



# Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certificate Economics

For consultation

September 2025

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## Introduction

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The Senior Cycle Review: Advisory Report (NCCA 2022a) was published in March 2022 following the response from the Minister for Education, Norma Foley, TD. Actions outlined in the Advisory Report include a review of existing curriculum components - subjects, modules, and programmes. In March 2022, the Minister for Education requested that NCCA undertake a series of actions to support the realisation of her vision for a redeveloped senior cycle as set out in [Equity and Excellence for All](#) (Department of Education, 2022.) One key action set out in this plan was that a schedule of senior cycle subjects and modules for redevelopment be prepared for approval by the Minister.

NCCA subsequently prepared a schedule of subjects for review, which was organised into a number of tranches. The redevelopment of Economics is included in Tranche 4, which will be completed in 2027 for introduction to schools in September 2028.

This paper provides a context for the review of Economics and has been informed by the views of teachers, school leaders, and students, which were gathered through school visits conducted in a representative sample of schools. It begins by considering the background of Economics with Section 1 presenting an overview of the current context, including consideration of relevant policy developments. Section 2 sets out how Economics related education is currently provided for within the Irish curriculum before focusing in more detail on Leaving Certificate Economics while Section 3 provides an overview of the insights gained through the school visits conducted and the lived experience of schools, teachers, and students. Section 4 considers similar education opportunities internationally and presents an overview of four different jurisdictions. Section 5 draws on the previous three sections to categorise and briefly discuss some issues identified for consideration in the redevelopment of Economics before finally setting out a proposed brief for this work in Section 6, which will guide the work of the development group.

## 1. Background and Context

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This section sets out some of the significant developments in Leaving Certificate Economics since its initial introduction, before focusing on the education and broader policy landscape which are important contextual considerations for the review and redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Economics.

The last revision of Leaving Certificate Economics took place in 2015 and was introduced to schools in 2019. The specification replaced the 1969 syllabus. It is to be noted that a new syllabus was approved by the Minister for Education and Science in 2007. However, the period of its proposed introduction coincided with austerity and the financial crisis of previous years, resulting in its deferral. Also, over that period, escalating economic instability both domestically and globally had a significant impact on Ireland's economy with economists re-evaluating how the crisis was handled, how it could have been prevented, and the implications of this analysis for future courses of study in economics at all levels. As a result, there was concern that the 2007 syllabus might become rapidly outdated, strengthening the case for further re-consideration of the Economics course for Leaving Certificate students. The specification introduced in 2019 was first assessed in June of 2021 and includes a research study worth 20% of the marks. The course provides progression and continuity from Junior Cycle Business, but students can also study the subject ab initio.

Leaving Certificate Economics is a social science, and it is driven by a desire to question and inquire about economic patterns, relationships and principles. Students study the shortage and distribution of restricted resources by people, governments, and companies. Economics is the core of global development and understanding economics equips students in comprehending the way economies work, fiscal policies, government interventions to influence societal behaviour, market mechanisms and, what an enormous impact they can have on societies. Comprehension of economics can develop students analytical and critical thinking skills which are vital for surviving in the modern world. The main fields of study in economics are microeconomics and macroeconomics. The first is concerned with the activities of private households and organisations in matters related to the distribution of resources within individual markets, whereas the latter considers the issues on the global economic scale, studying the interrelation and connection of global government decisions and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment, and inflation. Thus, there are so many captivating topics for students to discover and engage with in the economic field. Professionals working in varied fields such as government, private and public sectors require economic knowledge.

The introduction of the new Economics curriculum specification in September 2019 was followed closely by the Covid-19 global pandemic and the associated disruption it brought to the entire education system and society. Understandably, this presented additional challenges for the enactment of the new specification and resulted in changes to the assessment arrangements which have continued to date.

Since the introduction of the 2019 specification, there have been many changes and advancements globally. A complex interplay between geopolitics and economics is currently being witnessed. After decades of deepening economic integration, globally countries are now navigating a very different environment, shaped by economic fragmentation and heightened

geopolitical and trade tensions. Consequently, overall global growth is projected to remain subdued. The global economic landscape today is very different from a decade ago. Protectionist policies are on the rise. The weaponisation of trade through a greater use of tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and export restrictions is dictating a re-configuration of the global economy. Few countries have benefitted as much from freedom of trade and investment than Ireland and on the contrary, it is very exposed as a small open economy to any changes or shocks.

Globally there has also been an explosion in the growth of digital currencies and Financial Technology Companies (Fintech) which have led to unprecedented changes in the banking sector and in society with Ireland and other countries fast becoming a cashless society.

Furthermore, the impact of Brexit, Covid-19, and most recently, the instability resulting from the wars and unrest in the Middle East have influenced a number of factors internationally and nationally such as inflation rates, supply chain issues, the economic welfare of the citizens of Ireland, climate change and the transition to a low carbon energy future.

There has also been the release of several economic policies and initiatives across Ireland and the European Union (EU) which have led to changes nationally and throughout Europe. These changes highlight some areas which may require consideration when redeveloping Leaving Certificate Economics.

Consecutive Irish governments have focused on human behaviour to develop government policies to pursue important public policy goals e.g. increases in carbon taxes on fuel and increases in excise duties on cigarettes and alcohol. However, in more recent years we have seen the government being much more proactive in applying the principles of behavioural economics to further pursue important public policy goals such as promoting health (Sugar Tax, Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol) and combating climate change (Carbon Tax, Deposit Return Scheme).

