



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna

Economics

Curriculum Specification

LEAVING CERTIFICATE
Ordinary and Higher Level

Contents

Senior cycle.....3

The experience of senior cycle3

Leaving Certificate Economics6

Introduction.....6

Aim7

Objectives.....7

Related learning.....7

Overview.....9

Structure.....9

Outline of strands.....10

Time allocation.....11

Key skills11

Teaching and learning12

Differentiation.....14

Agricultural economics15

Strands of study16

Strand 1: What is economics about?17

Strand 2: How are economic decisions made?...19

Strand 3: What can markets do?.....21

Strand 4: What is the relationship between policy and economic performance?.....23

Strand 5: How is the economy influenced by international economics?.....25

Assessment.....27

Assessment components27

Overview of assessment27

Written examination.....28

Assessment criteria for the written examination.....28

Research study29

Assessment criteria for the research study29

Leaving Certificate grading30

Reasonable accommodations/inclusion30

Appendix.....31

1

Senior cycle

Learners in senior cycle are approaching the end of their time in school and are focusing on the directions they would like to take in their future lives. Senior cycle plays a vital role in helping learners to address their current needs as young adults and in preparing them for life in a changing economic and social context.

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all learners, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support learners as they shape their own future there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding; on learners taking responsibility for their own learning; on the acquisition of key skills; and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle and sets out to meet the needs of learners, some of whom have special educational needs, but who all share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes and talents.

Curriculum components at senior cycle promote a balance between knowledge and skills, and the kinds of learning strategies relevant to participation in, and contribution to, a changing world where the future is uncertain.

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

The experience of senior cycle

The vision of senior cycle sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable students to be resourceful, to be confident, to participate actively in society, to build an interest in learning, and to develop an ability to learn throughout their lives.

This vision of the learner is underpinned by the values on which senior cycle is based and it is realised through the principles that inform the curriculum as it is experienced by students in schools. The curriculum, made up of subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly-expressed learning outcomes, and supported by a range of approaches to assessment, is the vehicle through which the vision becomes a reality for the learner.

At a practical level, the provision of a high-quality educational experience in senior cycle is supported by:

- ▶ effective curriculum planning, development, organisation and evaluation
- ▶ teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest students, that enable them to progress, that deepen and apply their learning, and that develop their capacity to reflect on their learning
- ▶ professional development for teachers and school management that enables them to lead curriculum development and change in their schools
- ▶ a school culture that respects students, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

Senior cycle education is situated in the context of a broader education policy that focuses on the contribution that education can make to the development of the learner as a person and as a citizen. It is an education policy that emphasises the promotion of social cohesion, the growth of society and the economy, and the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development.

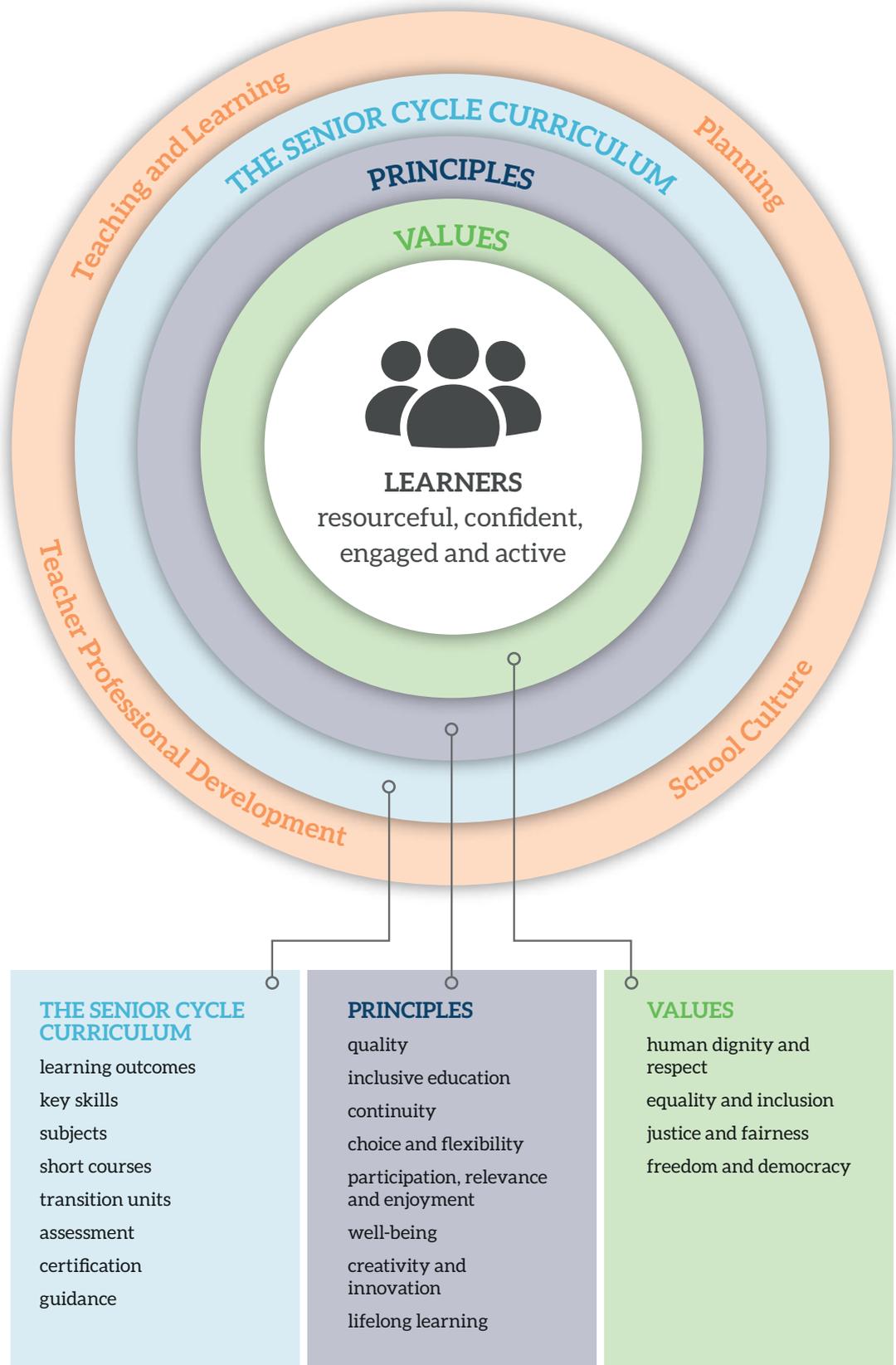


Figure 1: Overview of senior cycle



Figure 2: The vision of the learner



2

Leaving Certificate Economics

Introduction

Economics is the study of the processes and decisions that influence the production and consumption of goods and services by individuals, firms, governments and other institutions in an economy. Therefore, economics is often described as a way of thinking about how people interact in a society, how they make decisions and foster relationships. It is a social science, and it is driven by a desire to question and inquire about economic patterns, relationships and principles. It explains how income is generated, how income is used, how resources are employed and how goods and services are exchanged and distributed. Decisions relating to these have social consequences, intended and unintended, which are also analysed in economics.

