



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Business

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

Contents

Senior cycle	2
Rationale	4
Aims	5
Continuity and progression	5
Student learning in senior cycle	6
Key competencies	7
Strands of study and learning outcomes	10
Unifying strand: Investigating Business	13
Strand 1: Exploring the Business Environment	15
Strand 2: Understanding enterprise	19
Strand 3: Leading in Business	23
Strand 4: Being Informed and Making Informed Decisions	27
Teaching for student learning	30
Assessment	31
Reasonable accommodations	35
Appendix 1: Glossary of action verbs	37
Appendix 2: Glossary of terms	39

Senior Cycle

Senior cycle aims to educate the whole person and contribute to human flourishing. Students' experiences throughout senior cycle enrich their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall health and wellbeing. Senior cycle has 8 guiding principles.

Senior Cycle Guiding Principles

Wellbeing and relationships

Inclusive education and diversity

Challenge, engagement and creativity

Learning to learn, learning for life

Choice and flexibility

Continuity and transitions

Participation and citizenship

Learning environments and partnerships

These principles are a touchstone for schools and other educational settings, as they design their senior cycle. Senior cycle consists of an optional Transition Year, followed by a two-year course of subjects and modules. Building on junior cycle, learning happens in schools, communities, educational settings, and other sites, where students' increasing independence is recognised. Relationships with teachers are established on a more mature footing and students take more responsibility for their learning.

Senior cycle provides a curriculum which challenges students to aim for the highest level of educational achievement, commensurate with their individual aptitudes and abilities. During senior cycle, students have opportunities to grapple with social, environmental, economic, and technological challenges and to deepen their understanding of human rights, social justice, equity, diversity and sustainability. Students are supported to make informed choices as they choose different pathways through senior cycle and every student has opportunities to experience the joy and satisfaction of reaching significant milestones in their education. Senior cycle should establish firm foundations for students to transition to further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and participate meaningfully in society, the economy and adult life.

The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity. Students vary in their family and cultural backgrounds, languages, age, ethnic status, beliefs, gender, and sexual identity as well as their strengths, needs, interests, aptitudes and prior knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected, and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

At a practical level, senior cycle is supported by enhanced professional development; the involvement of teachers, students, parents, school leaders and other stakeholders; resources; research; clear communication; policy coherence; and a shared vision of what senior cycle seeks to achieve for our young people as they prepare to embark on their adult lives. It is brought to life in schools and other educational settings through:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation, reflection and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate students and enable them to improve
- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

Rationale

Leaving Certificate Business develops students' awareness of the significance of business for the Irish and international economy and helps to foster an understanding of how the world of business works. Students learn how business is relevant to their own lives, develop financial and business literacy, appreciate business in the world around them and how business is shaped by those who work, lead, and manage within the business environment.

The world of business is diverse, dynamic, and evolving, and through their study of Leaving Certificate Business, students learn how consumers, enterprise and governments must adapt to a range of opportunities and challenges such as digitalisation, sustainability, globalisation, ethical and economic concerns. Through their engagement with Leaving Certificate Business, students realise and can evaluate the impact of these issues on the business environment. By exploring the business world from their perspective as consumers and from the perspective of businesses themselves, students will develop a greater appreciation of how business influences the local, national, and international contexts in which it operates and how it contributes to society and the economy.

Through studying Leaving Certificate Business, the development of entrepreneurial thinking is fostered, and students have an opportunity to develop a range of competencies which will enhance students' abilities to communicate, research, problem-solve, and work as part of a team, which are fundamental in our increasingly complex, digital, and interconnected world. This supports students in becoming responsible, informed, and ethically aware and supports their development as confident, competent, and innovative citizens.

In studying Leaving Certificate Business, students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that they require to engage actively and confidently in the business world, both as consumers and within the world of work, while also developing their own financial and business literacy and acquiring the capacity to make informed and rational business-related decisions. Through this learning, they come to better understand the social and environmental impact of business practices and they develop a positive, ethical disposition to enterprise and all aspects of business.

Aims

Students of Leaving Certificate Business develop an appreciation of the importance of business in their daily lives and the world around them and gain a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges within a constantly evolving business environment. Through studying Business, students develop a broad range of competencies and can apply their learning to a range of real-life experiences.

The aims of Leaving Certificate Business are:

- to appreciate the role that business plays in daily life, locally, nationally, and internationally and to recognise opportunities that business can provide.
- to understand enterprise development and the interactions and connections between multiple stakeholders in the world of business, and to be able to apply this knowledge and understanding.
- to appreciate the opportunities and challenges of digital technology and develop an informed and critical understanding of ethical and sustainable business practice.
- to become business and financially literate, conscious, and aware of the importance of their financial wellbeing.
- to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and become confident, informed decision-makers.
- to develop competencies relevant to the dynamic world of business, to their lives, their careers, to further study, to roles as both employers and employees, as entrepreneurs and as business leaders of the future.

Continuity and progression

Leaving Certificate Business builds on the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that stem from learners' early childhood education through to the junior cycle curriculum and provides continuity and progression in business education although students do not need to have studied junior cycle Business Studies in advance of studying Leaving Certificate Business.

Junior cycle

The Junior Cycle Business Studies specification aims to stimulate students' interest in the business environment and how they interact with it. It develops skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that allow them to make informed and responsible decisions with all of the resources available to them, ensuring their and society's well-being, while becoming more self-aware as learners. In Junior Cycle Business Studies, students learn to understand the impact of business on their lives and to develop a set of foundational skills, understanding and values to engage within the business environment and the economy, and for future learning, work, and life, including analytical skills, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and communication. Students develop business-related knowledge and understanding in a number of other junior cycle subjects such as Mathematics where they solve money-related problems and Home Economics where they learn about being an informed consumer and develop financial literacy skills.

Beyond senior cycle

The study of Leaving Certificate Business can lead to many exciting and rewarding careers and builds an excellent foundation for students transferring into the world of work, further education and training, higher education, and entrepreneurship. Leaving Certificate Business provides students with a foundation for a wide range of careers in business, marketing, law, enterprise, and management.

Student learning in senior cycle

Student learning in senior cycle consists of everything students learn **within** all of the subjects and modules they engage with **and** everything students learn which spans and overlaps **across** all of their senior cycle experiences. The overarching goal is for each student to emerge from senior cycle more enriched, more engaged and more competent as a human being than they were when they commenced senior cycle.

For clarity, the learning which spans **across** all of their senior cycle experiences is outlined under the heading 'key competencies'. The learning which occurs **within** a specific subject or module is outlined under the heading 'strands and learning outcomes'. However, it is vital to recognise that key competencies and subject or module learning are developed in an integrated way. By design, key competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of specifications. In practice, key competencies are developed by students in schools via the pedagogies teachers use and the environment they develop in their classrooms and within their school.

Subjects can help students to develop their key competencies; and key competencies can enhance and enable deeper subject learning. When this integration occurs, students stand to benefit

- during and throughout their senior cycle
- as they transition to diverse futures in further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and
- in their adult lives as they establish and sustain relationships with a wide range of people in their lives and participate meaningfully in society.

When teachers and students make links between the teaching methods students are experiencing, the competencies they are developing and the ways in which these competencies can deepen their subject specific learning, students become more aware of the myriad ways in which their experiences across senior cycle are contributing towards their holistic development as human beings.

Key competencies

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop in an integrated way during senior cycle.



Figure 1: The components of key competencies and their desired impact

The knowledge which is specific to this subject is outlined below under 'strands of study and learning outcomes'. The epistemic knowledge which spans across subjects and modules is incorporated into the key competencies.

