

Consultation Report on the background paper for Leaving
Certificate Economics

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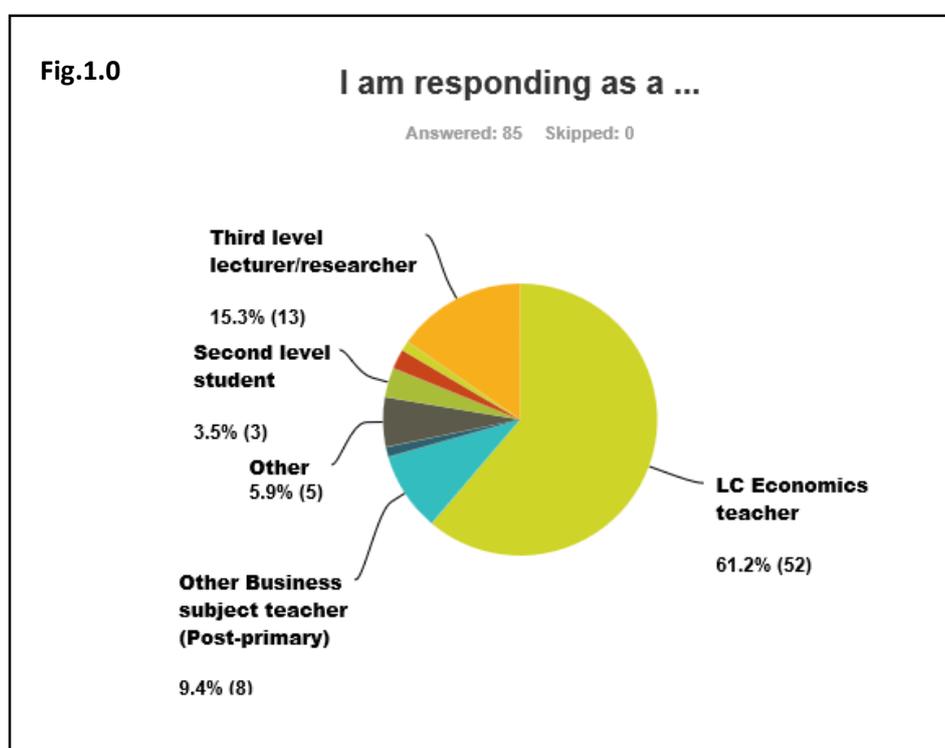
Introduction

The background paper for Leaving Certificate Economics was approved for consultation by Council in November 2014. The purpose of the background paper was to explore the development of economics as a subject at Leaving Certificate; to highlight good practice at home and abroad; and use evidence-based research to inform the revision of the Economics specification.

The aim of the consultation process was to hear the views of a wide range of interested individuals and organisations on the background paper. Specifically, the consultation sought to hear feedback on the extent to which these purposes were fulfilled and to hear different perspectives on the issues concerned. The consultation process consisted of two elements:

- an online questionnaire
- written submissions.

The online questionnaire was open from the 9th February 2015 until the 17th April 2015. In total, 85 respondents completed the online survey (Appendix 2) with 61% of respondents identifying themselves as Leaving Certificate Economics teachers and 15% identifying themselves as third level lecturers/researchers. The breakdown can be seen in Figure 1.0 below:



Respondents to the online survey were asked to comment on the following six areas:

1. Participant's details;
2. The scope of Leaving Certificate (LC) Economics;
3. Purpose(s) of Economics in Leaving Certificate;
4. An inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of economics;
5. Assessment of LC Economics;
6. The brief for the review of LC Economics.

The Economics Development Group, responsible for developing the revised specification, also discussed these core issues as part of their initial deliberations. This group has the brief of developing the new specification for Economics and is a representative structure consisting of nominees from the Department of Education, State Examinations Commission, the subject associations, teacher unions, management bodies, the QQI and IBEC. For the full list of organisations see Appendix 3. Discussions on the background paper focused around similar areas as the online questionnaire: the current provision for students, the purpose of Economics, the skills, knowledge and understanding a student should develop through the study of Economics, pedagogical approaches and the area of assessment.