Young people are growing up in a dynamic economy which is constantly changing at local, national and global levels. Increasingly, their lives are being shaped by social, political and economic decisions and policies made by the Irish government as well as European and international governments and institutions. Students need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge, understanding and values to negotiate these rapid changes in order for them to participate fully and effectively in society. In developing their knowledge and understanding of Ireland's economy, students will engage with the wider business environment. Being economically literate enables students to identify and evaluate economic concepts as they relate to the economy and political systems. Using skills of critical thinking, data analysis and decision making through the study of economics, students will be prepared and empowered to contribute to society and manage future challenges confidently.

By exploring the economic world in which they live, students will understand the economic, social, political and environmental implications of the decisions made by individuals, businesses, our government and others. In their lifetime, students will have to make decisions that may be of personal, local and national importance. This specification enables them to develop an appreciation of the interdependent nature of economic prosperity, societal wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

It is intended that Leaving Certificate Economics will be relevant to the lives of students today and in the future and inspire in them an interest in and curiosity about economic issues. It should enable them as citizens to appreciate the economic issues that affect their lives, to offer an informed viewpoint and set the foundation for future life, work and study.

Aim

Leaving Certificate Economics aims to stimulate students' curiosity and interest in the economic environment and how they interact with it. It develops a set of skills, knowledge and values that enables students to understand the economic forces which affect their everyday lives, their society and their economy at local, national and global levels, making them more informed as decision-makers.

Objectives

The objectives of Leaving Certificate Economics are to enable students to:

- ▶ understand the economy within which people act locally, nationally and globally
- ▶ appreciate the ethical, historical, social and environmental dimensions of economics, and reflect on how economics contributes to the social and political development of society
- ▶ build their knowledge and understanding of economic terminology, concepts and principles, and develop the skills needed to apply this knowledge and understanding to familiar and unfamiliar situations
- ▶ develop skills in critical and creative thinking around contemporary economic, political and social issues, while appreciating different perspectives, and providing informed solutions to a problem
- ▶ research and analyse qualitative and quantitative economic information and data from various sources, present and justify conclusions and make informed decisions
- ▶ discuss, explain and communicate the outcomes of their analysis and activities in verbal, graphical and other forms, using technology where appropriate.

Related learning

Leaving Certificate Economics provides continuity and progression in business education that begins in the primary school curriculum and is built on in junior cycle business studies.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

At primary level, children begin to encounter and form some fundamental ideas in relation to the economic world in which they live. Mathematics in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) develops the child's mathematical skills in the areas of reasoning, problem-solving, and representing mathematical ideas in different modes such as pictorially or graphically. Within the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum at primary level children are provided with opportunities to further develop their understanding of people living and working in the local community and beyond as well as developing their knowledge of trade and development issues. Such awareness, knowledge and skills are core to the study of economics and will be further developed as they progress into post-primary education.

JUNIOR CYCLE

The learning at the core of junior cycle, described in the statements of learning in *A Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)*, emphasises the importance of developing students' understanding of the origins and impacts of social, economic and environmental aspects of the world around them. In its strands and learning outcomes, student learning in junior cycle business studies highlights the interconnectivity of finance, enterprise and the economy in understanding contemporary economic, political and social developments. Many junior cycle subjects and short courses have links with economics, including mathematics, geography and CSPE.

SENIOR CYCLE

Many senior cycle subjects have close links with economics including business, Politics and Society, geography, history, mathematics, and home economics—scientific and social. The knowledge and understanding gained in economics can be used in conjunction with that developed in these other subjects to enrich overall learning.

FURTHER STUDY

Economics can lead to many exciting and rewarding careers, from being a policy developer, financial advisor, analyst or journalist, to being employed by the government, industry, financial institutions, statutory and voluntary organisations, and working in sectors such as IT and education.

Economics is about choice and the impact of choices on people and the environment. It relates to every aspect of our lives, from the decisions made as individuals or families to the structures created by governments and firms. Economics encompasses the study of factors that influence income, wealth and wellbeing. As a result, it is an integral part of many other business disciplines, including management, marketing, accountancy, and finance. It also influences and has applications across a wide spectrum of other subject areas including political science, international relations, sociology, geography, law and psychology.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

Students will develop an appreciation of the social and political perspectives of economics and of the impact of economic development on people and on the environment. Economics plays a key role in the social development that will continue to drive economies and enhance the wellbeing of citizens. It extends and enhances our understanding of why people, firms and the government make certain choices and how these choices impact personally, locally, nationally and globally. It develops students' self-awareness and encourages active citizenship and engagement in the wider community.

3

Overview

The Leaving Certificate Economics specification is presented in five strands that reflect five fundamental economic questions.