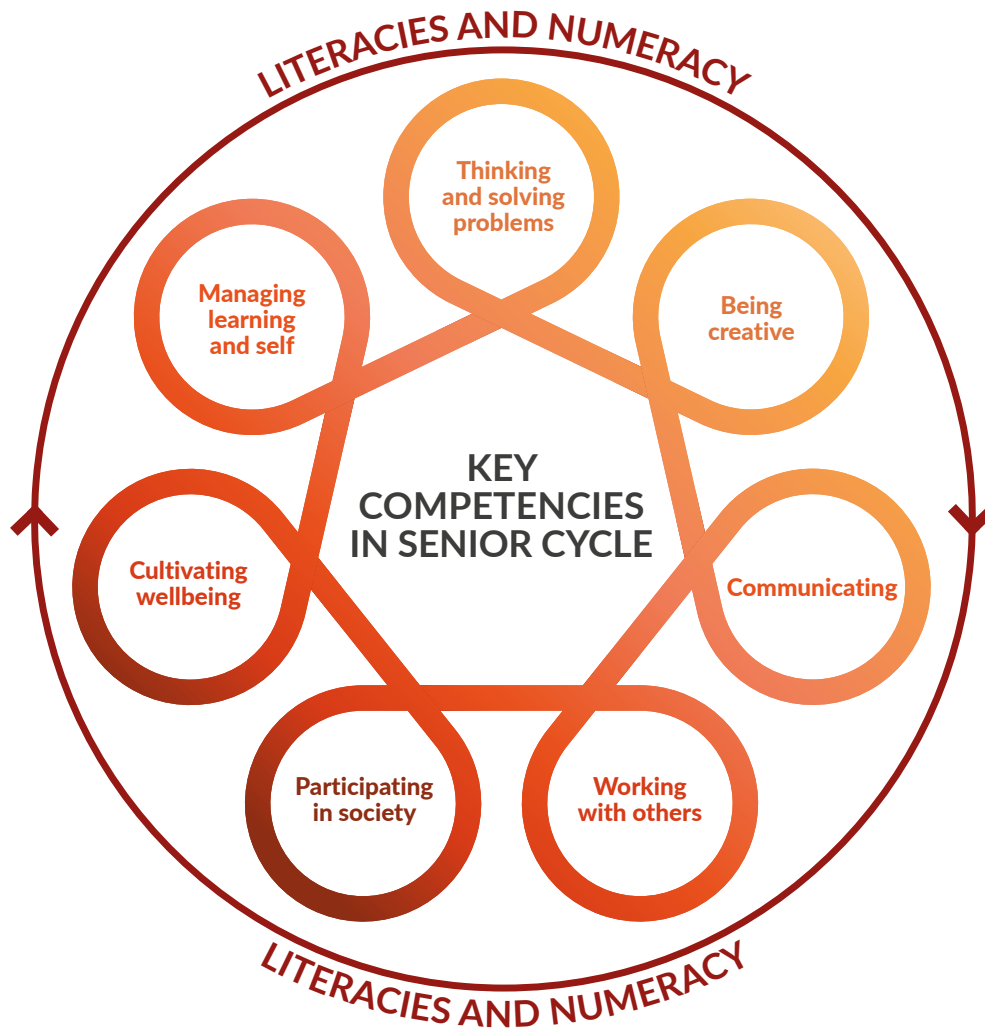


Figure 2: Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy.

These competencies are linked and can be combined; can improve students' overall learning; can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning; and are important across the curriculum.

The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice-versa. Key competencies are supported when students' literacies and numeracy are well developed and they can make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.

The key competencies come to life through the learning experiences and pedagogies teachers choose and through students' responses to them. Students can and should be helped to develop their key competencies irrespective of their past or present background, circumstances or experiences and should have many opportunities to make their key competencies visible. Further detail in relation to key competencies is available at <https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/student-key-competencies/>

The key competencies can be developed in Leaving Certificate Business in a range of ways. Innovative thinking and problem-solving is a cornerstone of success within the dynamic world of business. In Leaving Certificate Business, students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills to enhance their understanding of, and apply their learning to, the real world of business. Students engage on an ongoing basis with business in the media and access, gather and analyse information from a variety of sources. They are encouraged to do so with an open mind, underpinned by a desire to develop a greater understanding of how business works and how it is relevant to their daily lives, their communities, nationally and internationally.

As students engage with the learning outcomes in the Leaving Certificate Business specification, they have an opportunity to explore areas of business that are relevant to their daily lives and their local context. Students also develop an understanding of the importance of innovation and creativity in the world of business and in society more generally, become more confident in taking informed risks, overcoming adversity, and managing change, all of which encourage students to be more creative.

Students are encouraged and supported to develop self-management and self-regulation skills through their engagement with this specification. They explore the importance of planning and developing a project plan, where there are defined goals, while the significance of ongoing monitoring and adjustment where relevant is also emphasised. Students will have opportunities to communicate information, gained from their research while also expressing opinions as part of discussions. Through their engagement with different sources of information and data, students learn the importance of interrogating and acknowledging sources of information while also learning the importance of considering a variety of perspectives.

Leaving Certificate Business provides a wealth of opportunities for students to collaborate and work together. Through their classroom experiences, students will learn to work co-operatively and discuss relevant aspects of business in pairs and groups. This contributes to an appreciation of the potential advantages and challenges of working with others. Students also learn the importance of resolving differences of opinion and conflict while developing an understanding of how conflict can impact on the workplace environment.

In their engagement with Leaving Certificate Business, students develop an understanding of the importance of business in society and develop an understanding of how digital technology has transformed business practices. Students appreciate the importance of both ethical and sustainable business practices and are empowered to make informed choices and decisions as consumers, employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders in business. These competencies are applicable not only in the world of business but also in broader society and in their daily lives.

Strands of study and learning outcomes

This specification is made up of four contextual strands: Exploring the business environment, Understanding enterprise, Leading in business, and Making informed decisions in addition to the unifying strand, Investigating business. The unifying strand is designed to be woven throughout the contextual strands as appropriate.

Four cross-cutting themes are identified—Ethics and sustainability, Entrepreneurial thinking, Business and financial literacy, and Digital transformation—which provide a lens for the learning within the specification and are often interlinked. These themes are woven throughout student learning where appropriate to act as lenses to explore the dynamic world of business. The cross-cutting themes are outlined briefly below.

Ethics and sustainability: Ethical and sustainability considerations are a cornerstone of how businesses transact with society and the environment and are factors in successful business operation. In the dynamic world of business, it is important for organisations to behave ethically, to be transparent and ethically engage with customers, employees, fellow stakeholders, their local community, and the environment.

Entrepreneurial thinking: The development of an entrepreneurial mindset helps students to think broadly, to recognise and act on opportunities, to consider risk, diversify and adapt to change, reach informed conclusions, and learn from their experiences. This helps to foster innovation which drives both personal and business growth.

Business and financial literacy: Business and financial literacy are key literacies in lifelong learning that help to empower students as individuals and as citizens to develop knowledge, behaviours, and dispositions that support making appropriate and informed business and financial decisions.

Digital transformation: Ongoing developments in digital technology have revolutionised the business landscape and disrupted how business operates. Examples of this include (but are not limited to) digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data which all impact on businesses themselves, how customers engage with business, the world of work and how decisions are made. This rapidly changing environment challenges businesses and consumers to embrace innovation and to harness the power of digital technology while also addressing challenges that may arise.