Additionally, four written submissions were received:

- Irish Economists Association
- The Office of the Revenue Commissioners
- Irish Development Education Association/ “Challenging the Crisis” youth advocates
- Seamus Lynch, NUIG/St. Patrick’s College.

The following report is based on a detailed analysis of the views on the background paper expressed in the online survey and in submissions. The material is dealt with in terms of the themes that developed through the consultation. Selected quotations from respondents are used, where appropriate, to characterise and clarify the views being expressed.

Feedback from the consultation

In general there is strong consensus that a revised specification represents a positive development. This is reflected in the high level of interest in and engagement with the consultation tool as well as in the comments and feedback generated by the consultation.

2.1 Current economics syllabus

As detailed in the background paper, the current syllabus in Leaving Certificate Economics was introduced in 1969 and was assessed for the first time in 1971. At over 40 years old, it is one of the longest-standing syllabuses at Leaving Certificate. Many of the responses from the online survey and submissions reflected the longevity of the syllabus and the fact that it hasn't changed significantly in the subsequent years.

Respondents indicated agreement that elements of the current economics syllabus had become outdated and irrelevant to the lives of students due to changes in the domestic and international economic environment (68%). It was indicated that the syllabus pays inadequate attention to the contemporary issues of sustainability, entrepreneurship and globalisation (58%). There was agreement that there is too much abstract economic theory in the current syllabus (55%).

As a course that may help to develop future economics students it is sadly lacking in even basic quants and econometrics. The banking section is extremely outdated.

Leaving Certificate (LC) Economics teacher

Nevertheless, in terms of the extent to which the current syllabus provides adequate knowledge and skills for students' future life, study and work, only 36 % of respondents felt it was inadequate. There was also agreement to the statement that the current syllabus provides appropriate and relevant knowledge and skills for those who wish to follow careers in economics (51%).

The format of more recent Leaving Certificate subject specifications differs significantly from the format of the current economics syllabus (DES, 1969), reflecting changes which emerged through the review of senior cycle education (NCCA, 2009). The responses reflect the limitations of the 1969 format, where the syllabus is a list of content with little reference to teaching approaches, key skills and learning outcomes.

There is agreement that there is little emphasis in the current syllabus on teaching methodologies which help students become economically literate (63%). There is also agreement that the current syllabus does not place enough emphasis on developing critical and creative thinking (80%). There was

no consensus to that statement that the current syllabus helps students develop the ability to critique economic policy and principles, with 38% in disagreement and 33% expressing agreement. This may be attributed to the view of some respondents that development of skills such as critiquing policy is often dependent on the motivation of the teacher rather than being emphasised in the syllabus.

The syllabus from 1969 is relevant today...it just needs to be expanded upon. It is too short but it is relevant. Most teachers use the exam papers as their guide, not the syllabus. The way things are at the moment with the subject are not all bad. The teacher has great scope, freedom and time to make the subject interesting. There is plenty of time for a teacher to focus on current economic issues and to develop critical thinking skills. However it depends upon the teacher's motivation to do this.

LC Economics teacher

Some respondents raised points regarding the written terminal examination and the Leaving Certificate exam culture more generally. The written terminal examination is developed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and based on the Economics syllabus.

I believe that the exam is very prescriptive. There is very little room for students to apply their knowledge to economic data (in the form of articles, statistics, reports, graphs). There needs to be more evaluation, analytical, assessment, discussion type questions (in essay format).

LC Economics teacher

2.2 Scope of the Economics course

In terms of exploring the scope of economics, all the topics suggested and listed were considered relevant to a greater or lesser extent. This indicates that respondents regard each topic important to a degree.

- Economic theory and its application (82%)
- The economic history of Ireland (37%)
- Demand and supply - indifference curves/budget lines (81%)
- Demand and supply - price elasticity of supply (84%)
- Circular flow model (82%)
- Markets: price discrimination (83%)
- Regulation of markets - competition policy within the EU (79%)
- Money and central banking (94%)

- International trade and globalisation (96%)
- Investment, employment and income distribution (85%)
- Sustainable economics (69%)
- Developing economies (65%)

While the economic history of Ireland, developing economies and sustainable economics were considered least relevant, nevertheless many of the comments from the online survey and the submissions were extremely positive and often fervent about the inclusion of these topics in the revised specification.