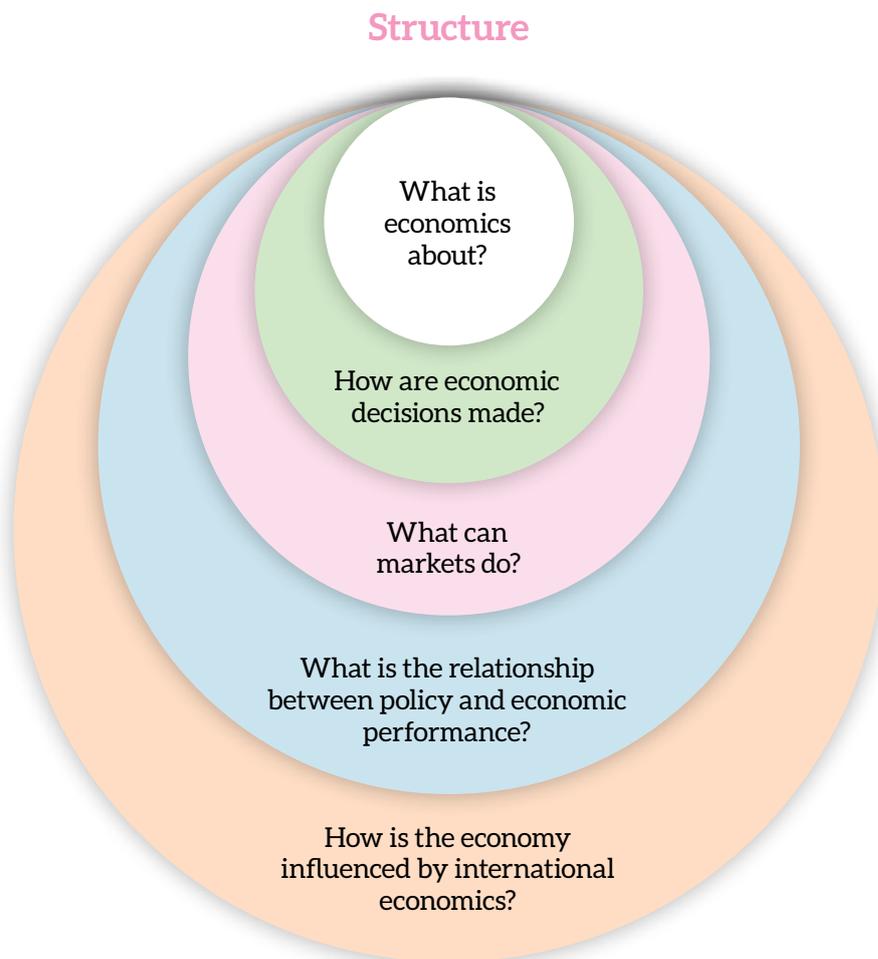


Figure 3: Structure of Leaving Certificate Economics

Strand 1: What is economics about? is a unifying strand; it permeates all the strands of the specification. The learning outcomes in this strand identify the knowledge, skills and values which are essential to students' learning throughout the course, underpinning the activities and content in the other strands. This strand aims to develop a student's ability to think as an economist, to use the skills of an economist in applying concepts and theories effectively and to consider the impact of sustainability on the economy. The learning outcomes in this strand address the fundamental economic principles of scarcity and choice.

Outline of strands



Figure 4: Outline of strands for Leaving Certificate Economics

This structure is intended to foreground economic questions, enabling students to apply key economic models and principles to explore economic problems and issues, and requiring them to analyse, evaluate and draw conclusions. It is intended that this question-based structure will encourage an inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of economics, so that students develop thinking skills in economics. Students are encouraged to question economic patterns and problems and learn to draw upon, analyse and apply their understanding to real-life economic issues. This structure aims to cultivate curiosity, innovation and critical thinking in students, which are fundamental to encouraging economic and social progress and fostering a culture of enterprise.

Time allocation

The economics specification is designed for 180 hours of class contact time.

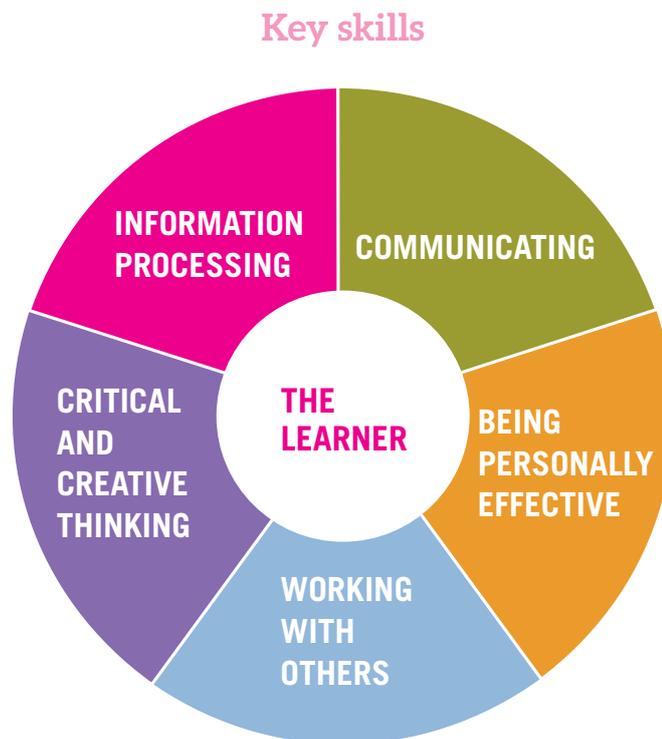


Figure 5: Key skills of senior cycle

There are five skills identified as central to teaching and learning across the curriculum at senior cycle. These are: information processing; being personally effective; communicating; critical and creative thinking; and working with others. It is important for all students to develop these key skills in order to achieve their full potential, both during their time in school and in the future. This will allow them to participate fully in society, including family life, the world of work and lifelong learning. The specification is designed to help students develop skills as they build on their knowledge and understanding of economics and form positive attitudes to learning. The key skills are embedded within the learning outcomes of the specification and will be assessed in the context of the assessment of the learning outcomes.

Students will engage with the fundamental principles and concepts of economics through participation in a range of skills-based activities. They will develop information processing and critical and creative thinking skills by examining and evaluating economic data and information to identify patterns and relationships, offering informed viewpoints and opinions and applying those conclusions to new or existing economic problems. They will develop skills in working with others as they collaborate on research and discussions. As they present and communicate their judgements and opinions, using written, oral and visual representations, students will develop skills in communicating. Students will learn how to access up-to-date and reliable information that they can use to develop a critical approach to economic theories. Students will develop the skill of being personally effective as they apply their skills and knowledge in order to understand the real-life economic and social environment around them and evaluate their learning.

Teaching and learning

Senior cycle students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to become more independent in their learning and to develop a lifelong commitment to improving their learning.

While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are set out separately in this specification, this should not be taken to imply that the strands are to be studied in isolation. The students' engagement and learning are optimised by a fully-integrated experience of all five strands. As students progress through strands they will build on their knowledge, skills and values incrementally.