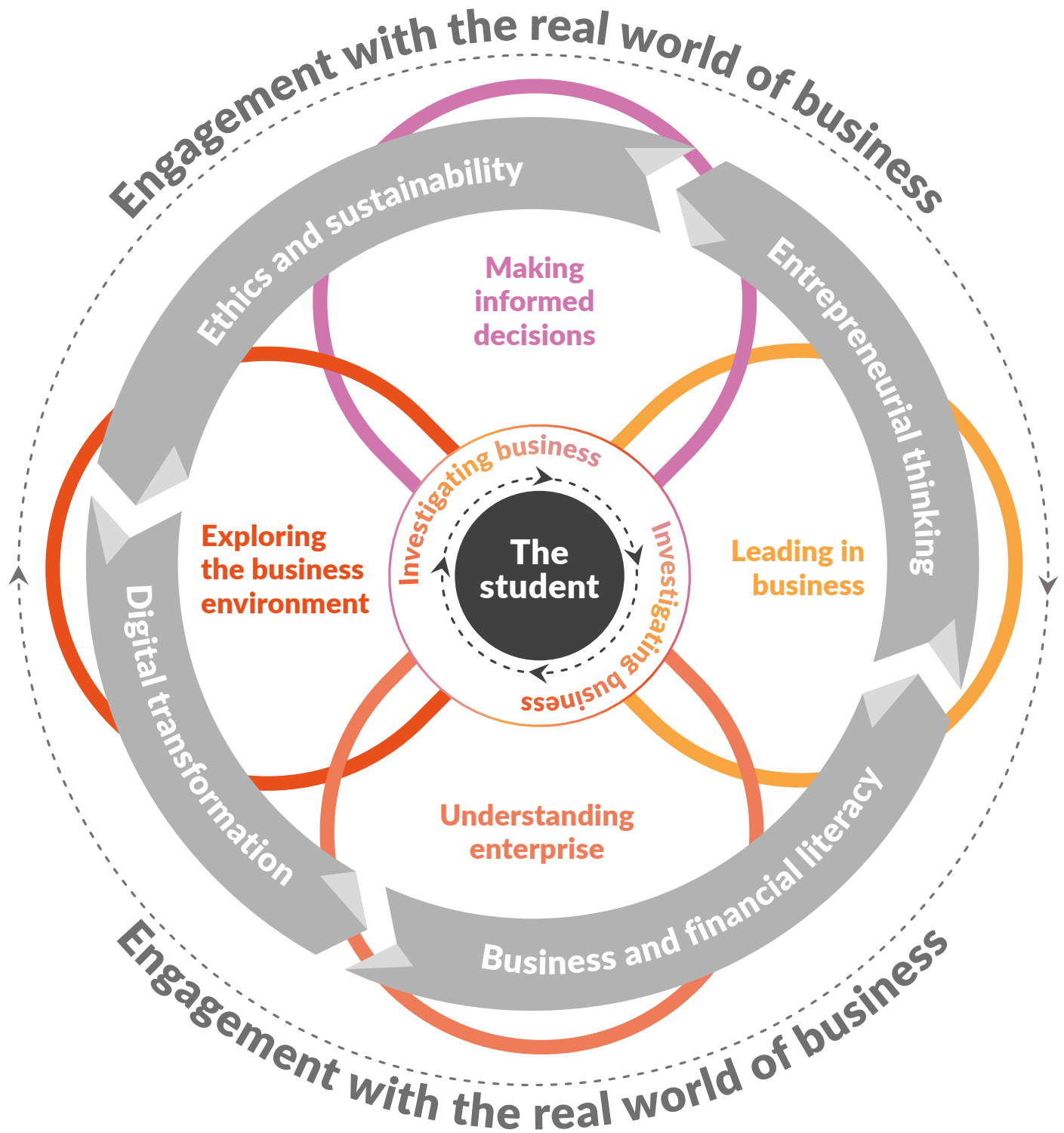


Figure 3: Leaving Certificate Business: Specification Overview.

The Leaving Certificate Business specification is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time. An overview of each strand is provided, followed by a table which sets out the learning for students in two columns. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the specification. Appendix 1 provides a glossary of action verbs used in the learning outcomes. Some concepts and terms within the learning outcomes have been marked with an asterisk (*) to indicate that the concept is explored further in the glossary of terms in Appendix 2.

The learning set out in this specification is assessed at both Higher and Ordinary levels therefore the learning outcomes set out across the strands should be achievable relative to each student's individual aptitudes and abilities. Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning processes that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally, enabling them to apply their key competencies to different situations as they progress. Students studying at both Ordinary level and Higher level will critically engage with Leaving Certificate Business, but the context, information and results arising from that engagement will differ.

Ordinary level	Higher level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students develop their knowledge, understanding and application of business and related competencies, which helps them to identify and explain fundamental aspects of the world of business as they relate to their own lives, enterprise, society, and the impact of national and international factors. • Students acquire knowledge, mainly concrete in nature, but with some elements of reflection • Students analyse information and develop their own ideas or perspectives with some element of critical awareness. They demonstrate and use a moderate range of skills and apply their understanding to justify their viewpoints and to consider a variety of problems in mainly familiar, but some unfamiliar contexts. • Students apply their learning to mostly familiar but some unfamiliar issues within the contemporary world of business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students demonstrate sophisticated understanding and application of business and related competencies, helping them to identify and explain aspects of the world of business as they relate to their own lives, enterprise, society, and the impact of national and international factors. • Students acquire knowledge of significant complexity, reflect on, and apply it in relevant areas. • Students analyse information and think creatively and critically to develop their own ideas or perspectives. They demonstrate and use a broad range of skills to evaluate and use information to justify informed viewpoints and to consider familiar and unfamiliar problems. • Students apply their learning to a wide variety of both familiar and unfamiliar issues within the contemporary world of business.

Table 1: Design of learning outcomes for ordinary and higher levels

Unifying Strand: Investigating Business

This learning permeates all four of the contextual strands and brings to life the practices and norms of working with information and data to arrive at informed conclusions, decisions, and recommendations. Students have an opportunity to build on learning and practices developed, not just in the junior cycle Business Studies classroom, but throughout their junior cycle experience. The learning in this strand also fosters the cross-cutting theme of the entrepreneurial mindset as students engage in a process where they must think broadly, recognise and act on opportunities, consider risks, diversify, and adapt to change and learn from their experiences.

There are many opportunities throughout the specification to develop the learning set out in this strand. The teacher has the freedom and flexibility to plan for this learning across the learning outcomes in the four contextual strands as potential opportunities to develop this learning are woven throughout with opportunities for investigation, evaluation, and analysis. Students can also apply this learning to their exploration of topical business-related reports and news items and in having opportunities to communicate in a range of formats.

Unifying Strand Learning Outcomes

Students learn about

U1. Developing questions to research

- the need to develop and refine questions based on topics to ensure clarity and the availability of sufficient, quality information and/or data using SMART objectives*

U2 Managing information

- the importance of using a range of information and data; considering a variety of perspectives, credibility of the source of the information/data; the context and accuracy of the information/data, assessing information/data for potential bias, reliability, and value.
- the need to analyse information and data from a range of perspectives and ensure that the data and information gathered is representative and comprehensive.

Students should be able to

1. develop a range of questions to research

1. identify relevant data, evidence and/ or information on business related issues from a range of sources.
2. assess the accuracy, credibility, and reliability of sources.
3. accurately record and acknowledge sources of data, evidence and/or information being used.
4. identify the key points or ideas in each source.
5. analyse their sources of information to determine the importance of an issue for different individuals and/or groups.
6. identify any gaps in information and data and assess the impact of this on drawing informed conclusion(s).

Students learn about

Students should be able to

U3 Project planning

- the significance of a detailed project plan and of monitoring progress as part of project management. The need for a project plan that has a clear purpose, goals and criteria for success and includes roles and responsibilities, resources, objectives, a detailed time schedule, risk assessment, monitoring, and evaluation.

1. demonstrate understanding of the importance of clearly defined purpose, goals, and criteria for success in a project.
2. outline the main elements of a project plan and develop a project plan which includes these main elements.
3. demonstrate understanding of the importance of monitoring and evaluating project progress.

U4 Analysing and evaluating information

- the need to analyse and evaluate findings in order to draw informed conclusion(s).

1. analyse and interpret information and data.
2. evaluate the range of perspectives within the findings.
3. synthesise findings to create new or enhanced understanding.
4. appraise the value of this information.
5. evaluate findings to make informed decision(s), reach informed conclusion(s) or make recommendation(s).

U5 Presenting findings and perspectives

- the importance of communicating in a format and style that is appropriate to the target audience.