I am thrilled to see such a concerted effort to increase the exposure to [Economic Development/Sustainable Development]. The ethical dimension is crucial to us avoiding the mistakes of the past – and addressing global inequality & poverty seriously. The previous emphasis has been too much on financial profit – and not enough about the general welfare of the planet and its citizens. The Millennium Development Goals would be a super example of something very concrete to provide structure for students’ thinking regarding Development.

Third level lecturer

Regarding the option of ‘the economic history of Ireland’, it received the highest neutral response at 34%, which indicates a level of uncertainty among respondents about the extent to which this topic is relevant to the teaching of economics at Leaving Certificate. However, among the third level respondents in particular there were a number of comments that strongly recommended the continued inclusion of economic history from the perspective of providing context to the economic debate.

We [...] recommend that some economic history be incorporated into the Leaving Certificate Economics curriculum. We suggest a brief overview of the main developments in economic history since the foundation of the state (self-sufficiency followed by opening up of trade; membership of the EU; breaking with sterling; joining the euro; several severe recessions; the Celtic Tiger; the property bubble and subsequent crash) and of the international events that have led to advances in economic thinking (e.g. the US great depression; the oil crises; the failure of communism in eastern Europe; the recent financial crisis).

Irish Economists Association (IEA) Submission

Students should learn how to critique economic policy, but also how to critique economic thinking; there are different schools of thought, particularly in macroeconomics. Some reflection on the history of economic thought is absolutely essential. This could be introduced by relating ideas to contemporary issues; e.g. debate over austerity vs stimulus, financial crises and (housing) bubbles. Alongside the usual suspects (Smith, Marx, Keynes, Friedman), students could also be introduced to some more heterodox thinkers - e.g. Minsky on financial crises.

Third level lecturer

I believe Irish Economic History is important. But there is a great difficulty in teaching a history "element" of a subject, as is currently the case with "History of Economic thought". By not going deep enough you rob the students of the rich learning. However, depth of study requires time that robs other elements of the syllabus.

LC Economics teacher

The interconnectivity of entrepreneurship and economic growth was also raised in the background paper as a theme for consideration. However, a number of comments felt that entrepreneurship is best placed in the Leaving Certificate business specification.

There is already a lot of focus on entrepreneurship within the Business syllabus so perhaps the Economics syllabus could benefit more with an increased focus on the EU's influence on Ireland's economic decision.

LC Economics teacher

Other topics and areas of interest mentioned by respondents included reference to agri-economics, in terms of the agriculture sector's contribution to our national economy, and the increasing popularity of economic-themed books in main stream circulation, for example, Freakonomics (Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner), No Logo (Naomi Klein), and The Undercover Economist (Tim Harford) to name but a few. Respondents also referred to emerging and popular modern-day economic theories such as the Prisoner's Dilemma, Game Theory, Behaviourist theory, indicating a desire to explore more modernist aspects of economics.

2.3 Purposes of Economics at Leaving Certificate

When asked how the study of economics can contribute to students' learning and skills development, there was strong agreement that it can contribute positively in a number of ways. The statements are ranked in accordance with the extent that respondents agreed:

- Help students become economically aware (96%)
- Help students appreciate how decisions made at an international level impact on the Irish economy (91%)
- Enhance students' interest in and develop a critical attitude towards contemporary economic issues and the impact on society (92%)
- Be relevant to the lives of young people, build on their experience as consumers to help them interpret economic situations (89%)
- Help students to make informed judgements about issues and policy and participate in the decision making in society (84%)
- Enable students to understand economic principles and concepts, their application in problem-solving and critiquing economic policy (83%)
- Provide an appropriate preparation for future study and careers in economics (82%)
- Help students understand how economic decisions may affect sustainable development and the environment (78%)
- Promote and develop an understanding of entrepreneurship, its importance to economic growth and social progress (69%).

Many of the comments referred to the importance of developing students' critical thinking skills indicating that this is a skill that is valued by respondents.