Changes in society and our economy have seen a number of social and fiscal policies developed by the Irish government including the [National Living Wage](#) planned for introduction in 2026 which aims to achieve a minimum acceptable standard of living and is evidence based and grounded in social consensus and the [Housing for All strategy](#) which will be sustained by a record €6bn capital investment in housing in 2025 - made up of €3.1bn exchequer funding, €1.25 allocated to the Land Development Agency (LDA) and €1.65bn for the Housing Finance Agency (HFA).

On the fiscal side measures introduced by the government include the establishment of the [National Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings Authority](#) to support certain employees who are not paying into a pension. Businesses and consumers alike are impacted by changes to legislation included in the Consumer Rights Act which acknowledges the role of the EU and single market in consumer rights. A range of other EU policies including the [Common Agricultural Policy \(2023-2027\)](#) which focuses on the national implementation of EU's CAP and on sustainability, generational renewal, and balanced territorial development in particular. Other related EU policies include the [Farm to Fork Strategy/European Green Deal Strategy 2020](#) which aims to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly and to make the EU climate neutral by 2050.

Ireland's open economy is particularly affected by the [Minimum Rate of Effective Taxation](#) agreed in 2024 where a minimum rate of effective taxation of 15% for multinational companies active in EU Member States meant that Ireland's attractive corporation tax rate of 12% was increased. To address sustainability in our economy in 2022 the government introduced [The Circular Economy](#)

[and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022](#) which underpins Irelands shift from a 'take-make-waste' linear model to a more sustainable pattern of production and consumption to that will retain the value of the resources in our economy. All of these may require consideration in a redeveloped Economics specification.

## Section Summary

- The current Economics specification was introduced in 2019 and includes a research study worth 20% of the overall marks
- Leaving Certificate Economics is a social science, and it is driven by a desire to question and inquire about economic patterns, relationships and principles and this is reflected in the current specification
- The introduction of the new Economics specification in September 2019 was met with early enactment challenges caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic which resulted in changes to the assessment arrangements which have continued to date.
- There have been significant policy developments in Economics over the last 5 years at both national and EU level including areas such as the deposit return scheme, the circular economy, the Common Agriculture Policy and the minimum rate of effective corporation tax to name but a few.

## 2. Economics in the curriculum

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This section provides an overview of the opportunities for learning related to Leaving Certificate Economics currently available to students within both the junior cycle and senior cycle programmes. It then focuses on the participation rates in Leaving Certificate Economics outlining the uptake of the subject and explores the Chief Examiner's Leaving Certificate Coursework Information Note 2021 from the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

### Business Studies in Junior Cycle

In 2015 a revised subject specification for Junior Cycle Business Studies was introduced in schools in line with the Framework for Junior Cycle (DES, 2015). This replaced the Junior Cycle Business Studies syllabus which was introduced in 1989. The main changes included the introduction of two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), a focus on key skills and the removal of the requirement for Business Studies students to sit two terminal written exams at Higher Level. This specification focuses on improving students' understanding of the business environment and on developing skills for life, work, and further study through the three interconnected strands: Personal Finance, Enterprise, and Our Economy. Links to Economics are prevalent in the learning outcomes outlined in all of the three strands but most particularly Our Economy and in Strand One: Personal Finance, needs and wants, rights and responsibilities as consumers. Also, one of the options for students to choose from when doing Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) 1 is Economics in Action. The revised specification also saw a revision to the general content of the specification with more of an emphasis on the understanding and application of economics theories and policies, age and stage appropriate.

### Economics in Senior Cycle

#### Economics in Transition Year (TY)

Schools have autonomy and flexibility to design their own TY programme to suit the needs and interests of their students, within the parameters of the TY Programme Statement which is being introduced across all schools in September 2025. There are a number of economic initiatives that students can engage in during TY such as The Young Economist of the Year (YEOTY) where students explore real life issues through their projects and the Generation Euro Students award which promotes awareness among students of monetary policy and macroeconomics.

#### Leaving Certificate Business – new specification

A new specification for LC Business was published in September 2024. This specification will commence being taught to 5<sup>th</sup> years in September of 2025 and will be first examined in the Leaving Certificate of June 2027. The specification includes elements of economics through the lens of how it impacts on business. In strand one of the specification titled 'Exploring the Business Environment' students learn about: business and the economy, the influence of national and EU policy, Irish businesses and trading globally and internationally.

## Economics in focus

This section explores participation rates in Leaving Certificate Economics drawing on statistics from the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and provides an overview of assessment for certification and insights from the Chief Examiners Information Note 2021.

### Student participation

Economics has seen a slight drop in uptake relative to the increase in the number of Leaving Certificate students annually. Since the examination of the new specification for the first time in 2021 the numbers sitting Economics have fallen from 9.4% to 8.35%. However, it is worth noting that this period also saw the introduction of two new Leaving Certificate subjects to the senior cycle curriculum – Physical Education and Computer Science.