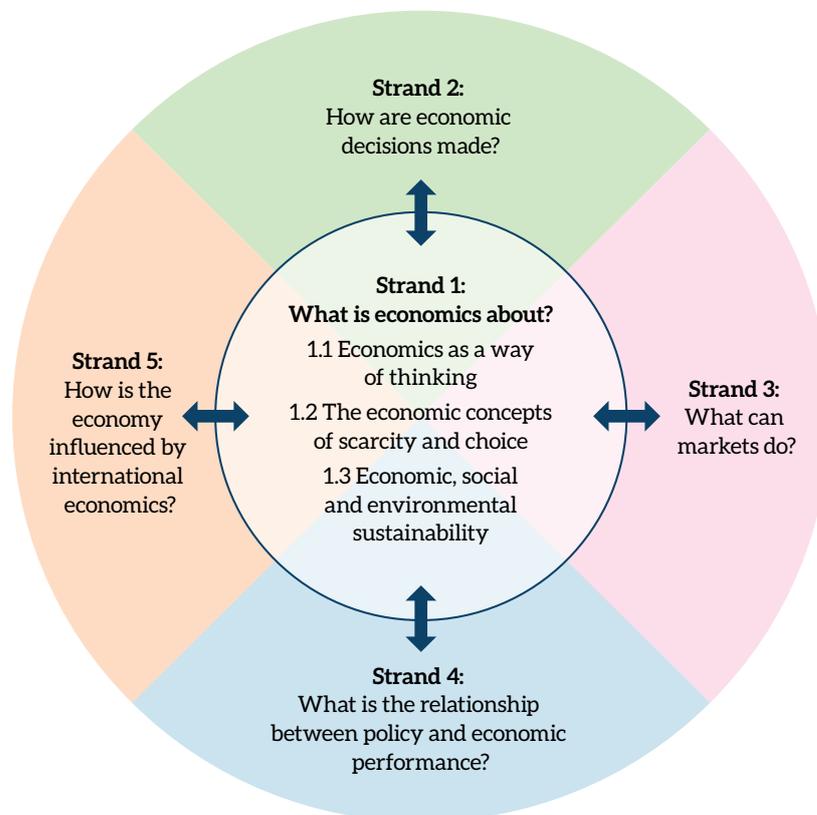


Figure 6: Pathways for teaching and learning

Figure 6 illustrates how areas across the specification are informed by strand 1 and its associated learning outcomes (topics 1.1-1.3). These learning outcomes will not be fully achieved through initial study of strand 1 content but will be achieved through completion of the linked strand and topics (topics 2.1-5.3). In planning for teaching and learning, teachers should identify pathways through the specification where the student is taken from the point of basic knowledge of content through to comprehension and application of their knowledge in increasingly-complex situations up to the point of being able to evaluate information and form opinions.

Leaving Certificate Economics supports the use of a wide range of teaching and learning approaches. The course is inquiry-based in its structure and emphasises the practical application of economic knowledge to the world around us. As students progress they will develop learning strategies that are transferable across different tasks and different subjects enabling them to make connections between economics, other subjects, and everyday experiences. By engaging in research and well-structured group discussions students will develop skills in reasoned argument, listening to each other and reflecting on their own work and that of others.

In planning for teaching and learning, teachers should develop students' understanding of the importance of economic events and the implications of individual, business and government economic decision-making. Increasingly, arguments between economists extend into the public domain and feature widely in the media. By critically evaluating economic arguments and problems students will engage with contemporary issues in economics that affect their everyday lives and will develop an appreciation of the social context of economics.

The inter-connectivity between our economy, our society and our natural environment should also be embedded into classroom teaching and learning, where teachers are encouraged to highlight the social nature of economic activity. Students will integrate their knowledge and understanding of economics with the ethical, social, political and environmental implications and applications of economics.

The variety of activities that students engage in will enable them to take charge of their own learning by setting goals, developing action plans, and receiving and responding to assessment feedback. As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support learning and provide information that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual students. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking higher-order questions, giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning as well as summarising achievement.

Students' participation in the classroom and understanding of economics will be enhanced when teachers help them to connect the content of learning to their lives. By making such connections teachers increase the relevance of the learning for their students and encourage them to find parallels between new learning and their own experiences.

Differentiation

The Leaving Certificate Economics specification is differentiated in three ways: through the learning outcomes of the specification, in the process of teaching and learning, and through assessment.

DIFFERENTIATION THROUGH THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes should be achievable relative to each student's ability level. Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning processes that develop students' knowledge and understanding incrementally, enabling them to analyse, evaluate and apply knowledge to different situations as they progress. Although Ordinary level and Higher level students can both critically analyse, the context, information and results associated with that analysis are presented at different levels. Support materials will provide examples demonstrating expectations at each level.

ORDINARY LEVEL	HIGHER LEVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Students develop basic economic literacy skills, helping them to identify and explain fundamental economic concepts and facts as they relate to the economy and political systems. ▶ Students acquire knowledge, mainly concrete in nature, but with some elements of reflection or theory. ▶ Students demonstrate and use a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and apply their understanding to a variety of problems in mainly familiar but some unfamiliar contexts. ▶ Students apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary, everyday economic issues and problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Students demonstrate depth of knowledge, understanding and application of economic concepts and facts as they relate to the economy and political systems. ▶ Students acquire knowledge, including theoretical concepts and reflective thinking, with significant depth in some areas. ▶ Students analyse information and think creatively to develop their own ideas or perspectives. They will demonstrate and use a broad range of skills to evaluate and use information to justify informed viewpoints in relation to familiar and unfamiliar problems. ▶ Students apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to a wide variety of both familiar and unfamiliar economic issues and problems.

Table 1: Differentiation through the learning outcomes in Leaving Certificate Economics

DIFFERENTIATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Economics provides numerous opportunities for teachers to select materials and to teach the subject in a way that meets the needs and interests of all students. The focus on the inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, which is central to economics, means that students can be engaged in learning activities that complement their own needs and ways of learning. The content matter of the course is specified in broad terms to allow the selection and exploration of topics in ways that are of most interest and relevance to the students.

Students vary in the amount and type of support they need to be successful. The level of support required in any learning activity will differ as students bring different ideas and levels of understanding to it. The use of strategies for differentiated learning such as adjusting the level of skills required, varying the amount and the nature of teacher intervention, and varying the pace and sequence of learning will allow students to interact at their own level.

DIFFERENTIATION IN ASSESSMENT

Assessment of Leaving Certificate Economics will be based on the learning outcomes in the specification. In the written assessment Leaving Certificate Economics will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. At Higher level the learning outcomes will be assessed at the highest skill level as demonstrated in the action verb of the learning outcome. At Ordinary level the learning outcomes will be assessed at a moderate skill level, focusing on the demonstration of a basic understanding of facts and concepts, and the application of concepts and theories. Examination questions will require students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and evaluation appropriate to each level. Differentiation at the point of assessment will also be achieved through the language register of the questions asked, the stimulus material used, and the extent of the structured support provided for examination students at different levels.