How to think like an economist; critically evaluate political and economic contemporary debate

Third level lecturer/researcher

The understanding of current economic issues are (sic) crucial

LC Economics teacher

Our alternative vision for economics is one that includes perspectives on the social impact and benefit of economic activity [...] developing the skills of young people to

critically think about all information they receive and learn about from neoliberalist models to farming cooperatives.

IDEA/Young advocates submission

A number of comments also referred to the importance of developing students' attitudes and value system and using the study of economics of a way of achieving this objective.

I would like to see students introduced to economics as a social science - with humans and their decisions/choices, behaviour and wellbeing, societies and their structure/organisation, as the core focus, as opposed to an approach which places money, banks, formulas, technical diagrams etc. at the core.

Third level lecturer

Can promote an awareness of the role of just economics in creating a fair society; can support students in distinguishing between being a consumer and being a citizen.

Third level lecturer

How economic policies/activities can affect the welfare of common citizens, not only the business environment; how our current economic system is just one preferred option of many.

IDEA/Young Advocates submission

It could do with a serious treatment of government as a set of actors responding to incentives, just like consumers and firms.

Third level lecturer

Students' appreciation of the principle of fairness could be developed, focusing for example on how Revenue and citizens mutually recognise basic rights and responsibilities (Customer Charter) and the reasoning behind why and how Revenue pursues those who are non-compliant. It could also provide students with a background to the shadow economy and tax evasion, what it is, how to recognise it, its negative impacts and foster an understanding that engaging in the shadow economy is illegal, negatively impacts on legitimate business, and can be damaging to the environment and indeed to personal health.

Office of Revenue Commissioners submission

Additionally, respondents welcomed an inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of economics in the revised specification, with 64% of respondents agreeing that an inquiry approach to economics education should be fore-fronted in the new specification. However, there was strong agreement that teachers would need support with this approach to economics education (90%).

If students are to be encouraged to engage in critical thinking then the marking scheme [of the Leaving Certificate exam] will need to be modified to reflect a wider range of acceptable answers to the questions posed.

LC Economics teacher

2.4 Assessment

In relation to assessment for certification, respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance they would associate with each of the following statements. The statements are ranked in accordance with how important they are deemed by respondents in the table below:

Statement	% of respondents in agreement
That students' ability to think critically and creatively and problem-solve should be assessed.	85
The inclusion of a range of question types on the written paper for example: short questions; stimulus materials; long questions; response data; structured essays	75
A balance between the assessment of micro- and macroeconomics.	74
That the assessment model supports an inquiry approach to economics	72
The assessment of coursework as part of the assessment for certification	54
The removal or reduction of choice from the written paper	37

Get students working with data. Build up stats skills. Get students to think about economic history. Get students working with, and thinking about, government policy.

Third level lecturer

Respondents were then asked what kind of coursework they think would be suitable to assess Leaving Certificate Economics. A majority (76%) of respondents indicated that some kind of project work would be suitable to assess the students' achievement. However, the term 'project work' was used generically and varied in forms with some suggesting case studies, presentations, research projects or

an economic history project as part of 'project work'. There was broad support for this type of assessment component. The common thread amongst the supportive comments was that the project work or second assessment component should assess a different range of skills as demonstrated in the terminal exam.

Prepare a project from a choice of topics provided by the SEC in 6th year, based on current economic problems facing Irish/European/global economy, where they investigate the causes of the problem, examine the consequences and give detailed suggestions of methods that could be used to solve the problem.

LC Economics teacher

There's too much rote learning under the current system. There should be some opportunity to offer well backed-up opinion and maybe a project on evaluating an existing economic problem.

LC Economics teacher

Action project/Mini-thesis - give a range of options for various economic topics.

LC Economics teacher

Project/essay on a topic chosen by SEC and this is to change each year. The project should require candidates to analyse current data and to make judgements from the data.

Business subject teacher

Essay/ Project on a key economic event from the past 12 months. A list of permitted key economic events could be prescribed to students by the SEC each year. This list would change each year to reflect changing economic events.