1. use appropriate forms of communication (oral, visual, written, multimodal) for different purposes and audiences.
2. use graphs/charts/diagrams /graphics to support the presentation of their findings.
3. identify how and why their perspectives may have changed based on their research.
4. present conclusion(s), perspective(s) and/or recommendation(s) clearly and logically using business terminology and concepts correctly and effectively.

U6 Acknowledging sources

- the importance of recording and acknowledging all sources of information* whether primary or secondary, regardless of the format.

1. clearly and accurately record and acknowledge all sources of data and information.

Strand 1: Exploring the Business Environment

Ireland is a small, open economy which has implications for business, for government policies and decisions and ultimately, for consumers. Students explore how the government makes decisions that impact on business, and how business impacts on society, the environment, and the economy. They explore how developments at national, European, and international levels impact on the world of business and consider how digital developments and international trade* can impact on consumers and businesses alike.

In this strand students will develop an understanding of the business environment. Students will achieve this through considering the different forms of business organisations and the importance of different stakeholders and how they interact. Students will explore the influence of policy on business and consider how business and business interests can impact on policy.

As an island nation, access to trading blocs is a key factor for business development. Ireland's membership of the EU is also significant for Irish businesses and students will analyse and evaluate Ireland's membership of the EU and the opportunities and challenges involved. Students will learn about the world of global business and how Ireland's open economy can benefit from international trade, while also recognising the associated challenges. Exploring the influence of technology and the potential of Foreign Direct Investment will also help to inform student understanding of the dynamic world of business.

Through engaging with this learning students will develop their ability to investigate, analyse and evaluate and will appreciate the significance of the national and international business environment while developing their business literacy. Students will have an opportunity to explore topical business issues and will be empowered to reach informed conclusions and apply their learning across their study of Leaving Certificate Business.

Strand 1: Learning Outcomes

Students learn about

1. Key stakeholders in business

- key stakeholders in business (including business owners, investors, employees, consumers, suppliers, local community, and government), their importance in business and their interdependencies, including the needs and wants of different stakeholders at different stages of business development.

Students should be able to

1. outline the key internal and external stakeholders in a business and demonstrate their importance in the business environment.
2. demonstrate how stakeholders interact and identify potential conflict between stakeholders.
3. suggest appropriate ways of avoiding and resolving conflict between stakeholders.
4. conduct stakeholder mapping* and explain the importance of prioritising different stakeholder interests.

Students learn about

Students should be able to

2. Forms of business, business regulation and governance

- the different types of business that operate, including both public, private, semi-state and not for profit enterprises*.
- the nature of business ownership and how this may evolve over the lifecycle of a business (including nationalisation and privatisation). The types of organisations explored should include sole traders, partnerships, private limited companies, public listed companies, franchises, co-operatives and public sector organisations.
- how organisations are regulated both internally and externally including audit, risk management and compliance.
- the significance of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors* in business governance.

1. distinguish between public, private, and not for profit enterprises and analyse the contribution of each of these types of enterprise both locally and nationally.
2. outline how business ownership differs between different types of organisations and how ownership can change over time.
3. outline the purpose of regulation in business and investigate how organisations are regulated both internally and externally.
4. explain what is meant by governance in an organisation.
5. outline the three factors considered in an ESG report.

3. Business and the economy

- the relevance of specific economic indicators including inflation, employment rates, interest rates, economic growth and development, exchange rates, and consumer confidence for business development and growth.
- The value of the business economy in Ireland including turnover and employment patterns.

1. explain how economic indicators can impact on business development and growth.
2. outline the value of the business economy in Ireland.

4. The influence of national and EU policy

- how Irish government policy* impacts across different sectors of the economy, how policy and legislation differ, and how stakeholders in business can inform and influence policy development (including interest groups and lobbying).

1. outline three Irish government policies that impact on three different sectors of the economy in Ireland*.
2. explain the difference between government policy and legislation.
3. outline the role played by business in the development of national policy.

Students learn about

- the key actors in EU policy development (including the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Central Bank).
- The difference between EU regulations, directives and opinions based on how the Irish government must respond at national level.
- how the EU impacts on business activity in Ireland with a focus on the purpose of the directive/legislation, how it has been implemented in Ireland, how it can impact both positively and negatively on different stakeholders, and whether it fosters ethical and sustainable business practice and/or the use of technology.

5. Irish business globally and internationally

- the importance of trading blocs for Irish businesses, Ireland's membership of the EU and how this can impact on the Irish economy, businesses, and consumers.
- the international business market and why organisations based in Ireland may choose to expand internationally and the factors to be considered including taxes and tariffs, costs, exchange rates, regulation, competition, and language/culture.
- the significance of the balance of payments and balance of trade.
- the social and environmental consequences of globalisation* including political risks, financial risks, and cultural barriers.

Students should be able to

4. identify the key decision-makers in European policy development.
5. distinguish between European regulations, directives, and opinions.
6. evaluate the effect of one EU regulation of their choice and one EU directive of their choice on business activity in Ireland.¹

1. explain what is meant by a trading bloc and discuss why these are important for businesses in the Irish economy.
2. identify the trading blocs most relevant for Irish businesses.
3. evaluate Ireland's membership of the EU from the perspective of the economy, businesses, and consumers.
4. outline the factors to be considered when trading internationally.
5. explain why Irish businesses trade globally with reference to Ireland's open economy and compare the challenges and benefits of trading in an international environment.
6. distinguish between balance of payments and balance of trade and calculate both based on figures given.
7. evaluate the impact of Irish organisations trading internationally, with a focus on both positive and negative impacts and the social and environmental impact of globalisation.
8. explain how globalisation can increase interdependence* and evaluate the consequences of this for both businesses and consumers.

¹The regulation and directive evaluated here must be different to any legislation explored in section one and section three of Strand Four

Students learn about

- the role played by technology in globalisation including trade, work practices, and how the business operates.
- the concept of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and how Ireland attracts FDI (including human capital* development, pro-enterprise policy, access to markets, and research).
- the opportunities and challenges of FDI for Ireland in terms of employment, revenue, research, infrastructure, and innovation.

6. Applying my learning

- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

Students should be able to

9. evaluate the role of technology in globalisation.
 10. explain what is meant by Foreign Direct Investment and investigate how the Irish government promotes Foreign Direct Investment.
 11. outline the contribution of Foreign Direct Investment to the Irish economy.
-
1. analyse information from the news and media related to the business environment and provide an informed opinion or perspective.

Strand 2: Understanding enterprise

This strand supports student engagement with the dynamic world of business through developing an understanding of strategic planning and the significance of business models. In this strand students will develop an understanding of enterprise and entrepreneurship in its broadest sense and will recognise the importance of both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in the world of business and its significance for the individual, the community, and the wider economy.

In this strand students will develop an understanding of business plans and business models and will apply this knowledge and understanding to different aspects of enterprise development.

In engaging with the learning outlined in this strand, students will explore idea development, the importance of planning, growth and development and operations and finance. Students will focus on the interrelationships

between market research, the marketing mix and consumer behaviour, and will use a range of analytical tools to draw informed conclusions. The importance of managing risk is considered in addition to the need for ethical and sustainability considerations and the potential of harnessing the power of digital.

Through engaging with the learning in this strand, students will develop their capacity to analyse and evaluate. Students will value both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship and have an increased understanding of the need for innovation while developing their business literacy. In the study of this strand students will be empowered to discuss and present informed opinions on a range of topical business issues and will apply their learning to information from the news and media.

Strand 2: Learning Outcomes

Students learn about

1. Enterprise in its broadest sense

- the range of different reasons for starting an enterprise; how enterprise and innovation are present in, and important for, government, society, business, the community, and their own lives.
- the competencies that support innovation and enterprise development.
- the role of the Irish government in supporting business and enterprise in Ireland both locally and nationally.

Students should be able to

1. identify examples of innovation, intrapreneurship, and entrepreneurship in their local community, nationally and internationally, and explain the importance of innovation for business, the economy and society.
2. identify the competencies* of innovators and outline why these are significant when starting a business.
3. investigate the role of government in fostering enterprise and supporting business development and growth.