Table 1: Number of students sitting Leaving Certificate Economics at higher and ordinary Level 2019-2024 (SEC Annual Examination Statistics 2019-2024)

Year	Higher Level	Ordinary Level	Total Candidates	Total LC candidates	Economics as a % of total candidates
2019	4990	873	5863	56,071	10.46%
2020	5081	665	5746	57,668	9.96%
2021	4979	486	5465	57,952	9.4%
2022	5155	575	5730	58,056	9.87%
2023	4510	577	5087	58,006	8.77%
2024	4264	480	4744	56,791	8.35%

Table 2: Number of students sitting Leaving Certificate business subjects 2019-2024 (SEC Annual Examination Statistics 2019-2024)

Year	Economics	Business	Accounting	Total LC candidates
2019	4990	17326	7907	56,071
2020	5081	17901	8107	57,668
2021	4979	18032	8326	57,952
2022	5155	19457	7735	58,056
2023	4510	19501	7058	58,006
2024	4744	19784	7438	56,791

## Assessment for certification

### Insights from State Examinations Commission

There has been no Chief Examiner's Reports on Leaving Certificate Economics published by the SEC since the release of the 2019 specification. However, in an information note published in 2021 by the SEC has noted good practices in relation to the engagement with the student research project. The information note includes observations to support teachers and students in their engagement with the coursework. Examples of good practice observed by the Chief Examiner in Economics included:

- Research reports were generally well presented and followed the indicative content, word count and structure. A high degree of originality and innovation was evident in the majority of reports and it was clear that candidates researched their lines of inquiry. Candidate engagement with the brief was evident through the range of appropriate references with a concise bibliography and relevant data, resulting in a more comprehensive report.
- Candidates who focused their individual line of inquiry into one distinct, discrete area generally received higher marks as the focused nature of their research facilitated candidates in having clear and specific achievable aims. It provided a structure and focus to the research process which in turn facilitated candidates to draw valid and relevant conclusions.
- Relevant theories and concepts appropriately linked to the candidate's individual line of inquiry.
- The data used was valid, and applicable to the line of inquiry and spanned a range of different relevant and up to date sources. Candidates used both qualitative and quantitative data as required and set out in the indicative content section of the student research brief.
- In a significant majority of cases the quality of presentation was of a high standard with candidates using a range of types of presentation including graphs, curves, and tables which were presented clearly and labelled accurately and appropriately.
- In some instances, in the conclusion section, a new line of inquiry for further research was presented, emerging from the analysis of the research. This demonstrated candidate's comprehensive engagement with their research findings.

### Section Summary

- There has been a slight decline in the number of students studying LC Economics over the last five years.
- Students have multiple opportunities to engage with economics-related learning across junior cycle and senior cycle.
- Junior Cycle Business offers specific opportunities for continuity and progression in developing students' understanding of inquiry-based learning related to Leaving Certificate as well as deepening critical thinking skills.

- The Chief Examiners information note suggests that there is a wide range of effective practices in Economics classrooms since the introduction of the 2019 specification. These include promoting student centred and inquiry-based learning, integrating research work into subject learning, and providing opportunities for students to plan, design and carry out their own research and data analysis.

### 3. Insights from school visits

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School visits were conducted as part of the scoping work for this Background Paper. A representative sample was selected from 25 of the schools that expressed an interest in becoming involved in Economics curriculum developments. The 6 schools were selected using criteria relating to DEIS status, gender, school size and type. Visits to these schools took place in May 2025 and involved focus group meetings with 39 senior cycle students, 7 teachers of Economics and 14 school leaders. The following section provides an overview of the insights gathered through these visits.

#### **Clarity to support planning for teaching and learning**

One of the most significant concerns expressed by teachers related to clarity in the specification. Whilst teachers enjoy and welcome most of the areas set out in the current learning outcomes, they feel that it is difficult to determine when learning outcomes have been fully achieved by students. They also expressed a view that this can lead to ambiguity and presents challenges for examination preparation. Consequently, this can lead to over-reliance on textbooks (and past examination papers) for clarity and can cause potential risks of going into too much detail, or too little detail, with certain areas of learning to ensure students are sufficiently prepared. Teachers welcomed the clarity that is now a part of the redesigned curriculum template and the two-column approach in particular which provides further scaffolding of learning outcomes. In many instances, teachers remarked that this type of scaffolding of learning outcomes in a revised Economics specification would respond to their concerns over clarity.

#### **Teaching and learning experiences in Leaving Certificate Economics**

All teachers welcomed the introduction of the revised 2019 specification. They recognised that change was needed in the subject, and there are many aspects of the current specification that they value and that their students enjoy learning about. Students and teachers alike see the benefits of the practical and applied nature of learning in the subject. Both also recognise that as a social science, students benefit from an inquiry approach to learning which fosters innovation, creativity and critical thinking. Students specifically indicated that they enjoy learning when it is relevant, and where they can apply their knowledge to daily events in their local context and in the world around them.

There was strong agreement from all teachers and students that a new specification should include behavioural economics and demographics. Both students and teachers remarked that while they are currently inherent in the teaching, learning and assessment of the specification they are not specifically mentioned in any learning outcomes. Students commented that they enjoy learning about government initiatives which are addressing aspects of behavioural economics, attempting to change the behaviours of the citizens of the state. Examples given by students were the sugar tax and bottle return scheme.

It was noted that the current specification lacks the linking of economic historians' thinking to economic policies and that a redeveloped specification could address the linking of historians thinking to policy but through an economic lens rather than an historical one. Two other areas which were cited as absent from the current specification are the advancements and growth in digital currencies and also Fintech companies and that both could be considered for inclusion in a redeveloped specification. Other concerns mentioned by teachers and students alike was the lack

of clarity in terms of areas of learning in the current specification such as measures of national income, comparative and competitive advantage, the factors of production, and elasticity.