LC Economics teacher

Combination of group presented projects and individual study reports on real world issues

LC Economics teacher

I believe it would be beneficial for all students to conduct an investigation into the economy of a chosen country which can be compared to Ireland.

LC Economics teacher

Many respondents cited the importance of analysis, research, presentation and data interpretation skills as being suitable for assessment in project work. A minority of respondents (6%) raised a concern in relation to project work as an equitable means of assessing students citing the influence or contribution of adults and teachers on the student's work. 10% of respondents wanted a written exam only, thus maintaining the status quo.

Coursework leads to interested parents (or their in-laws/out-laws/friends) and teachers completing assignments for students. It is a fact that cannot be ignored. Students from areas where the home environment is less supportive of education will suffer most.

LC Economics teacher

I would not favour project work for Leaving Certificate Economics. This could be done by someone other than the student and the work cannot be verified as the student's work. I would prefer an Oral Economics Examination like Oral Irish Examination as it can test a wide variety of areas in economics.

LC Economics teacher

Other concerns raised included the demanding Leaving Certificate examination calendar and the opportunity to consider accommodating second assessment components across senior cycle to avoid overload at particular times of the year. In addition, concern regarding the Leaving Certificate culture more generally where teachers often feel compelled to teach to the exam as well as the importance of developing assessment components that are as consistent and fair as possible for all learner needs. These concerns highlight the importance of ensuring the reliability and validity of assessment practices when designing any new assessment component. A reliable assessment component should consistently and accurately measure a student's learning over time, while a valid assessment component should measure the knowledge, skills and attributes it was designed to measure.

2.5 Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Economics

In relation to the brief set out for the development group to review Leaving Certificate Economics, respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance that should be attached to statements related to developing the new specification. There was little divergence in the responses with most respondents indicating a strong level of importance for all aspects. The statements are ranked in accordance with their perceived importance by the respondents as follows:

- Emphasising discussion, economic debate and analysis of business, politics and social issues (85%)
- Promoting an inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of Economics (76%)
- Using multiple, diverse assessment practices which support learning (76%)
- Embedding the Key Skills in the learning outcomes (75%)
- Building on personal, political and social interests of the students (73%)
- Helping students to develop a responsible attitude to citizenship, society and economic sustainability (72%)
- Continuity and progression of related learning at Junior Cycle (64%)
- Integrating the use of ICT into the learning outcomes (57%).

The responses indicate the importance of students developing skills, such as analytical skills, in the classroom, through the study of economics. Additionally, the ways in which teachers can support skills development is reflected in the promotion of the inquiry approach to teaching and learning. The extent to which the course is relevant and meaningful to students' day to day reality is deemed very important by the respondents and was an evident concern in the submissions also.

We would encourage the committee to think of ways of future-proofing the new syllabus. Inevitably the world students will encounter in fifteen or twenty years' time will be very different from the current one.

IEA Submission

Messages from the consultation

It was evident from the consultation that the review of the Leaving Certificate economics syllabus is welcome. The brief within the background paper highlighted key outcomes from the research undertaken in the background paper and establishes considerations for the Economics Development Group. While many of the findings from the consultation supported the considerations established in the brief, some findings have implications for the specification and require discussion and deliberation by the Economics Development Group.

Emerging from the consultation process was support for reviewing the specification to make it more relevant and meaningful to young people's lives today, including facilitating the teaching and learning of more modern-day theorists and theories. The role of economics is to develop young people's economic literacy, in helping them understand the world around them as well as news and information from the media was emphasised. There was support for the emphasis on skills development, particularly for the skills of critical thinking and problem-solving, making evidence-based judgements and decision-making. There was acknowledgement of the critical role that economics can play in encouraging young people to develop a conscientious and ethical attitude towards issues such as sustainability, taxation and globalisation. There was strong support for an inquiry approach to teaching and learning, while it was recognised that teachers would need professional development in order to implement this approach in the classroom.