Students learn about

2. Idea development

- how business ideas are developed
- the significance of design thinking* (including the four phases of clarify, ideate, develop, and implement) to support idea development and the importance of evaluating a business idea to determine the potential future viability of the business.

3. Business planning

- the importance of a coherent business plan at different stages of business development and how it supports business start-up, operations, funding and development, and the need to consider both ethical and sustainability factors.
- the role of business models* in generating income and creating, delivering, and capturing value for both the enterprise and its customers.
- the importance of the business model and the elements of the business model canvas*.
- a range of business models including retail, manufacturing, subscription, franchise, and affiliate.
- the digital economy including marketplace, subscription, crowdfunding and advertising-supported models; the similarities and differences when compared to non-digital business models, and how businesses have adapted to or developed based on the digital economy and other internal or external drivers.

4. The target market

- the marketing mix and the importance of identifying the target market; conducting market research and marketing for a business including product/service, pricing, promotion, people, packaging, process, and place.

Students should be able to

1. determine the factors that impact on the development of business ideas.
2. outline design thinking as an innovative approach to idea development and appreciate how the process is iterative and both solution- and person-centred.
3. appreciate the importance of conducting a feasibility study to evaluate a business idea.

1. appreciate the importance of having a business plan and outline the key functions of a business plan.
2. outline the importance of ethics and sustainability when planning in business.
3. explain what is meant by a business model and appreciate its role within the business plan.
4. identify the key elements of the business model canvas and outline the role of business models in successful enterprises.
5. identify and compare the most common business models.
6. outline how digital technology is a driver of change in business.
7. identify and compare a number of technology-driven business models and outline the key characteristics of each model.

1. appreciate the importance of market research in identifying the target market and discuss how businesses conduct market research.
2. outline the elements of the marketing mix and explain their significance for a business and how they are influenced by the target market.

Students learn about

- identifying the Unique Selling Point (USP), developing and modifying the marketing mix.
- how technology changes market research and marketing.
- the importance of ethics and sustainability in marketing including its influence on marketing companies and on different marketing strategies.
- the potential of a range of analytical tools to analyse customer interest and the external environment.

5. Operations and finance

- the elements of the operational aspect of the business including the key partners a business may have, the key activities of the business and the key resources, while also understanding how these may evolve over time.
- the financial aspect of a business including the key costs incurred (variable costs, fixed costs) and the potential revenue streams (single transactions or recurring sales) for the business, understanding that these may evolve over time and that the business may need to take action to address issues that arise.

6. Growth, development, and expansion

- the importance of identifying potential competition and competitors and the significance of a business' competitive advantage and how a business can capitalise on this.

Students should be able to

3. develop a marketing mix for a product and a service of choice and provide a USP analysis for each.
4. evaluate and suggest ways of improving an existing marketing mix.
5. demonstrate an understanding of the disruptive impact* and influence of digital technology on market research and marketing.
6. evaluate the influence of ethics and sustainability on marketing.
7. use a power interest grid* to analyse customer interest and adjust the marketing mix as necessary.
8. conduct a STEEPLE analysis* to develop greater understanding of the external environment and identify issues of concern for a business.

1. outline the main elements that are key to the operational model of a business and explain why these may change over time.
2. identify the key costs and sources of finance for a business and explore why these may change over the lifecycle of the product or service.
3. analyse the cashflow of a business and recommend a suitable course of action for the business to address the issues arising from the analysis.

1. demonstrate an understanding of the importance of identifying competition in the market.
2. use Porter's five forces model* to identify and analyse competition in the market and use these findings to identify the competitive advantage of a business.

Students learn about

- how enterprise is not static and how a business may develop and may use technology to support growth.
- the importance of considering both potential benefits and potential costs when making business decisions.
- how a business may have to adapt to external drivers (including customer demographics, competition, and economic factors) to enhance financial sustainability, and how the business can address issues through considering their product/service, pricing, promotion, people, packaging, process, and place and/or business model.

Students should be able to

3. outline the strategies employed by a business to adapt or expand.
4. appreciate the potential of technology to support adaption and expansion.
5. conduct a cost-benefit analysis to analyse the implications of business expansion.
6. outline strategies that a business may employ to adapt based on their marketing mix and/or business model.

7. Managing risk

- the nature of risk within entrepreneurship and the importance of risk management in business.
- a range of risk management strategies including avoidance, spread, prevention and the importance of choosing suitable insurance products.

1. outline the challenges and risks associated with enterprise and entrepreneurship.
2. outline the importance of assessing and managing risks in business.
3. analyse a range of risk management strategies that can be used to respond to the challenges and risks in business.

8. Applying my learning

- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

1. analyse information from the news and media about enterprise and innovation and provide an informed opinion or perspective.

Strand 3: Leading in Business

This strand explores both leading and managing in business and students develop an understanding of how leadership and management impact on the successful development of an organisation, while also recognising the significance of ethical and cultural considerations in increasingly diverse workplaces.

In this strand, approaches to recruitment, selection and appraisal are explored and students have an opportunity to consider the impact of digital technology and to recognise the value of human capital and professional development in the workplace. The significance of organisational culture is also considered in this strand, with an opportunity for students to consider the opportunities and challenges associated with new ways of working and to understand the importance of focusing on employee wellbeing.

Effective communication is a key factor in successful organisations and in this strand, students explore different modes of communication. A lack of effective communication can be a contributing factor to conflict in the workplace and students have an opportunity to

consider the causes of conflict, while also exploring how best to address such conflict.

In the dynamic world of business, it is vital for organisations to be able to manage change and to plan for unforeseen circumstances. In this strand students learn about the importance of planning for change in an organisation, while also developing an understanding of the reasons that underpin resistance to change. The importance of contingency planning is also explored, and students will recognise the need for effective crisis management.

Through engaging with this learning students will develop their ability to investigate, analyse, evaluate, and innovate, and will appreciate the key role played by effective leaders and managers in the dynamic world of business. Students will have an increased awareness of ethical and cultural issues, the significance of digital technology and innovation and will have a greater understanding of the 21st century workplace and work practices.

Strand 3 Learning outcomes

Students learn about

1. Leading and managing an organisation

- the role of leaders and managers in organisations.
- the significance of organisational culture and applying innovative approaches within organisations.
- how leadership styles influence organisations.

Students should be able to

1. distinguish between leadership and management in organisations.
2. analyse the significance of organisational culture and innovation in successful organisations.
3. outline how leadership styles foster organisational culture and organisational innovation.

Students learn about

- the reasons that conflict may arise in the workplace and how it impacts on the workplace; different approaches to conflict resolution; conciliation, and arbitration as external approaches to conflict resolution.

Students should be able to

4. appreciate the range of reasons for conflict in the workplace and demonstrate an understanding of how conflict may impact on the workplace.
5. analyse how both employees and employers may deal with conflict internally.
6. outline different external approaches to conflict resolution.

2. Leading and managing people

- the range of factors that impact on workforce planning in an organisation, the key stages in recruitment including identification, application and selection, and the significance of ethics in workforce planning (including equality, diversity, and inclusion).
- how digital developments change the process of recruitment and selection
- motivation and the importance of appraisal in the workplace, and how organisations may adapt different approaches to appraisal including self-appraisal, formative and summative appraisal and the 360-degree approach to review employee performance and motivate employees.
- the significance of human capital* management, induction, training and professional development for organisations and employees, and how employees can learn from their experiences.
- teamwork and how collaboration impacts on both the employee and the organisation
- how both employers and employees can contribute to more sustainable workplaces

1. discuss the internal and external factors that impact on workforce planning.
2. outline the key stages in the recruitment process and suggest how organisations might adopt ethical approaches to recruitment.
3. evaluate how digital technologies influence the process of recruitment and selection.
4. investigate the factors that impact on employee motivation.
5. describe what is meant by effective employee appraisal.
6. identify a number of approaches to appraisal and analyse how these approaches might contribute to employee motivation.
7. explain what is meant by human capital management and outline how the organisational environment is a factor in its development.
8. investigate the different types of training and professional development that may be offered to employees and outline why ongoing training and professional development is an important aspect of human capital management.
9. appreciate the opportunities and challenges associated with working in teams for both employees and employers.
10. outline how employers and employees can work together to create a more sustainable workplace.