There was a consensus from the majority of both teachers and students that the level of mathematics currently in the specification is sufficient and should not be increased. This was seen as greatly helping to address any misconceptions around the difficulty of the subject and the level of mathematics required to study the subject.

### **Development of research and data analysis skills in Leaving Certificate Economics**

Currently the research study requires students to pursue an individual line of inquiry based on the annual brief issued by the SEC. The NCCA Guidelines to support the research study indicate that students are given an opportunity to research and analyse an economic issue, problem or question, to evaluate findings and reflect on their own learning; showing that they can research and process information and data that is relevant and meaningful. Students apply concepts, models and theories in the evaluation of information and data in order to show understanding and make an informed conclusion.

A recurring theme voiced by teachers during school visits was the lack of student research skills when conducting the research for the project. Teachers noted that firstly students do not know how to refine their research, and secondly, do not know how to refine their research into a line of inquiry. Students echoed this concern with many stating that they lacked confidence when researching. Teacher also highlighted the lack of data analytical skills among students. They noted that students were able to access vast amounts of data, however, they did not have the necessary skills to analyse, refine, and reproduce this data to ensure its relevance to their line of inquiry. Notably it was stated that students did not have the necessary digital skills to disseminate, synthesise and extrapolate from existing data to recreate graphs, charts, curves to address their line of inquiry.

### **The Additional Assessment Component (AAC)**

The AAC came in for much discussion in terms of how it might evolve as an AAC with a 40% weighting. School visits highlighted many welcome aspects of the current component: a student research project. Teachers and students noted that the project allowed students to showcase their knowledge and skills, and to gain a portion of marks before sitting the Leaving Certificate exam. There were positive remarks about the guidance offered to students through the NCCA guidelines and the accompanying detail with the Economics Brief issued annually by the SEC. Students and teachers generally welcome the timing of the issue of the Brief (beginning of September in 6<sup>th</sup> year), the length of time to complete it and the submission date (which is usually the end of term 1 of 6<sup>th</sup> year). Some teachers and students stated that they would like more student autonomy in the choices of topic that they do their research on. Students remarked they would like to choose to research an aspect or topic in Economics that is relevant to them. The majority of teachers and students welcomed the increase from 20% to 40% for the AAC, however they remarked that this should not equate to an increase in the workload.

School leaders, teachers and students in a number of schools raised general concerns about access to digital platforms. These particular schools are already experiencing huge demands on the limited computer rooms/computer trolleys that they currently have available. They quoted that existing demands are from students doing CBAs in Junior Cycle, TY students, Leaving

Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) students and the subjects that already have a computer-based component. Concerns were also raised regarding future potential challenges of multiple AAC's and students needing access to a digital device to complete same.

The issue of generative artificial intelligence (AI) was raised in all schools by school leaders and teachers alike. Teachers expressed grave concerns over the authentication of students work. School leaders remarked about the concerns they had for their teachers dealing with students work and generative AI.

#### **The relevance and appeal of the subject**

Students choose LC Economics for a variety of reasons. Some students became interested in the subject through exposure to aspects of Economics in Junior Cycle Business, TY modules and competitions such as YEOTY (Young Economist of the Year). Some students see Economics as being important for a range of future pathways and the majority of students noted that they were also studying another business subject such as Accounting or Business and a small number of students stated that they were studying all three subjects. It was noted during all school visits that all students had a passion for the subject and were glad they had chosen it as one of their optional LC subjects. The majority of students stated that they hoped to study Economics in some capacity during their future studies. While the remaining students noted that while not intending to study it further, they had gained many life skills from studying the subject. They remarked that they would be able to analyse, understand and explain government decisions by linking them to government policy. In all schools it was suggested that there can be misconceptions amongst students that there is a significant emphasis on mathematics in the Economics specification, which was seen as potentially off-putting for students. Students of Economics were happy with the level of mathematics involved in studying Economics currently and suggested that this aspect of the course should not be increased.

### **Section Summary**

- Teachers and students alike believe that students need more scaffolding in how to conduct research to prepare them for the student research project including a need to learn how to refine data, to funnel it down to a coherent and manageable line of inquiry and need to know how to extrapolate information from data to reproduce graphs, charts, curves. Furthermore, teachers believe that students need further support in analysing data.
- LC Economics holds appeal due to its practical relevance, its inquiry-based learning and the opportunities afforded by the AAC. Students engage with the subject based on their background, its conceptual links with other subjects, and as means to pursue a diverse range of future pathways.
- Teachers have concerns over clarity and would welcome further scaffolding of learning outcomes aligned to the technical form of the recently redeveloped specifications.
- Behavioural Economics, demographics, digital currencies and fintech should be embedded in the learning of a redeveloped specification.
- Students would benefit from a more in-depth engagement with crosscutting themes and enjoy learning in Economics that is practical and relevant.

- The majority of students and teachers welcome the move to an AAC with a minimum weighting of 40%, however they believe this should not equate to an increased workload.

## 4. International trends in Economics education

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This section considers the Economics education landscape internationally. A review of upper secondary Economics education in a number of jurisdictions: India, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland illustrate the main areas of study within international curricula and offers some perspectives of upper secondary Economics curriculum structures and approaches to assessment. These jurisdictions were selected for review as they provide insights into aspects of Economics that relate to the study of Economics in Ireland and/or their approach to the assessment of student learning.