The consultation findings supported the following elements of the brief:

- How the specification can develop students' economic literacy
- How the specification can develop students' analytical and inquiry skills
- How the development of key skills will be embedded in the specification
- How personal, political and societal interests and concerns about business, the economy and contemporary life can be referenced in the specification
- How the specification can develop in students a responsible attitude in relation to citizenship, society and economic sustainability
- How inquiry-based teaching and learning will be promoted
- How the specification can build on related learning at junior cycle and future learning in life, study and work.

3.1 Areas for consideration

The main findings of the consultation process indicate that the development group should also give consideration to the following:

- The revised specification will be organised around strands and learning outcomes, in line with other new Leaving Certificate specifications. This differs from the current syllabus, which is organised around a list of content. The development group will need to consider how teachers can be supported in working with the new specification.
- The extent to which some areas of the specification will be future-proofed in light of the fluctuating domestic and international economic environment, reflecting changed policies, institutions and viewpoints.
- How economic history can be embedded into the specification in such a way that it provides students and teachers with a meaningful context from which to discuss and explore economic theories, models, systems, institutions and behaviours.
- Whether emerging and more modern-day economic theories and theorists should be referenced or embedded in the course, and to what extent.
- While respondents to the consultation welcome the inquiry approach to teaching and learning, consideration will need to be given to the continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers of, and the necessary resources required to support, a new approach to teaching in the economics classroom.
- The consultation also raises considerations for the development group in relation to assessment. Specifically, consideration needs to be given to how assessment methods are in line with ongoing developments in assessment at Leaving Certificate. Consideration will also need to be given to the impact of any resultant changes that may arise in assessment as discussions unfold and the necessary supports and resources required to assist teachers.

Conclusion

The consultation shows significant support for the development of a new specification for Leaving Certificate Economics. It is evident that it is desirable to incorporate a pedagogical approach that helps students develop their understanding of economics and enables them to become critical thinkers who can engage in economic debate, discuss economic policies, engage in analysis and form ideas. Assessment is highlighted as an area which has scope to support the development of these skills in the classroom and the idea of a second assessment component is welcomed. The feedback from the questionnaire and the submissions highlight the need for Continual Professional Development, to support teachers with pedagogical approaches which nurture the skills, knowledge and understanding outlined above. Likewise, given the nature of the subject, the feedback indicates that future proofing is an important consideration.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who completed the online survey and sent in submissions. The themes emerging from these responses will inform the work of the Leaving Certificate Economics Development Group.

References

Department of Education. (1969). Leaving Certificate Economics syllabus (Ordinary level and Higher level). Retrieved May 18, 2015 from

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National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009). Towards Learning: An Overview of Senior Cycle Education. Retrieved May 18, 2015 from

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post

[Primary Education/Senior Cycle/Towards Learning an overview /Towards Learning an overview .pdf](#)

Appendix 1

Submissions

- Irish Economists Association
- Office of the Revenue Commissioners
- Irish Development Education Association/ “Challenging the Crisis” youth advocates
- Seamus Lynch, NUIG/St. Patrick’s College

Appendix 2

Online Survey

Introduction

The aim of this consultation questionnaire is to hear the open and honest views of teachers/parents/students and interested parties on the Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certificate Economics.

The generation of the Background Paper and Brief is the first stage of the curriculum and assessment development process. It provides a background and context for the development of a new specification for Leaving Certificate Economics. The consultation will involve gathering feedback through this survey and through focus group meetings in the period Feb-March 2015. The NCCA would greatly appreciate your feedback. This feedback will inform the work of the Senior Cycle Economics Development Group.

Please complete this questionnaire as fully as possible, but feel free to skip any item that is not relevant to you.

The questionnaire is divided into six parts:

1. Participant's details;
2. The scope of Leaving Cert. Economics;
3. Purpose(s) of Economics in senior cycle;
4. An inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of economics;
5. Assessment of LC Economics;
6. The brief for the review of LC Economics.

