of payments	Growth may require finance, so it is logical to study this at this point in			
		o economic growth; firms	the course, as well as reactivating this			

o employment/unemployment

o the rate of inflation

o FDI flows

Exchange rate understanding again is reactivated here as is the reason for and against membership of a trading bloc.

The Eurozone

Now students can appreciate the need for firms to pursue overseas markets and market products globally in an appropriate way.

Conditions that prompt trade

Push factors:

- saturated markets
- competition

Pull factors:

- economies of scale
- risk spreading
- Possibility of offshoring and outsourcing
- Extending product life cycles by selling in multiple markets

Reactivates learning from teacher two.

• Raising capacity utilisation

Assessing the potential of different

economies

Factors influencing expansion into a market:

- o levels and growth of disposable income
- o ease of doing business
- o infrastructure
- o political stability
- o exchange rate

another opportunity to reactivate exchange rates which students find challenging.

Factors influencing the location of production sites:

costs of production

when the role of banks and the financial sector is studied in Year 13.

The following learning continues to focus on the microeconomic issues in the course. This enables students to see the concept of profit maximisation in the context of reported financial information from firms.

- a) Profit as an incentive in a competitive market: market entry and exit.
- b) How firms calculate:
 - -Gross Profit.
 - -Operating Profit
 - Profit for the year (net profit)
- c) Statement of comprehensive income (profit and loss account)
- d) How firms measure profitability:
- Gross Profit margin
- Operating profit margin
- Profit for the year (net profit margin).

Learning the structure of the income statement enables students to see how costs impact profits and how profits determine the amount of corporate tax a firm pays. This complements the learning with teacher one on tax avoidance, which some MNCs pursue with their location or transfer pricing policies.

e) How firms increase profit

Business survival and cash flow

- Distinction between cash and profit.
- Importance of cash flow for business survival.
- Forecasting and Interpreting cash flow

Use of a cash flow forecast to identify credit requirements and minimise risk.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Pages o skills and availability of labour force infrastructure 0 o location in trade bloc 0 government incentives o ease of doing business o political stability natural resources 0 o likely return on investment Responding to global demand Globalisation vs glocalisation Different approaches to global markets: domestic/ethnocentric mixed/geocentric international/polycentric Price and non-price competition in global markets o adapting marketing strategies for global markets Branding and differentiation in global markets Demand-side factors in global markets Cultural/social factors: cultural differences different tastes Information and communication factors: language, unintended meanings, inappropriate/inaccurate translations How firms respond to these demandside factors o adapting marketing strategies for niche and mass markets

> Links with work on markets with teacher two; reactivate learning on niche and mass market and pricing.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Pages						
Summer	6	After the 'big picture' of globalisation, we focus now on the impact of MNCs. Prior learning about the impact of injections into the economy, job creation, membership of trade blocs can all be reactivated here.		Introduction to market failure; this complements well the work of teacher 1 on the impact of MNcs and arguably, the need to regulate them. Market Failure		
		The impact of multinational corporations (MNCs)		a) social costs		
		Impact of MNCs on the local economy:		b) benefits and social benefits Costs and benefits from the c) production and consumption		
		o local labour, wages, working conditions and job creation		of goods and services Strength of the market economy: d) markets work well		
		o local firms		when the private and social		
		o the local community and the environment		benefits exceed (or are equal to) the private and social costs		
		Impact of MNCs on the national economy:		Weaknesses of the market e) economy: some markets fail		
		o economic growth		because of the existence of external costs, leading to		
		o FDI flows		under/over production or		
		o balance of payments		consumption		
		o technology and skills transfer		Market failure in		
		o consumers		Society:		
		o business culture		a) The consequences of under-		
		o tax revenues and transfer pricing		provision and under- consumption of merit and other		
		Ethical issues		goods and services b) Positive and negative externalities		
		Stakeholder conflicts		c)		
		Pay and working conditions		Over-consumption of demerit goods		
		Environmental considerations:		d)		
		o emissions		Factor immobility (occupational		
		o waste disposal		and geographical) e)		
		Supply chain considerations:		Imperfect and asymmetric		
		o exploitation of labour		information f)		
		o child labour		Consequences of environmental		
		Marketing considerations:		change		
		o misleading product labelling		Externalities: a)		
		o inappropriate promotional activities		Private, external and social costs and benefits		
		Controlling MNCs		b) The impact on society of		
		Factors to consider:		charging prices that do not		
		political influence		reflect total internal and external costs		
		legal control		c)		
		pressure groups		Environmental externalities		