### India

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) is a two-year course taken in Years 11 and 12 of secondary education by students who choose to stay on at school following successful completion of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) at the end of Year 10. The HSC is conducted by the respective state boards across the country, and the curriculum is designed to provide students with advanced education and knowledge in their chosen field of study. Students choose from a variety of streams which includes science, arts and commerce and are required to take specific subjects based on their chosen stream. HSC Economics may be studied as part of the commerce stream, which can also include subjects such as HSC Accountancy, Commerce, Commercial Maths, Legal Business and Business Studies.

Subject content in Year 11, the first year of the two-year HSC, is structured around two topics - Indian economic development and Introduction to statistics:

- Indian economic development includes: economic development and economic growth; quality of human life (includes physical quality of life index and human development index); major challenges for the Indian economy (population, poverty, unemployment); economic reforms since 1991 (liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation); economic planning (meaning and objectives and tenth five-year plan); infrastructural development in India.
- Introduction to statistics includes: introduction to statistics; collection and organisation of data; graphical presentation of data; measures of central tendency - mean, median and mode; index numbers.

In Year 12, the final year of the HSC, subject content is structured around the two key themes of micro-economics and macro-economics:

- Micro-economics includes: introduction to micro-economics; consumer behaviour; analysis of demand and elasticity of demand; analysis of supply; types of market and price determination under perfect competition; factors of production.
- Macro-economics includes: introduction to macro-economics; national income; determinants of aggregates; money; commercial banking; central banking; public economics.

Assessment for the Economics HSC Syllabus offered by the Maharashtra HSC Board covers the complete syllabus and includes an exam, worth 80 of the 100 available marks and an internally assessed project/assignment, worth 20 marks. The exam focuses on core topics such as micro-

and macroeconomics, utility analysis, demand analysis, elasticity of demand, supply analysis, and national income, for example, and there are usually a mix of theoretical- and application-based questions. The 3-hour exam includes a mix of multiple choice, short-answer and essay-type questions.

Example topics for the project/assignment are set out in the syllabus. These are provided as a guideline only and specific topics are a matter for individual students, decided on with the guidance of their teacher. Example topics included in the syllabus document include: students visiting a cottage industry to collect information about its income and expenses; the development of a chart relating to the marginal and total utility of a commodity; a comparative study of the individual demand schedules of any one commodity between two families; an analysis of changes in demand and supply of e.g. wheat in a grocery shop over a five-month period; an analysis of changes in the policies of the Reserve Bank of India.

For all HSC subjects offered by the Maharashtra HSC Board, students must achieve a mark of 35 per cent to pass. This 35 per cent pass mark applies to both the exam and to any practical/ assignment/project component.

## Scotland

Students in Scotland usually take four or five subjects for their Highers, which are targeted at students who want to continue their further education at university. Many students then go on to take three of their subjects for a second year of study for Advanced Highers. Senior secondary students electing to study Higher Economics are expected to have achieved the National 5 Economics course (or equivalent qualifications and/or experience) prior to starting the course, although entry is at the discretion of the school or college. National 5s are usually taken on completion of the final two years of compulsory secondary education, at around age 16.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Higher Economics course aims to help students to develop an appreciation of how markets and governments work, and how decisions taken in these economic contexts affect everyday life. It focuses on developing the ability to think logically and to consider the reasons for, and the effects of, economic decisions and policies, and helps students to understand the key concepts of economics and apply them in real-life contexts. The course highlights the importance of economic concepts, government policies and global trade, building on students' own experiences as consumers to help them to interpret economic situations through the application of these concepts. It provides them with the opportunity to analyse, interpret, predict and explain the actions of individuals, firms and governments in various economic situations, and aims to help them to develop understanding of how markets work; how governments attempt to address economic problems; and how to analyse, interpret and communicate economic information.

Students carry out an assignment which is worth 30 marks (25% of total marks available). It aims to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to select an appropriate and current economic topic or issue; collect information/evidence relating to the context of the assignment, from a range of sources; apply relevant economic concepts and theories to the context of the assignment; analyse and evaluate economic data/information; draw/make valid justified conclusions and/or recommendations based on economic data, concepts and evidence; communicate economic reasoning and conclusions and/or recommendations; and produce an economics report relating to the context of the assignment, using given headings. The report is

based on an analysis of the research findings. Students select a topic or issue for the assignment and teachers are expected to encourage them to frame the report title as a question. The assignment is set by the SQA, conducted in school under some supervision and control, and submitted to the SQA for external marking. It is carried out by students on an individual basis, and research, data collection and analysis must be completed independently. Desk research takes place in school, but field research can be conducted outside the classroom setting. Teachers are expected to put in place mechanisms to authenticate student evidence and/or research not completed within the classroom setting, e.g. through regular checkpoint meetings; short spot-check interviews; or checklists which record activity/progress. They may provide reasonable assistance to students, which may include clarifying instructions or the requirements of the assignment; advising on a suitable topic or issue to research or on the likely availability and accessibility of resources for the chosen topic or issue; or advising on how best to structure the economics report.

The course also aims to develop (transversal) skills in literacy (writing); numeracy (information handling); employability, enterprise and citizenship (employability, citizenship); and thinking skills (understanding, applying, analysing and evaluating) which are based on the SQA Skills Framework: (Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work). Teachers are expected to build these skills into the course at an appropriate level. The course also aims to develop (transversal) skills in literacy (writing); numeracy (information handling); employability, enterprise and citizenship (employability, citizenship); and thinking skills (understanding, applying, a where there are suitable opportunities.