In the second assessment component, the research study, the task will be common for Higher level and for Ordinary level. A differentiated marking scheme will apply. Students will be expected to research and process information and data, and apply concepts and theories to evaluate the information and make an informed judgement, producing some original work.

Agricultural economics

This revision of Leaving Certificate Economics, together with the revision of Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science, will obviate the need for the subject agricultural economics, which will be discontinued. The nature of learning outcomes is that they are broad and facilitate teachers to respond to their students' interests and the school's unique context. In this way, consideration can be given by teachers to elements of agricultural economics that might contribute to students' achievement of learning outcomes in this specification. Explanations and examples can be drawn from the agricultural sector by teachers and students to explore and critically analyse economic issues. In microeconomics economic principles can be applied to an individual farm. In macroeconomics there are clear connections between the contribution of the agricultural sector to economic growth, international trade, economic policy and sustainable development.

4

Strands of study

STRAND 1: WHAT IS ECONOMICS ABOUT?

- 1.1 Economics as a way of thinking
- 1.2 The economic concepts of scarcity and choice
- 1.3 Economic, social and environmental sustainability

STRAND 2: HOW ARE ECONOMIC DECISIONS MADE?

- 2.1 The market economy
- 2.2 The consumer
- 2.3 The firm
- 2.4 Government intervention in the market

STRAND 3: WHAT CAN MARKETS DO?

- 3.1 Market structures
- 3.2 The labour market
- 3.3 Market failure

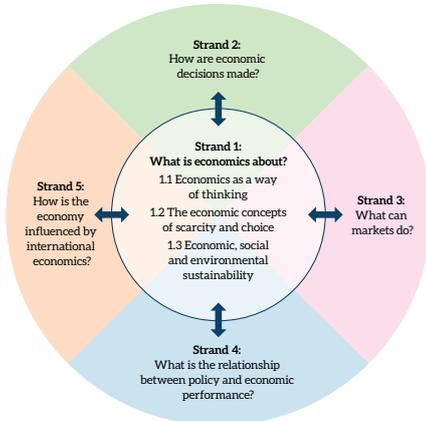
STRAND 4: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICY AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE?

- 4.1 National income
- 4.2 Fiscal policy and the budget framework
- 4.3 Employment and unemployment
- 4.4 Monetary policy and the price level
- 4.5 Financial sector

STRAND 5: HOW IS THE ECONOMY INFLUENCED BY INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS?

- 5.1 Economic growth and development
- 5.2 Globalisation
- 5.3 International trade and competitiveness

Strand 1: What is economics about?



Strand 1 is a unifying strand that sets the context for the Leaving Certificate Economics course. The learning outcomes in this strand address particular knowledge, skills and values which students will cultivate and build on gradually as they progress through the course. This strand relates to both the students' introduction to economics and its progressive development over two years, where its themes are embedded within learning outcomes throughout the other strands. As students progress through each strand, there will be a systematic development of their fundamental knowledge, economic skills and values. Students' learning in economics will be used to support informed and well-reasoned conclusions.

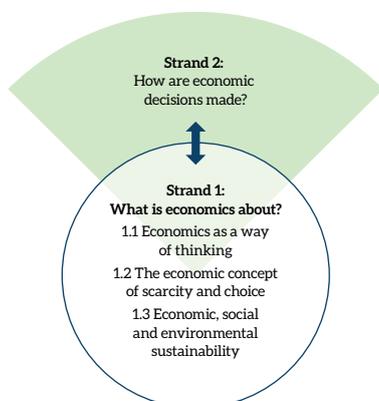
Strand 1 introduces students to the fundamental economic principles of scarcity and choice. Resources are limited and people cannot have all the goods and services they want. Understanding decisions at various levels – individuals, firms, businesses, governments and other institutions, is necessary to understanding the functioning of an economy.

Economic, social and environmental sustainability provides a context in which economics functions today. Sustainable development is about people having satisfying lives and a healthy environment now and in the future. It is essential for the wellbeing of people and the planet that economic growth is achieved without harming society or the environment.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>1.1 Economics as a way of thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ appreciate the role of models, concepts and data for exploring economic behaviour, interactions, policy and outcomes ▶ differentiate between positive and normative economic statements; identify instances of their use in local, national or international media/economic commentary ▶ discuss and evaluate why solutions to economic problems may differ and how economic perspectives on solving economic challenges can change over time ▶ discuss how real world events such as the Great Depression, the Irish economic crises of the 1950s and the Great Recession (from 2007), have shaped our understanding of economics and the response of policy makers ▶ collect, organise, present, analyse and interpret data, with and without the use of technology, to come to an informed view and evaluate current economic issues/policies

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>1.2 The economic concepts of scarcity and choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ explain how scarcity of economic resources relative to wants results in choices being made between competing uses of resources; predict possible consequences of these choices ▶ explain how individuals, firms, businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government interact to produce, consume and distribute economic resources ▶ evaluate the opportunity costs involved in economic decisions made by individuals, firms and the government at local and national levels ▶ discuss the role of incentives and the motivating influences for individuals, firms, the business sector and the government in economic decisions; describe conflicting incentives with reference to local, national or international examples ▶ differentiate between individual markets and aggregate supply and demand; explain the difference in focus between micro and macro economics ▶ explain the principle of specialisation and outline how it may apply to individuals and firms seeking to increase efficiency ▶ analyse how a cost-benefit approach supports effective decision-making; apply a cost-benefit approach to assess who enjoys the benefits and who bears the costs
<p>1.3 Economic, social and environmental sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ outline the concepts of economic, social and environmental sustainability and explain their interconnections ▶ identify indicators of economic growth, social cohesion, inequality, and environmental sustainability; examine relationships between the indicators ▶ consider potential implications of sustainable development for individual behaviour, choice, habits and values; business decisions; government policy.

Strand 2: How are economic decisions made?