• social media

Self-regulation	Government Intervention & Failure:
	Purpose of intervention with a) reference to market failure
	in various contexts Methods of government b) intervention:
	o regulation
	o legislation
	o indirect taxation
	o grants and subsidies
	o voluntary agreementsCauses of governmentc) failure:
	o distortion of price signals
	unintended consequences excessive administrativecosts
	o information gaps d) Government failure various markets

How you are assessed

There are three papers that students will be assessed on:

Paper 1 – This will cover material from Themes 1 and 4 – contributes 35% towards final grade

Paper 2- This will cover material from Themes 2 and 3- contributes 35% towards final grade

Paper 3- This will cover material from themes 1, 2, 3 and 4 and is based on a pre-release stimuli material – contributes 30% towards final grade

In each paper the students are assessed using the following skills and weightings:

Skill	Exam Weighting (%)
AO1 Demonstrate knowledge of terms / concepts and theories / models to show an understanding of the behaviour of economic agents and are affected by and respond to economic issues	20-22
AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding to various economic contexts to show how economic agents are affected by and respond to economic issues	22-24
AO3 Analyse issues within economics, showing an understanding of the impact on economic agents.	28-30
AO4 Evaluate economic arguments and use qualitative and quantitative evidence to support informed judgements relating to economic issues.	26-28

Enrichment – How can you deepen your understanding of Economics?

Economics is dynamic and reflects real life situations so there are plenty of opportunities to find out more. We suggest that you read or listen to the news frequently. The Financial Times offers free subscriptions to students using their school e mail address as The Ecclesbourne School is signed up for this. This is a fantastic opportunity to read articles by the best journalists in the field. I find the writing to be accessible whilst challenging. Other sources of economics news:

- o The Times
- o The Guardian
- The Independent
- o BBC News
- Channel 4 News

Books relevant to the course

In addition, books that really bring economics to life:

- The Economics Book Big Ideas Simply Explained, Niall Kishtainy
- Fifty things that made the modern economy, Tim Harford
- Undercover Economist, Tim Harford
- Undercover Economist Strikes Back, Tim Harford
- The Spirit Level, Pickett and Wilson
- Talking to My Daughter About the Economy: A Brief History of Capitalism Yanis Varoufakis
- The Equality Effect, Dorling

- Freakonomics, Levitt and Dubner
- Grave New World, Stephen D King
- The Selfish Capitalist, Oliver James
- Affluenza, Oliver James
- The Almighty Dollar, Dharshini David
- Nudge, Richard Thaler
- Economics The User's Guide Ha-Joon Chang

Relevant websites

www.tutor2u.net

http://news.sky.com/

https://www.theguardian.com/uk/business

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/#section-news

http://www.independent.co.uk/

https://www.bloomberg.com/businessweek

https://www.economist.com/

Where next – how can Economics support your future?

Many students continue to study Economics to degree level after A level and Economics degrees are currently at the top of the list of the most desirable from the point of view of an employer!

During your A level studies you will have improved your numerical, analytical and evaluative skills which are transferable to other courses of study as well as the workplace environment. More students are now considering apprenticeships after school and a knowledge of economics, and the business environment can be a big asset to your application.

Here are some of the jobs that people with economics degrees go into:

Jobs directly related to an Economics degree include:

- Actuarial Analyst
- Chartered Accountant
- Compliance Officer
- Data Analyst
- Economist
- External Auditor
- Financial Risk Analyst
- Investment Analyst
- Political Risk Analyst
- Risk Manager
- Statistician
- Stockbroker

Jobs where an Economics degree would be useful include:

- Business Development Manager
- Civil Service Fast Streamer
- Data Scientist
- Diplomatic Service Officer
- Local Government officer
- Management consultant
- Policy officer
- Quantity surveyor