The course content is based on the following three areas of study:

- For economics of the market - skills, knowledge and understanding focus on: the economic problem; production possibility diagrams; theory of demand; determinants of demand; price elasticity of demand (PED); theory of supply; determinants of supply; markets; production; costs; market structures; market intervention.
- For UK economic activity - skills, knowledge and understanding focus on: government finance; government aims; government policy; national income; place of Scotland in the UK economy.
- For global economic activity – skills, knowledge and understanding focus on: understanding global trade; multinationals; exchange rates; balance of payments; understanding the impact of the global economy.

## England

Students in senior secondary education in England taking A Levels usually take three subjects (although they can take up to five). Those choosing the Economics A Level offered by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) awarding body learn to apply economic theory to support analysis of current economic problems and issues, and to appreciate the interrelationships between microeconomics and macroeconomics. The AQA Economics AS and A Level specification focuses on applying economic theory to support analysis of current economic problems and issues; encouraging students to appreciate the interrelationships between microeconomics and macroeconomics; and developing understanding that economic behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives. It aims to develop real-life knowledge and skills to enable students to understand and analyse data, think critically about issues and make informed

decisions, and build upon their quantitative skills while appreciating that, when evaluating arguments, both qualitative and quantitative evidence are important. In addition to AS and A Level Economics AQA also offers a GCSE in Economics for students completing lower secondary education.

Subject content in the AQA Economics AS and A Level specification is set out separately for the AS and A Level, given that they are available as stand-alone qualifications that can be taught together or independently of one another. Subject content for the one-year AS Level covers two subject strands, each including a range of sub-topics:

- The operation of markets and market failure: covers economic methodology and the economic problem; price determination in a competitive market; production, costs and revenue; competitive and concentrated markets; the market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets.
- The national economy in a global context: covers the measurement of macroeconomic performance; how the macroeconomy works; economic performance; macroeconomic policy.

Subject content for the full, two-year A Level includes two, similar subject strands, covering a range of sub-topics:

- Individuals, firms, markets and market failure: covers the economic problem and economic methodology; individual economic decision making; price determination in a competitive market; production, costs and revenue; perfect competition, imperfectly competitive markets and monopoly; the labour market; the distribution of income and wealth; poverty and inequality; the market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets.
- The national and international economy: covers the measurement of macroeconomic performance; how the macroeconomy works; economic performance; financial markets and monetary policy; fiscal policy and supply-side policies; the international economy. There is also a focus on the understanding of the evolution of theory from Keynes, one of the leading theorists in the economics schools of thought. Students learn about the determinants of long run Aggregate Supply (AS) with a complete focus on the Keynesian AS Curve.

Assessment for the AQA Economics AS and A Level is via compulsory written examination only. The Ofqual Subject Level Conditions also require that awarding organisations, such as the AQA, must ensure that students' mathematical skills are assessed at an appropriate level across the assessment objectives for Economics. The weighting of mathematical skills required is at least 15 per cent for AS qualifications and at least 20 per cent for A Level qualifications.

## **Northern Ireland**

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) offers qualifications in Economics at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) which is the end of compulsory secondary education at age 16 in Northern Ireland. They also offer senior secondary GCE Economics qualifications at AS and A level standards. The AS is taken after the first year of the course (aged around 17) and the A level at the end of the two-year course aged around 18. Economics in Northern Ireland is intended to appeal to those interested in knowing more about human behaviour, and how individuals and groups of people make choices about managing their

limited resources. Although money, business and the stock market are important aspects of economics, the courses in Northern Ireland also deal with wider social and environmental issues including climate change, globalisation, sustainable development, and income and wealth distribution. The study of Economics in Northern Ireland aims to enable students to develop a range of practical and transferable skills that will benefit them in education and the world of work. These include critical investigation, analytical thinking, oral and written communication, numeracy, research, ICT and data handling.

GCE Economics is a social science course incorporating mathematics and statistics. It provides an insight into behaviours that influence income, wealth and well-being and covers the connection with physical sciences, politics, law and geography, and contemporary economic issues in local, national and global contexts. It aims to develop students' interest in and enthusiasm for economics; their appreciation for how the subject contributes to the understanding of the wider economic and social environment; and their understanding of a range of economic concepts and their ability to use these concepts in a variety of different contexts. It also aims to enable students to adopt a critical approach to studying economics and develop an ability to think as an economist; to understand that economic behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives; and to develop analytical and quantitative skills.

There are two units in the AS year 1 namely Markets and Market Failure and Managing the National Economy. Students who continue to A2 (for the full CGE A level) have two further units namely Business Economics and Managing the Economy in a Global World. Each of the units is set out as content and learning outcomes.