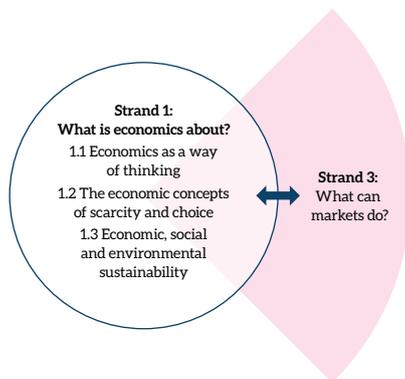


Strand 2 focuses on microeconomics and the market economy. A market exists when buyers and sellers interact. This strand examines how individuals, firms, and government policy makers interact and influence the market. Students explore how individuals, firms and the government respond to incentives. Using models of demand and supply, students analyse how markets operate. Students also examine the role of the government in regulating the marketplace. Students explore how governments actively influence markets by intervening in the operation of the price mechanism.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
2.1 The market economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ construct a graphical representation of demand and supply in a market economy and critically analyse the role of the price mechanism in a market economy ▶ demonstrate how a change in the main determinants of demand and supply can affect changes in the price and quantity of goods and services ▶ examine how advances in technology can impact the market economy
2.2 The consumer (demand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ evaluate the economic role of consumers in an economy, explaining how positive and negative incentives influence consumer activity ▶ critique the assumption that consumers taking part in economic activity behave rationally ▶ using data, calculate Price Elasticity of Demand (PED) and Income Elasticity of Demand (YED) using a formula, and evaluate how PED and YED can be used by individuals, firms and the government to help predict the impact of pricing on revenue/sales ▶ investigate and interpret data patterns in Irish consumers' current expenditure

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
2.3 The firm (supply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ evaluate the economic role of firms in an economy, explaining how positive and negative incentives influence economic activity ▶ graphically represent, calculate and describe the relationship between total, marginal and average revenue and costs ▶ apply the distinction between the short and long run in analysing the implications of a firm's costs and revenue situation ▶ explain and illustrate the conditions for profit maximisation in terms of marginal cost and marginal revenue ▶ analyse the role of economies and diseconomies of scale in determining the size of firms ▶ critique the reasons a firm may pursue objectives other than profit maximisation
2.4 Government intervention in the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ evaluate the economic role of the government in a mixed economy ▶ evaluate how and why the government may use various interventions and incentives, such as taxation and legislation, to influence the price and quantity outcomes in particular markets ▶ evaluate the role and effectiveness of regulation in the Irish economy

Strand 3: What can markets do?

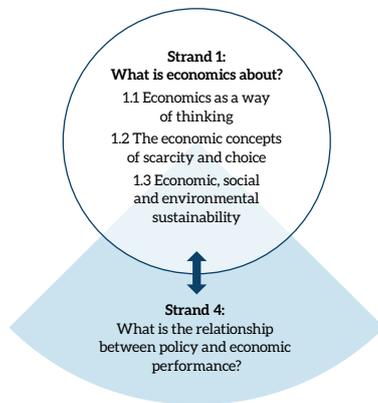


This strand progresses the understanding of the basic operation of a market to exploring the importance of competition in product markets. Students use market structures as models to explore the nature of competition and pricing in the market. They analyse the labour market as an example of a factor market. There is an economic role for the government in a market economy and government decisions and policies have benefits and costs. Governments must provide for social welfare, address environmental concerns and attempt to make markets more competitive. Students explore the reasons for market and government failures in the market economy.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>3.1 Market structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ examine why economists use market structures and models to analyse and find solutions to economic problems ▶ describe and critique the main features of perfectly competitive, monopolistic and oligopolistic product markets ▶ demonstrate and analyse how a change in demand or supply in a market structure impacts on equilibrium ▶ graphically represent, describe and compare market equilibrium under perfect competition, monopoly and monopolistic competition in the short and long run ▶ graphically represent and evaluate the point of profit maximisation for a firm in a monopoly market and a firm in a perfectly competitive market ▶ examine the implications of changing levels of competition and market power on price and output under perfect competition, monopoly and oligopoly ▶ collect data and calculate the concentration of power in a market using a concentration index such as the Herfindahl-Hirschman index; evaluate the implications of its concentration ▶ explain why particular market concentrations are deemed problematic for consumers and are therefore regulated by Irish and European competition authorities

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
3.2 The labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ distinguish between a goods and services market and a factor market ▶ outline the factors of production ▶ examine the factors affecting the demand for labour ▶ construct a graphical representation of the relationship between the wage rate and quantity demanded of labour; analyse the reason for the shape of the demand curve for labour ▶ explain marginal physical productivity and marginal revenue productivity of labour; critically analyse the usefulness to an employer and employee of a knowledge of MPP and MRP ▶ examine the factors affecting the supply of labour ▶ construct a graphical representation of the relationship between the wage rate and quantity supplied of labour; analyse the reason for the shape of the supply curve for labour ▶ construct a graphical representation of labour market equilibrium and show the effect of government interventions such as minimum wage or taxation on equilibrium ▶ discuss the factors that determine wage differentials in the labour market
3.3 Market failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ discuss the factors that lead to market failure such as externalities, monopoly power and imperfect information ▶ determine and debate how governments can overcome market failure using factors such as taxation, regulation and direct government intervention

Strand 4: What is the relationship between policy and economic performance?



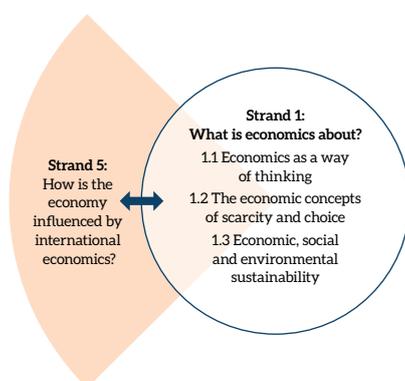
Strand 4 develops the students' understanding of the macroeconomy. Economic performance refers to an assessment of how a country is performing relative to objectives of government policy. The main aim of policy is usually an improvement in the wellbeing of its population. The government establishes and prioritises a number of economic objectives to achieve its goal of improving economic welfare. Economic policies impact on economic growth, employment, price stability and the distribution of income. The government implements a range of policies, subject to the changing economic, political, environmental and social conditions and EU policy priorities. Patterns and trends in economic data help to

guide the implementation of these policies. Students explore how the Irish government strives for economic growth and manages business cycles.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>4.1 National income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ construct and interpret the circular flow of income model; examine the effects of leakages and injections on the circular flow of income in the macroeconomy ▶ differentiate between GDP, GNP, GNI and GNDI as measures of national income; analyse which measure is a more accurate indicator of Ireland's economic performance and economic welfare ▶ critique the limitations of these measures of economic performance ▶ debate the economic and social impact of economic activities in the hidden economies ▶ explain the multiplier effect; apply the multiplier formulae to calculate and evaluate changes to national income in an open and closed economy ▶ investigate data patterns in Ireland's national income, price level, unemployment rate, government expenditure and national debt over a period of time; identify the different phases of business cycles and critically examine the main factors that led to the fluctuations in output