Students learn about

- the disruptive impact of digital technology with a particular focus on how diverse ways of working including remote and blended work practices impact on both employers and employees and the world of work.
- the importance of maintaining a focus on wellbeing in the workplace and the key role of the leader in fostering corporate wellbeing.

3. The importance of communication

- the significance of communicating effectively in an organisation including supporting collaboration, avoiding conflict, increasing engagement, promoting positive culture, managing change, and promoting innovation.
- the parameters around different modes of communication (verbal and non-verbal) and the impact of technology on communication (including modes, speed, cost, access, collaboration, sustainable business practices, productivity, and security).
- how to improve communication (including setting clear goals, listening actively, ensuring ongoing engagement, and choosing the correct mode of communication).

4. The rationale for planning

- the internal and external changes that impact on an organisation, how resistance to change can arise, and how to foster innovation and approach resistance to change.

Students should be able to

11. investigate how digital technology impacts on the workplace.
12. identify the opportunities and challenges associated with remote and blended working arrangements for both employees and employers.
13. analyse the ethical and sustainability issues associated with remote and blended working.
14. outline the importance of corporate wellness* and investigate the impact of corporate wellness on employee motivation and organisational culture.
15. identify the role of leadership in promoting corporate wellness.

1. explain the importance of communication in an organisation.
2. identify different modes of communication and analyse the efficacy of each mode as an approach within an organisation.
3. discuss how technology enables communication in organisations.
4. discuss how communication might be improved in an organisation.

1. outline the internal and external changes that organisations encounter through their lifetime.
2. analyse the reasons for resistance to change in an organisation.
3. identify the practices that promote innovation and entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial thinking.
4. outline a range of approaches which may help to overcome resistance to change.

Students learn about

- the significance of strategic planning as an ongoing process in an organisation, how it supports leading and managing change in an organisation, and how a force field analysis can be used to support strategic decision-making.
- the importance of contingency planning for effective crisis management which may arise locally or nationally, and the need to consider a range of factors including cost, time and risk when developing a contingency plan.

5. Applying my learning

- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

Students should be able to

5. outline what is meant by strategic planning and appreciate the importance of strategic planning as an ongoing process.
6. describe the benefit of strategic planning for an organisation.
7. explain the importance of planning for change and discuss how a force-field analysis* could support strategically planning for change in an organisation.
8. explain what is meant by contingency planning in terms of crisis management in an organisation.
9. discuss the factors that should be considered when developing a contingency plan.

1. analyse information from the news and media related to leadership in business and provide an informed opinion or perspective.

Strand 4: Being Informed and Making Informed Decisions

As students move into senior cycle they are preparing for life beyond school. In this strand students will develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with making informed decisions particularly in areas that affect their own lives.

They will consider their role and experience as consumers and will be able to identify their rights and responsibilities enshrined in the relevant legislation and will apply the cross-cutting themes of ethics and sustainability when reflecting on their role as consumers. They will also have an opportunity to consider how digital technology has impacted on consumer choice.

As they prepare for adult life, the learning in this strand will support students to develop the capacity

to make informed financial decisions while also understanding how the financial market is regulated and how technology impacts financial services through fintech. Students will also have an opportunity to learn about the workplace and to determine their rights and responsibilities as an employee and how government decisions impact on workers.

Through engaging with this learning students will appreciate the need to make informed decisions as consumers, when making financial choices and in the workplace. Students will have an increased awareness of ethics and sustainability and the significance of advances in technology and will be able to apply their learning to discuss related news stories in the media.

Strand 4 Learning outcomes

Students learn about

1. Making informed decisions as a consumer

- how different pieces of legislation set out both rights and responsibilities that consumers should be aware of regarding products, services and digital services and their promotion; and how these rights change when buying outside the EU.
- the importance of ethics and sustainability including the consequences of participation in shadow economy for the consumer, the business, and the economy, and how consumers contribute to the circular economy*.
- how technology impacts both positively and negatively on the consumer.

Students should be able to

1. investigate the rights and responsibilities of consumers using current relevant consumer legislation.²
2. demonstrate how consumer behaviour might be informed by ethical and sustainability concerns.
3. investigate how digital technology impacts on consumer behaviour.

² Students are required to engage with current legislation to ensure that they explore relevant information as it relates to existing business practice. Where relevant legislation changes during the two years of study, students can engage with the existing or newer legislation.

Students learn about

- how European regulation provides protection for personal data.
- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

2. Making informed financial decisions

- the importance of informed decision making in relation to saving and investing; considering factors including inflation, risk, interest rates, taxes and charges, and short/medium and long term and return on investment.
- the importance of analysing potential risks when acquiring financial products/services and why consumers should consider switching between product providers.
- the opportunities and challenges of fintech* for consumers.
- the criteria used to determine credit worthiness and credit ratings, what can cause a poor credit rating and how a person's credit rating travels with them over time.
- regulation of the financial products market both by the Irish government and the EU, and how to manage risk including those related to pensions, mortgages, credit-based products, and crypto-finance.
- the advantages and disadvantages of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)* as an electronic equivalent to cash, and how it differs from stablecoins and crypto assets.
- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

Students should be able to

4. investigate how personal data is protected by European regulation.
5. appreciate the importance of making informed consumer decisions and use this understanding to discuss consumer-related stories in the news and media.

1. examine the factors to be considered with saving, investing, and borrowing.
2. explain risk tolerance from a consumer perspective and investigate the range of risks facing consumers of financial products and how consumers can identify reliable sources of financial information.
3. outline the importance of considering switching between financial product providers.
4. explain how technology impacts the provision of financial products and outline the benefits and challenges of fintech.
5. outline how a person's credit rating is established, the factors that can impact on credit rating, and the consequences of a poor credit rating.
6. investigate how the financial services industry is regulated and discuss the potential consequences of under-regulation.
7. outline a range of financial fraud activities and discuss how consumers can protect themselves.
8. describe Central Bank Digital Currency and examine the potential impact of digital currency on consumers and businesses.
9. appreciate the importance of making informed financial decisions and use this understanding to discuss finance-related stories in the news and media.

Students learn about

3. Being an informed employee

- the rights and responsibilities of employees set out in different pieces of legislation (including pay, conditions, health and safety, discrimination, security of employment and dismissal) and how employees have both legislative and non-legislative protection.
- the function of trade unions in supporting employees in the workplace.
- the impact of on-demand, freelance jobs where workers are paid 'per piece' on employees.
- how government decisions can have an effect on those in employment.
- how their learning in Leaving Certificate Business can be applied to their daily lives and help them to understand business-related stories in the media.

Students should be able to

1. examine how employees are protected both legislatively and non-legislatively in the workplace.
2. investigate how the rights and responsibilities of both employees and employers are set out in current relevant employment legislation.³
3. describe the role of trade unions in the workplace.
4. discuss the role of the gig-based economy* and identify the associated opportunities and challenges for workers.
5. investigate how the annual government budget impacts on workers.
6. appreciate the importance of making informed decisions as employee and use this understanding to discuss workplace-related stories in the news and media.

³ Students are required to engage with current legislation to ensure that they explore relevant information as it relates to existing business practice. Where relevant legislation changes during the two years of study, students can engage with the existing or newer legislation.

Teaching for student learning

The learning outcomes set out in this specification support the use of a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning. The specification places the student at the centre of learning and emphasises the importance of engagement with business in the real world. As students progress through their learning, they will develop a range of key competencies that are transferable across different tasks and different disciplines, enabling them to make connections between Leaving Certificate Business, other subjects, the dynamic world of business and their daily lives. Through regular engagement in discussion and groupwork, students will develop skills in reasoned argument, listening to each other and reflecting on their own work and that of others.