<p><b>Unit AS 1 – Markets and Market Failure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Key economic concepts</li> <li>2) The basic economic problem of scarcity and choice</li> <li>3) Demand and supply in product markets</li> <li>4) Markets and equilibrium</li> <li>5) Elasticity of demand and supply</li> <li>6) Factor markets: labour</li> <li>7) Market failures and imperfections</li> <li>8) Government intervention in markets</li> </ol>	<p><b>Unit AS 2- Managing the National Economy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The circular flow of income</li> <li>2) Measuring national income</li> <li>3) Aggregate demand</li> <li>4) Aggregate supply</li> <li>5) Macroeconomic equilibrium</li> <li>6) Macroeconomic objectives</li> <li>7) Inflation</li> <li>8) Unemployment</li> <li>9) Economic growth</li> <li>10) Fiscal policy</li> <li>11) Monetary policy</li> <li>12) Supply-side policies</li> <li>13) Exchange rates</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unit A2 1 – Business Economics</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Short run versus long run</li> <li>2) Business objectives</li> <li>3) Business growth</li> <li>4) Measuring markets</li> <li>5) Analysing market futures</li> <li>6) Perfect competition</li> <li>7) Monopoly</li> </ol>	<p><b>Unit A2 2 – Managing the Economy in a Global World</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Trade and globalisation</li> <li>2) Economic development</li> <li>3) Balance of payments</li> <li>4) Exchange rates</li> <li>5) European Union (EU)</li> </ol>

8) Monopolistic competition 9) Oligopoly 10) Contestable markets 11) Competition policy.	6) Monetary policy and the financial sector 7) Fiscal policy 8) Macroeconomic policies and objectives in a global economy
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Assessment is via written examination only, with one examination for each GCE unit. Assessment for AS year 1 is at a standard appropriate for students who have completed the first year of the full course. Assessment of A2 includes more demanding analytical and evaluative tasks, more extended writing, and an element of synoptic assessment (to assess students' understanding of the subject as a whole), as well as more emphasis on assessment objectives that reflect higher order thinking skills.

## Section summary

- Two of the four jurisdictions researched (India and Scotland) have a second component as part of the assessment. In India the project is internally assessed and is worth 20% of the final grade. In Scotland the project is worth 25% of the final mark, it is marked by the SQA.
- In Scotland students have the autonomy to select a topic or issue of interest to them for their project.
- The curricula explored link to and build on students' previous learning from engagement with the subject of business.
- The jurisdictions explored offer stand-alone upper secondary economics related specifications with an approach similar to how economics is offered within the Irish education system.
- All jurisdictions examined for the purpose of this paper focus on the development of research and data analysis skills.
- Notably one of the jurisdictions specifications places an emphasis on statistics and index numbers.
- Across the jurisdictions the concept of behavioural economics was very evident in all the curricula.

## 5. Issues for Consideration

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This section sets out a number of issues for consideration in the development of a new specification for Leaving Certificate Economics to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and impactful in the modern world. These arise from the nature of the subject itself, and the influence of a wide range of economic and political factors both nationally and internationally, in addition to drawing on themes emerging in the previous sections of this background paper.

### Development of student capacity in research and analysis

The earlier sections of this paper, and the focus groups conducted during the school visits, revealed the concerns from both teachers and students for the development of student research skills so that they can adequately and competently research their line of inquiry. In the development of the new specification consideration will have to be given to the incremental development of these skills which are embedded in the key competencies of Thinking and solving problems and Managing learning and self so that students are competent, capable and proficient at researching data but also skilful enough to refine and funnel all their data into a line of inquiry. In tandem with this, consideration will also have to be given to the development of student's data analysis skills. Again, these will have to be developed gradually and incrementally while students engage with the learning set out in the specification. While developing these skills there will also need to be an exploration of students learning to extrapolate, manipulate and extract data to create charts, graphs and curves with a focus on the key competency of Communicating.

### Breadth of student learning and clarity within the specification

As the international world and hence the subject of Economics continues to evolve, develop and change, careful consideration must be given to the breadth of learning set out in the specification. Facilitating student interest in a wide range of topics related to the intersection of economics with everyday life both locally, nationally, internationally and globally is critical. While there are undoubtedly many areas of economic relevance that students can learn about, one challenge in the first instance for the redevelopment process, will be to clarify the boundaries of the new specification and address teacher concerns over clarity. This presents further challenges in, firstly, clarifying the breadth of the social science that is economics. Also, in the treatment of this social science and its related concepts, principles and content, embedding of the senior cycle key competencies of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions in students learning and engagement with the subject is vital. It emerged during the school focus group meetings that in the new specification teachers would like clarity in the learning outcomes regarding the topic of Behavioural Economics and the breadth of learning required. It also transpired that there is an appetite from teachers for economic policies to be linked to the particular economist's school of thought, however through the lens of economics and not history.

### Ensuring relevance and sustainability of the specification in a rapidly changing world

There has been a slight decline in participation in LC Economics. It will be important to consider how the redeveloped specification will encourage interest in and engagement with economics,

leading to improved participation rates. Maintaining a balance between theory and practice, applying learning to the economy and economics locally, nationally, internationally and globally will be important. Since the introduction of the new specification in 2019 there have been many changes globally which have also impacted Ireland. In a new specification it will be important to consider these emerging developments such as the growth in Fintech companies and the escalation in digital currencies. In the redevelopment of a new specification and to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant in an ever-changing world, it is important to consider demographics from a national, international, and global level. To ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, exciting and impactful on students' lives it will be important to ensure that students can relate the economics' theory from the learning outcomes to the world around them.

## **The assessment of Leaving Certificate Economics**

The AAC is an opportunity to build on the existing component integrating the key competencies of senior cycle and the development of student capacity for research and data analysis. A variety of assessment approaches are evident across the international jurisdictions with two of the four jurisdictions conducting a research project, however, there would seem to be more focus in their specifications on the skills of research and data analysis.