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>4.2 Fiscal policy and the budget framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ identify the main sources of government revenue and expenditure; distinguish between the current and capital parts of the government accounts ▶ discuss measures that a government can take to manage a budget deficit, surplus or balanced budget ▶ differentiate between expansionary, neutral and contractionary fiscal policies and examine how the government could use these policies in an attempt to stabilise the business cycle ▶ discuss the limitations of fiscal policy in stabilising business cycles ▶ discuss how being a member of the EU and the Eurozone influences Ireland's ability to implement fiscal policy ▶ debate the purpose and impact of taxation on the economy as a whole, explaining how tax policy can be used to address inequality
<p>4.3 Employment and unemployment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ investigate data patterns to describe the main features and trends in Ireland's labour force in relation to factors such as age, population, gender, geographic location, employment and unemployment ▶ investigate the causes of unemployment in the Irish context and evaluate its impact on the individual and the economy ▶ examine the relationship between employment and poverty
<p>4.4 Monetary policy and the price level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ explain inflation and deflation and describe how they are measured using a price index such as the Consumer Price Index ▶ evaluate the causes of inflation and consequences of changes in the price level for consumers, firms and the economy as a whole ▶ examine the objective and role of central banks in implementing monetary policy ▶ evaluate how being a member of the Eurozone shapes and influences monetary policy in the Irish economy
<p>4.5 Financial sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ examine the main factors affecting the demand for and supply of cash and credit funds in the money market ▶ explain how commercial banks create credit and outline the consequences for an economy ▶ analyse the factors that influence the level of interest rates, evaluating the impact of changes in interest rates on economic activity ▶ examine the role and effectiveness of current financial institutions and regulators in the operation of financial markets

Strand 5: How is the economy influenced by international economics?



Ireland is a small, open economy and this has implications for our economic activity and performance, and for government policies and decisions. In this strand students explore how an economy develops according to its endowment of resources and its values and apply their understanding of economics to assess the costs and benefits of economic development. Students develop an understanding of how Ireland's economy is influenced by economic events and policy development at a European and international level. They examine how the government attempts to manage inflows and outflows of investment to meet its economic objectives. Students consider how changes in the prosperity of the

international environment can have significant effects on the domestic economy.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
5.1 Economic growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ explain how countries and regions can be profiled by income, wealth and equality ▶ explain how the factors of production, such as labour, capital, human capital and technology, lead to economic development and growth ▶ compare and analyse Ireland's economic development to that of a less-developed nation using the inequality-adjusted human development index ▶ assess and evaluate the effectiveness of a priority area of the Irish government's programme on overseas development
5.2 Globalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ explain the concept of globalisation and discuss the positive and negative implications of globalisation ▶ discuss the reasons for multinational corporations (MNCs) investing in countries outside their home country ▶ investigate data patterns in inflows/outflows of foreign direct investment into Ireland over a period of time and evaluate the effect of multinational corporations/foreign owned industry on Ireland's economy

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT:	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:
<p>5.3 International trade and competitiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ investigate and analyse patterns in Irish trade in terms of quantity and types of goods and services over a period of time; assess the benefits and costs of trade on the Irish economy ▶ describe the main components/the basic composition of Ireland's balance of payments account ▶ discuss the factors that determine a country's competitiveness ▶ explain the principle of comparative advantage and its role in determining competitiveness ▶ discuss the arguments in favour of international trade, trade protection and the fair trade movement ▶ discuss the determinants of exchange rates; analyse the effects of changes in exchange rates on the Irish economy ▶ examine the role and effectiveness of trade agreements and global institutions in the operation and management of international trade

5

Assessment

Assessment for certification is based on the aim, objectives and learning outcomes of this specification. Differentiation at the point of assessment is achieved through examinations at two levels – Ordinary level and Higher level.

Assessment components

There are two assessment components at each level:

- ▶ written examination (80%)
- ▶ research study (20%).

Both components of assessment reflect the relationship between the application of skills and the theoretical content of the specification.

Overview of assessment

MODE		ORDINARY LEVEL WEIGHTING	HIGHER LEVEL WEIGHTING
Written examination		80%	80%
▶ Section A	Choice of short answer questions	20%	20%
▶ Section B	Choice of extended response questions	60%	60%
Research study	Report	20%	20%
Total		100%	100%

Written examination

The written examination will consist of a range of question types. The questions will require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, and an ability to apply, analyse and evaluate appropriate to each level. The key skills are embedded in the learning outcomes and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes. The written examination paper will assess, appropriate to each level:

- ▶ knowledge and understanding of economics
- ▶ application of economic knowledge and understanding from different areas of the specification to economic issues and problems
- ▶ critical thinking, the ability to analyse and evaluate information and to form reasonable and logical argument based on evidence.

The written examination paper will be two and a half hours long and will have two sections.

- ▶ Section A (short answer questions) allows for the knowledge and understanding of the student to be assessed in relation to the five strands of study.
- ▶ Section B (extended response questions) allows the student to be assessed in relation to his/her knowledge and understanding of economics and his/her skills of critical thinking, analysis, evaluation and his/her application of knowledge and understanding. Section B allows the student to analyse and interpret information and data in coming to conclusions and makes connections between different strands of the subject.

Assessment criteria for the written examination

The assessment criteria relate to the performance of Ordinary level and Higher level students in the written examination.

A high level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a thorough knowledge and understanding of economic terms, concepts and theories from across the whole specification with few significant omissions. Students consistently apply their knowledge and understanding of economics to both familiar and new contexts, where appropriate. They accurately analyse and evaluate information and data from different sources; manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be correct. Students present logical arguments and ideas which are clearly based on evidence.

A moderate level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a good knowledge and understanding of economic terms, concepts and theories from many parts of the specification. Students apply their knowledge and understanding of economics to familiar contexts and in some new contexts, where appropriate. They carry out adequate levels of analysis and evaluation on information and data from different sources; much of their manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be correct. Students present arguments and ideas which, in the main, are based on evidence.

A low level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a limited knowledge and understanding of economic terms, concepts and theories. Students select appropriate facts, concepts and theories to apply to familiar contexts. They carry out basic levels of analysis and evaluation of information and data and carry out basic manipulation of data, where appropriate. Students present explanations which are referenced to some evidence.

Research study

Through the research study, students are afforded an opportunity to engage in research, analysis and reflection. The research study will assess the students' ability to use the knowledge, concepts and skills developed in their study of economics to evaluate information and data and make informed conclusions. The key skills of processing data and information, communicating, critical and creative thinking, being personally effective and working with others can be developed through all the learning in this course, and these skills will be applied through the student's engagement in a research study.