Opportunities for student engagement with the unifying strand, Investigating Business, across the two years of study is an important aspect of teaching and learning in Leaving Certificate Business. In their planning teachers can provide ample opportunities for students to engage with topical issues and apply the learning set out in the unifying strand which will also be applied across the four contextual strands. Students benefit from this process being approached in a developmental manner with repeated exposure, in different contexts over time.

Students should also regularly engage with the world of business through reflecting on their own understanding and other perspectives on business developments through news reports and items in the media. This may be supported through students maintaining an investigative folder across the two years of study in which they compile a collection of information from the media and other appropriate sources upon which they reflect in light of their learning in the business classroom and their own experience of the world of business. While this will not be formally assessed, developing an investigative folder will support students in applying their learning to the real world of business, in developing informed perspectives, and in gathering resources which they may draw upon as they complete their AAC.

Through the cross-cutting themes, students will have an opportunity to consider the world of business and its intersection with ethics, sustainability, business, and financial literacy, all of which permeate the world of business and impact on our daily lives. They will develop an understanding of the transformative nature of digital technology and appreciate the potential of entrepreneurial thinking and innovation. Students will learn to analyse and evaluate information and will learn to use this to make informed decisions and to support their individual perspectives.

The ability to work collaboratively is an important skill in the world of business. Students learn about teamwork in Strand 3 in particular and should be afforded opportunities to engage in groupwork in the Business classroom including opportunities to discuss and share their perspectives.

The variety of learning activities that students engage in will enable them to take charge of their own learning through setting goals, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and receiving and responding to feedback. Students will vary in the amount and type of support they need to succeed and achieve in Leaving Certificate Business. The use of approaches such as adjusting the degree of competency required, varying the amount and the nature of teacher intervention, and varying the pace and sequence of learning will help to promote inclusivity.

The use of digital technology in the classroom and beyond can also play a role in enhancing learning, teaching and assessment and can help to enhance opportunities for students to develop their key competencies. In their study of Leaving Certificate Business students may have opportunities to use digital technology to gather, analyse and present data and information, develop enhanced research skills and apply these in practice, become more independent learners through the use of appropriate digital and online supports, and engage with business in the real world.

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting 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 students through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of strength or difficulty for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification is based on the rationale, aims and learning outcomes of this specification. There are two assessment components: a written examination and an Additional Assessment Component comprising (AAC) comprising of the Business Alive Investigative Study. The written examination will be at higher and ordinary level. The Business Alive Investigative Study will be based on a common brief. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

In the written examination, Leaving Certificate Business will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary as set out in Table 1 on page 12. Examination questions will require students to demonstrate learning appropriate to each level. Differentiation at the point of assessment will also be achieved through the stimulus material used, and the extent of the structured support provided for examination students at different levels.

Assessment component	Weighting	Level
Business Alive Investigative Study	40%	Common brief
Written examination	60%	Higher and ordinary level examination papers

Table 2: Overview of assessment for certification

Additional Assessment Component: Business Alive Investigative Study

The Additional Assessment Component (AAC) in Leaving Certificate Business provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning across the course, and to apply the learning set out in the unifying strand in the context of one or more of the contextual strands and/or cross-cutting themes. It involves students completing the Business Alive Investigative Study which will require students to demonstrate their capacity to conduct, analyse and evaluate research on a particular issue, using a variety of sources and considering a range of perspectives, while drawing on their ongoing engagement with the world of business.⁴ Students are expected to present informed perspective(s), conclusion(s) and/or recommendation(s) at the end of their study. The Descriptors of Quality on page 34–35 are intended to provide insights into the broad expectations for students completing the AAC.

The Investigative Study will focus on student learning across the Leaving Certificate Business specification. The nature of the brief will exploit the potential of the Investigative Study to be motivating and relevant for

students and to allow students to potentially explore an aspect of business relevant to their own interests or context through providing an opportunity to create and develop a research question to support further and deeper investigation. The brief for the study will be issued annually in term two of 5th year by the SEC and will set out the requirements for students.

This brief

- will support students in considering areas related to the theme of the brief which they may wish to explore further
- will support teachers in planning for teaching and learning
- may support students in gathering resources which they may draw upon as they complete their AAC.

As part of their study students will complete a report which will be submitted digitally during 6th year to the SEC in a format specified by the SEC. An overview of the timelines for the Investigative Study is provided in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Timelines for Investigative Study

A separate document, Guidelines to Support the Business Alive Investigative Study gives guidance on a range of matters related to the organisation, implementation, and oversight of the AAC.

The Investigative Study is designed to give students practical opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions, to consider the cross-cutting themes and apply their project management skills. Students will have an opportunity to apply the

key competencies they have developed through their engagement with Leaving Certificate Business such as being creative, thinking critically and solving problems, managing learning and self, and communicating as they engage in this component. Engagement with this component may also highlight aspects of the dynamic world of business of interest to students, support students in seeing the relevance of business to their lives and to society, and potentially highlight potential future career paths.

⁴ It is envisaged that the AAC will take up to 20 hours to complete. Further details will be provided in the Guidelines to Support the Business Alive Investigative Study.

Descriptors of Quality for the Business Alive Investigative Study

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Business Alive Investigative Study. In particular, the investigation requires students to:

- plan their investigative study, apply, and demonstrate project management skills, and their capacity to monitor and evaluate progress
- investigate an aspect of business and apply the skills developed primarily through their engagement with the Unifying Strand to reach informed conclusion(s), recommendation(s) and/or perspective(s)
- apply the relevant cross-cutting theme(s) within the Leaving Certificate Business Specification to their Investigative Study, and relate the study to the world of business
- communicate their findings.

The descriptors of quality for the Business Alive Investigative Study are set out in Table 3.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate effective engagement with planning throughout their study and clearly reflect on and evaluate the extent to which the planning undertaken contributed to the effective completion of the study. • develop a clear and probing research question that is underpinned by the relevance or importance of business locally, nationally and/or internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate engagement with planning throughout their study and reflect on the extent to which the planning undertaken contributed to the completion of the study. • develop a clear research question that is underpinned by the relevance or importance of business locally, nationally and/or internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate limited engagement with planning throughout their study and present limited reflections on the extent to which the planning undertaken contributed to the completion of the study. • develop some form of research question.
Investigating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and evaluate the potential value of a wide range of appropriate sources related to the research question created based on the brief. • complete an in-depth analysis and evaluation of data and information from a range of reliable sources justifying the choice of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and evaluate the potential value of a range of appropriate sources related to the research question created based on the brief. • analyse and evaluate data and information from a range of reliable sources justifying the choice of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a limited range of sources related to the research question created based on the brief. • present limited analysis and evaluation of data and information from a range of sources.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Investigating (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present conclusions justified by the analysis and evaluation of the data and information, related to the research question developed. • clearly identify limitations in the investigative study across the design of the research question, the research gathered and/or analysis conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present conclusions related to the research question developed. • identify some limitations in the study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present limited conclusions demonstrating engagement with the topic. • do not identify limitations in the study.
Applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate capacity to reflect on how the findings relate to the world of business and business-related stories in the media where relevant, and how their perspectives have been influenced by the investigative study. • clearly and appropriately relate the findings of the investigation to the cross-cutting theme(s) within the specification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate some capacity to reflect on how the findings relate to the world of business, business-related stories in the media where relevant, and how their perspectives have been influenced by the investigative study. • relate the findings of the investigation to the cross-cutting theme(s) within the specification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate limited capacity to reflect on how the findings relate to the world of business, business-related stories in the media where relevant, and how their perspectives have been influenced by the investigative study. • make limited links between the findings of the investigation and the cross-cutting theme(s) within the specification.
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present clear and appropriate data and information and analysis using a range of relevant graphics as appropriate. • use coherent and consistent language throughout the report with clearly acknowledged appropriate supporting references and reflections on the study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present adequate data and information and analysis; using relevant graphics as appropriate. • use moderately coherent and consistent language throughout the report with some acknowledged supporting references and reflections on the research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present limited data and information and analysis, limited or no use of graphics. • present a report where the language used demonstrates limited coherence and consistency with limited supporting references and reflections.