1. Participant's details

*1. I am responding as a ...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> LC Economics teacher | <input type="radio"/> Second level student |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Business subject teacher (Post-primary) | <input type="radio"/> Third level student |
| <input type="radio"/> Non- Business teacher (Post-primary) | <input type="radio"/> Parent/ Guardian |
| <input type="radio"/> Primary teacher | <input type="radio"/> Teacher educator |
| <input type="radio"/> Principal/ Deputy Principal (Post-primary) | <input type="radio"/> Pre-service Teacher |
| <input type="radio"/> Principal/ Deputy Principal (Primary) | <input type="radio"/> Third level lecturer/researcher |
| <input type="radio"/> Other | |

Other (please specify)

2. If you are responding on behalf of a group/organisation, please indicate below whether the submission may be made publicly available and/or whether the group/organisation may be named in the consultation report as a contributor.

	Yes	No
My group/organisation agrees to this submission being made available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My group/organisation agrees to be named as a contributor to the consultation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide the name of the group/organisation on whose behalf you are responding.

3. School type (if applicable)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Voluntary secondary school | <input type="radio"/> Vocational school |
| <input type="radio"/> Community school | <input type="radio"/> Community college |
| <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive school | <input type="radio"/> Other |

Other (please specify)

4. You can provide your name and email address to enable us to follow-up on particular issues that you may identify. However, your survey data will be anonymised and we will ensure that no views which you articulate will be attributed to you personally or be reported in any way that would allow you to be identified.

Name

Email address

2. The scope of Leaving Certificate Economics

Information on the current Leaving Certificate Economics syllabus and the 2007 syllabus is provided in section 2 of the Background Paper (pages 6-11).

The current syllabus is included in Appendix 1 of the Background Paper (pages 43-45). Information about the 2007 syllabus is on page 9. Please read these sections before answering the questions below.

Please note, the current syllabus refers to the 1969 syllabus (Appendix 1).

5. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Elements of the current syllabus are irrelevant due to the changes in domestic and international economic climate.	<input type="radio"/>				
The current syllabus provides adequate knowledge and skills for students' future life, study and work.	<input type="radio"/>				
The current syllabus does not place enough emphasis on developing critical and creative thinking.	<input type="radio"/>				
There is little emphasis in the current syllabus on teaching methodologies which help students become economically literate.	<input type="radio"/>				
There is too much abstract economic theory in the current syllabus.	<input type="radio"/>				
The current syllabus pays adequate attention to issues such as sustainability, the role of entrepreneurship and globalisation.	<input type="radio"/>				
The current syllabus provides appropriate and relevant knowledge and skills for those who wish to follow careers in economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
The current syllabus helps students develop the ability to critique economic policy and principles.	<input type="radio"/>				
There is an adequate number of units in the 2007 syllabus.	<input type="radio"/>				

If you wish, please outline any additional views you may have about Leaving Certificate Economics.

6. Please indicate how relevant you consider the study of each of the following elements in the context of LC Economics (1 = not relevant; 5 = very relevant).

	1	2	3	4	5
Economic theory and its application	<input type="radio"/>				
The economic history of Ireland	<input type="radio"/>				
Demand and supply - Indifference curves/budget lines	<input type="radio"/>				
Demand and supply - price elasticity of supply	<input type="radio"/>				
Circular flow model	<input type="radio"/>				
Markets: price discrimination	<input type="radio"/>				
Regulation of markets - competition policy within the EU	<input type="radio"/>				
Money and central banking	<input type="radio"/>				
International trade and globalisation	<input type="radio"/>				
Investment employment and Income distribution	<input type="radio"/>				
Sustainable economics	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing economies	<input type="radio"/>				

Please list any other topics which you think are particularly relevant.

3. Purpose(s) of Economics in the senior cycle

7. Please respond to the following statements showing your level of agreement.

The study of LC Economics...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
...will enable students to understand economic principles and concepts, their application in problem-solving and critiquing economic policy.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can help students to make informed judgements about issues and policy and participate in the decision making in society.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can help students become economically aware.	<input type="radio"/>				
...should be relevant to the lives of young people, build on their experience as consumers to help them interpret economic situations.	<input type="radio"/>				
...should provide an appropriate preparation for future study and careers in economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can help students appreciate how decisions made at an international level impact on the Irish economy.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can enhance students interest in and develop a critical attitude towards contemporary economic issues and the impact on society.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can help students understand how economic decisions may affect sustainable development and the environment.	<input type="radio"/>				
...can promote and develop an understanding of entrepreneurship, its importance to economic growth and social progress.	<input type="radio"/>				

If there are other objectives which you think the study of Economics can or should promote, please state them here.