The research study will be based on a brief issued annually by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). A common brief will be issued for Ordinary level and Higher level. The brief will outline a number of topics from which students will choose one for their research study. The brief will also outline the parameters for the research study and for the report which will be submitted to the SEC for assessment. The research study will be completed in sixth year.

In particular, the research study requires students to demonstrate that they can:

- ▶ research and process information and data that is relevant and meaningful to understanding a particular economic issue
- ▶ apply concepts and theories in the evaluation of information and data in order to make an informed conclusion.

The report must be the student's own work. Authentication procedures will be put in place to ensure compliance with this requirement. These will include a protocol in relation to the use of internet-sourced material.

Assessment criteria for the research study

The assessment criteria relate to the performance of Ordinary level and Higher level students in the research study, although a differentiated marking scheme will apply.

A high level of achievement in the research study is characterised by a thorough engagement with the topic. The student's report is purposeful and clear. The report is sufficiently detailed to provide concrete evidence of the student's knowledge and understanding but moves beyond a mere re-telling of facts and information to focus on insights and learning gained. Students demonstrate an ability to research, select, organise and process information and data from a variety of sources for relevance and reliability very judiciously. They accurately apply concepts and theories to analyse and evaluate qualitative and quantitative information and data from different sources; manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be correct. Students present informed conclusions which are clearly based on evidence. The student shows a clear capacity to reflect on how the topic relates to his/her own life and how his/her attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour have been influenced.

A moderate level of achievement in the research study is characterised by a good engagement with the topic. The report is clear and, in the main, provides evidence of the student's knowledge and understanding providing some insights on the learning gained. Students can adequately research, organise and process information and data from a variety of reliable sources. They apply relevant concepts and theories to analyse and evaluate qualitative and quantitative information and data from different sources; manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be correct in the main. Students present considered conclusions which are in the main based on evidence. The student shows some capacity to reflect on how the topic relates to his/her own life and how his/her attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour have been influenced.

A low level of achievement in the research study is characterised by some engagement with the topic. The report provides a basic summary of the topic with few personal insights on the learning gained. While the report provides some evidence of the student's knowledge and understanding, the student demonstrates a limited ability to research, organise and process information and data. The application of concepts and theories and analysis and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative information and data may be flawed; manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be basic. Students present some conclusions based on evidence, though they may include irrelevant material. There is limited evidence of a capacity to reflect on how the topic relates to his/her own life and how his/her attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour have been influenced.

Leaving Certificate grading

Leaving Certificate Economics will be graded using an 8-point grading scale at both Ordinary level and Higher level. The highest grade is a grade 1, the lowest a grade 8. The highest seven grades (1-7) divide the marks range 100% to 30% into seven equal grade bands 10% wide, with a grade 8 being awarded for percentage marks of less than 30%. The grades at Higher level and Ordinary level are distinguished by prefixing the grade with H or O respectively, giving H1-H8 at Higher level, and O1-O8 at Ordinary level.

GRADE	% MARKS
H1/O1	90-100
H2/O2	80<90
H3/O3	70<80
H4/O4	60<70
H5/O5	50<60
H6/O6	40<50
H7/O7	30<40
H8/O8	<30

Figure 7: Leaving Certificate grading scale

Reasonable accommodations/inclusion

This economics specification requires that students engage with economic analysis on an ongoing basis throughout the course. In addition, the assessment involves a research study, which accounts for 20% of the total marks awarded. This emphasis on investigative activities may have implications for students with physical/medical/sensory and/or specific learning difficulties. In this context, the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission, is designed to assist students in the Leaving Certificate who have physical/medical/sensory and/or specific learning difficulties.

Appendix

Glossary of action verbs

This glossary is designed to clarify the learning outcomes. Each action verb is described in terms of what the learner should be able to do once they have achieved the learning outcome.

ACTION VERB	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
Analyse:	study or examine something in detail, break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure; identify parts and relationships, and to interpret information to reach conclusions
Apply:	select and use information and/or knowledge and understanding to explain a given situation or real circumstances
Appreciate:	recognise the meaning of, have a practical understanding of
Assess:	judge, evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of something
Calculate:	obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working
Classify:	group things based on common characteristics
Compare:	give an account of the similarities and/or differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both/all of them throughout
Complete:	finish making or doing; bring to a successful conclusion
Conduct:	organise and carry out
Consider:	describe patterns in data; use knowledge and understanding to interpret patterns, make predictions and check reliability
Construct:	develop information in a diagrammatic or logical form; not by factual recall but by analogy or by using and putting together information
Convert:	change to another form
Debate:	argue about a subject, especially in a formal manner
Demonstrate:	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application
Describe:	develop a detailed picture or image of, for example, a structure or a process, using words or diagrams where appropriate; produce a plan, simulation or model
Develop:	progress or improve to become more mature, advanced, or elaborate
Devise:	plan, create or formulate a procedure or system by careful thought
Determine:	recognise or ascertain what makes something different
Differentiate:	recognise or ascertain what makes something different
Discuss:	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses; opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence
Distinguish:	make the differences between two or more concepts or items clear

ACTION VERB	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
Evaluate (data):	collect and examine data to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion in an inquiry or investigation; identify the limitations of data in conclusions; make judgments about ideas, solutions or methods
Evaluate (ethical judgement):	collect and examine evidence to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgments about ideas, solutions or methods
Explain:	give a detailed account including reasons or causes
Examine:	consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and relationships of the issue
Identify:	recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature
Investigate:	observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions
Interpret:	use knowledge and understanding to recognise trends and draw conclusions from given information
Justify:	give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion
Monitor:	observe and check the progress of something over a period of time; keep under systematic review
Predict:	give an expected result of an event; explain a new event based on observations or information using logical connections between pieces of information
Prepare:	make something ready for use or presentation
Present:	promote or propose an idea; deliver or illustrate evidence; show something for others to examine
Propose:	put forward a plan or suggestion for consideration
Recommend:	put forward something with approval as being suitable for a particular purpose
Recognise:	identify facts, characteristics or concepts that are critical (relevant/ appropriate) to the understanding of a situation, event, process or phenomenon
Relate:	associate, giving reasons
State:	provide a concise statement with little or no supporting argument
Suggest:	propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer
Understand:	have and apply a well-organised body of knowledge
Use:	apply knowledge or rules to put theory into practice
Verify:	give evidence to support the truth of a statement