Table 3: Descriptors of Quality: Business Alive Investigative Study

Written examination

The written examination will consist of a range of question types. The senior cycle key competencies (Figure 2) are embedded in the learning outcomes of this specification and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes. The written examination paper will include a selection of questions that will assess, appropriate to each level:

- the learning described in the four contextual strands of the specification and the unifying strand
- application of the cross-cutting themes of ethics and sustainability, business and financial literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and digital transformation
- students' capacity to engage with the world of business and business in the media.

Reasonable accommodations

This Leaving Certificate Business specification requires that students engage with the nature of the subject on an ongoing basis throughout the course. The assessment for certification in Leaving Certificate Business involves a written examination worth 60% of the available marks and an additional component worth 40%. In this context, the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), is designed to assist students who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical, visual, sensory, hearing, or learning difficulty. The scheme assists such students to demonstrate what they know and can do, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The focus of the scheme is on removing barriers to access, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions as are assessed for all other students and to apply the same standards of achievement as apply to all other students. The Commission makes every effort when implementing this scheme to accommodate individual assessment needs through these accommodations.

There are circumstances in which the requirement to demonstrate certain areas of learning when students are being assessed for certification can be waived or exempted, provided that this does not compromise the overall integrity of the assessment.

More detailed information about the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations, including the accommodations available and the circumstances in which they may apply, is available from the State Examinations Commission's Reasonable Accommodations Section.

Before deciding to study Leaving Certificate Business, students, in consultation with their school and parents should review the learning outcomes of this specification and the details of the assessment arrangements. They should carefully consider whether or not they can achieve the learning outcomes, or whether they may have a special educational need that may prevent them from demonstrating their achievement of the outcomes, even after reasonable accommodations have been applied. It is essential that if a school believes that a student may not be in a position to engage fully with the assessment for certification arrangements, they contact the State Examinations Commission.

Leaving Certificate Grading

Leaving Certificate Business will be graded using an 8-point grading scale. The highest grade is a Grade 1; the lowest grade is 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

Table 4: Leaving Certificate Grading

Appendix 1: 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. This glossary will be aligned with the command words used in assessment.

Action verb	Students should be able to
Acknowledge (sources)	expressly recognise sources of information
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
Appraise	evaluate, judge, or consider information or a piece of work
Appreciate	recognise the meaning, value, or importance of or have a practical understanding of
Assess	judge, evaluate or estimate the value of something
Calculate	obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working
Compare	give an account of the similarities and (or) differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout
Conduct	to perform an activity
Demonstrate	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application
Describe	give a detailed account of the main points of a topic using words, diagrams, examples and/or images where appropriate
Determine	establish or ascertain based on information usually after investigation
Develop	to evolve; to make apparent or expand in detail
Discuss	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses and is supported by appropriate evidence
Distinguish	make the differences between two or more concepts or items clear
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 the 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 the ideas, solutions, or methods
Examine	look closely at arguments, data, information, concepts and/or stories in order to uncover origins, assumptions, perspectives, trends and/or relationships
Explain	give a detailed account including reasons or causes
Identify	recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognize and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature
Interpret	use knowledge and understanding to recognise trends and draw conclusions from given information
Investigate	observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and/or reach new conclusions

Action verb	Students should be able to
Outline	give the main points; restrict to essential points of information
Present	show something for others to consider
Record	to document in writing or digitally for the purpose of preserving evidence
Suggest	propose solution(s), hypothesis, or other possible answer(s)
Synthesise	combine different ideas to create new or enhanced understanding

Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

This glossary is intended to clarify concepts and terms used in this specification.

Concept/Term	Understanding
Business model	A business model is an element within the business plan which outlines how a company will operate, create, deliver, and capture value in economic, social, and cultural contexts.
Business model canvas	A business model canvas is a tool used to map out a business model and includes the key partners, activities and resources, the value proposition (why the customer would choose the product/service), customers, customer relations and channels, costs, and revenues.
Circular economy	A model of production and consumption which extends the life cycle of products, reduces waste, and creates further value.
Competencies (of entrepreneurs)	The integration of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that support and foster innovation.
Corporate wellness	An organisational focus on equality, diversity, inclusivity and the overall wellbeing of the workforce to nurture a diverse, inclusive, and healthy workplace.
Design thinking	An innovative, non-linear approach to the development of products and services which focuses on solutions for the end user.
Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)	CBDC is an electronic form of cash for the digitalised world. It gives consumers the option to use central bank money in a digital format, complementing banknotes and coins. Digital currency differs from stablecoin where the stability and reliability depend on the issuing entity and the credibility and enforceability of their pledge to maintain the money's value over time. There is no single identifiable entity that is liable for crypto assets.
Disruptive impact	Disruptive impact is often used to describe how digital technology can change the way in which businesses operate (including within the workplace) and how consumers interact with business. It can be both positive and negative.
Environmental, social and governance factors (ESG)	ESG stands for environmental, social and governance and These factors form the pillars in ESG frameworks and businesses may in some cases be expected to report their performance and progress under these three pillars.
Fintech (Financial technology)	The use of technology to deliver financial services and products to consumers.
Force-field analysis	A force-field analysis is an approach used to identify and analyse forces which drive and inhibit change. Forces can be both internal and external.
Gig economy	The gig economy refers to a part of the labour market which relies on temporary positions, part-time workers, or freelancers.
Globalisation	The growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the world's economies, cultures and populations arising from cross-border trade in goods, services, digital technology and movement of investment, people, data, and information.
Human capital	The competencies embodied in people, invested in, and developed to help them to be more productive and realise their potential.
Interdependence	Interdependence arises when one group becomes dependent on another for the supply of necessary goods and services.
International Trade	The movement or exchange of goods or services between two jurisdictions or across borders. In considering international trade it is important to be mindful of the potential of trade on the island of Ireland between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Concept/Term	Understanding
Irish government policy	Refers to the policy of the Irish government which includes actions or statements of guidance which are adopted by the government and used as a basis for decision-making.
Not for profit enterprises	Enterprises motivated by broader social objectives including charities, social enterprises, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
Porter's five forces model	Porter's model includes five forces which support deeper understanding of the competitive forces within business which drive how economic value is divided amongst stakeholders. The five forces with Porter's model include the threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of customers, the threat of substitutes and competitive rivalry.
Power-interest grid	A power-interest grid is a form of stakeholder mapping which considers the motivations of stakeholders and their ability to exert influence (either positive or negative) thereby mapping them according to their relative power and interest.
Sector of the economy (in Ireland)	The different economic activity sectors which categorise producers/ service providers based on the goods or services they output. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) publish the list of sectors within the Irish economy.
Shadow economy	Business and economic transactions that are deemed illegal in a jurisdiction because the goods or services being traded or exchanged are unlawful or the transaction itself is not in line with legislation or government reporting requirements.
SMART objectives (for research)	Refining a question for research based on it being specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound.
Sources of information	Sources of information can be either primary or secondary. Primary sources involve original documents or first-hand information and can include interviews and surveys while secondary sources often interpret primary information.
Stakeholder mapping	Stakeholder mapping involves considering the main stakeholders and their power and influence, while learning about the range of stakeholders and the need to consider a range of perspectives. Stakeholder mapping can be written or visual and should include different stakeholders, their interdependencies and inter-relationships, and consideration of their power and influence on decision-making.
STEEPLE analysis	A STEEPL analysis may be used to assess the impact of external factors on a business. It includes consideration of social (S), technological (T), economic (E), environmental (E), political (P), legal (L) and ethical (E) factors.



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