4. An inquiry approach to teaching and learning Economics.

Pages 30-32 of the Background Paper outlines the benefits of adopting an inquiry and practical based approach to the teaching and learning of Leaving Certificate Economics. In particular a problem-based pedagogy is identified as being relevant to the study of economics. Some of the countries in the international trends section have utilised this approach to economics education (p.16 -29) as a way of developing students' critical thinking, analysis and reflection skills and keeping students up to date with contemporary issues and questions.

In a problem-based approach, students are presented with a problem or challenged to identify current issues or problems, to research them, analyse and interpret their findings, to evaluate possible solutions and to make recommendations. Students are provided with instructional support from teachers. Unlike many textbook problems, these problems are realistic in that they are ill-structured, offering the possibility of multiple solutions and methods to solve the problem. (Mayer , D. 2010).

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements in relation to the new specification for LC Economics.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
An Inquiry approach to teaching and learning economics could develop critical thinking and Innovation.	<input type="radio"/>				
An Inquiry approach to economics could help students situate problems in familiar contexts and help them develop their analytical skills.	<input type="radio"/>				
All students of LC Economics should study a wide range of topics associated with economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
An Inquiry approach to economics education should be fore-fronted in the new specification.	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers would need support with this approach to economics education.	<input type="radio"/>				

Use the space below for any additional observations you may wish to make regarding the nature of LC Economics.

5. Assessment of LC Economics

The new specification will set out details for the assessment of LC Economics. The current assessment model for LC Economics, comprises of a terminal written examination at both levels. Section 3 of the Background Paper (p. 12 - 15) sets out the assessment arrangements for Economics and raises some issues with the assessment of the subject. The section on international trends in economics education outlines some of the assessment models used in other jurisdictions which may be worth consideration. (See Section 4, p. 16 - 28).

***9. In relation to assessment for certification, please indicate the level of importance you would associate with each of the following, where 1 = of low importance and 5 = of high importance.**

	1	2	3	4	5
A balance between the assessment of micro and macro economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
The assessment of coursework as part of the assessment for certification.	<input type="radio"/>				
The removal or reduction of choice from the written paper.	<input type="radio"/>				
The inclusion of a range of question types on the written paper for example: short questions; stimulus materials; long questions; response data; structured essays.	<input type="radio"/>				
That the assessment model supports an Inquiry approach to economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
That students ability to think critically and creatively and problem-solve should be assessed.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please use the space below for any additional views you may have on the assessment for certification of the new specification for LC Economics.

***10. What kind of coursework do you think would be suitable to assess Leaving Certificate Economics? Explain your choice.**

6. Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Economics

Section 6 of the Background Paper (page 35) sets out the proposed brief for the review and the development of a new specification in LC Economics.

11. Please respond to the following statements to indicate the level of importance that should be attached to each in developing the new specification in LC Economics (1 = of low importance; 5 = of high importance).

	1	2	3	4	5
Emphasising discussion, economic debate and analysis of business, politics and social issues.	<input type="radio"/>				
Promoting an inquiry approach to the teaching and learning of Economics.	<input type="radio"/>				
Integrating the use of ICT into the learning outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>				
Helping students to develop a responsible attitude to citizenship, society and economic sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>				
Building on personal, political and social interests of the students .	<input type="radio"/>				
Embedding the Key Skills in the learning outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>				
Using multiple, diverse assessment practices which support learning.	<input type="radio"/>				
Continuity and progression of related learning at Junior Cycle.	<input type="radio"/>				

You may wish to add further comments in relation to the brief. If so, please use the space below.

Appendix 3

Leaving Certificate Economics Development Group – Nominating bodies

Quality and Qualifications, Ireland

Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

Department of Education and Skills

Education & Training Boards Ireland

Business Studies Teachers' Association

Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Irish Universities Association

Joint Managerial Body

National Parents Council Post-Primary

State Examinations Commission

Teachers Union of Ireland