The insights from school visits point to the benefits of the AAC in allowing students to pursue their interests, showcase their learning, and using inquiry-based learning to develop their critical and analytical skills over the course of study. However, insights also reflect concerns about the perceived challenges teachers and students face in embedding research and data analysis skills which will need to be addressed in a redeveloped specification. It will be important to consider how to effectively integrate assessment with teaching and learning, as teachers plan to progressively develop students' competencies as independent researchers to empower them to engage in research on topics close to their own lives.

## **Section Summary**

- In the redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Economics, it is important to respond to the needs of students and teachers such as the incremental development of student research and data analysis skills.
- As the world we live in today is constantly changing and evolving consideration must be given to the sustainability and relevance of the subject in a rapidly changing world.
- In a redeveloped Leaving Certificate Economics specification consideration will need to be given to widening the appeal of the subject by ensuring the curricula provides for new and emerging considerations in the world of economics.
- In a redeveloped specification, consideration will need to be given on how the senior cycle key competencies are embedded into everyday classroom teaching and learning through the integration of incremental and gradual development of research and data analysis skills.

## 6. Brief for the review of Economics

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NCCA has established a development group to undertake the task of redeveloping a curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Economics. The work of the Development Group is, in general terms, agreed by the NCCA Board for Senior Cycle and by the Council in the form of the brief set out below.

This brief is designed to provide the basis for redeveloping Economics. While the brief is derived from the key insights and issues for consideration identified in the previous sections of this paper, it is also guided by the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 4 subjects ([Appendix 1](#)).

The specification will be student-centred and outcomes-based and in general terms, the specification should be broadly aligned with levels 4 and 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications. It will be available at both Higher and Ordinary level, and it will be designed to be taught and assessed in a minimum of 180 hours.

The specification will align to the template, agreed by Council, for curriculum specifications as set out in the [Technical form of curriculum specifications for subjects and modules in a redeveloped senior cycle](#) (NCCA, 2023). The Senior Cycle Key Competencies will be embedded in the learning outcomes.

The specification will be completed by Q2, 2027.

More specifically, the development of the new specification will address:

- How the specification aligns with the guiding principles of senior cycle.
- How the specification can support continuity and progression, including how to connect with and build on related learning at junior cycle and in other senior cycle subjects and modules as well as future learning in life, study, entrepreneurship, further education and training, higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships, and the world of work.
- The rationale for studying senior cycle Economics, making it transparent and evident to students, teachers and parents and how to potentially widen the appeal of the subject.
- How the specification can support students in understanding the relevance of economics to their daily lives and the relevance and importance of economics in the 21st century and how the specification can support the development of students' economic literacy.
- How to develop assessment arrangements that are aligned to the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 4 subjects ([Appendix 1](#)).
- How to embrace and embed the development of student capacity to research and analyse data.

- How the specification can foster a desire in students to question and inquire about economic patterns, relationships and principles resulting in deep analysis, discussions and debates on economics, political, social, and financial issues that permeate the economic environment in the 21st century and what these mean for individuals, the government, those in business, and the general welfare of the citizens of the state.
- How the specification, in its presentation and language register, can be strongly student centred and have a clear focus on how students develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions.
- How to build on current assessment practice to provide multiple, diverse, and appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning while mindful of avoiding over-assessment.
- How the specification, in its presentation, can support teachers in planning for teaching, learning and assessment, including how a focus on developing a range of relevant key competencies might be fostered including Thinking and solving problems, Communicating, Managing learning and self and Being creative, and the development of a range of digital skills relevant to future life, work and study.

The work of the Development Group will be based, in the first instance, on this brief. In the course of the work and deliberations of the Development Group, elaborations of some of these points and additional points may be added to the brief.

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# **Appendix 1: Overarching parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 4 subjects.**

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## **1. Background**

- The Minister for Education announced an update on September 20, 2023, on the approach to be taken to the introduction of new and revised subject specifications including how assessment would be addressed in those specifications. Specifically, the announcement indicated that:
  - Each subject shall have an assessment component in addition to the final written examination.
  - This assessment component (an AAC) will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks.
  - Each subject is to have one written examination; typically marks for the written examination will be 60%.
  - Typically, there should be two assessment components: One written examination and one other assessment component (an AAC).
- More than one AAC or written examination may be justified in exceptional circumstances and after extensive consideration of the overall assessment load on students. Such exception, however, would be based on strong, clear evidence that a second AAC or a second written paper in the final examination is essential to assess student learning which cannot be achieved through a single AAC and a single written examination paper.

## **2. Introduction**

This document outlines the overarching assessment arrangements and parameters to guide the design of specifications for all Tranche 4 subjects which include:

- Art
- Economics
- French
- Gaeilge
- German
- Italian
- Politics and Society
- Spanish
- Technology.

This advice is informed by ongoing work with Tranche 2 and 3 subjects and will be amended, as appropriate, for future tranches which may take account of their subject areas and existing assessment arrangements.

The arrangements as detailed here reflect the policy direction issued by the Minister of Education that all subjects will have an assessment component, to be in a form that is not a traditional written examination, for those components to be set and assessed by the SEC and thereby lead to a reduced emphasis on final examinations in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year.

Specifically, the arrangements for all assessment components as outlined in this document are framed by the Minister's announcement(s) on March 29, 2022, and subsequently on September 20 2023. Underpinned by the following understandings, the assessment components:

- will not take the form of traditional written examinations
- will be set and marked by the SEC
- will be subject to SEC arrangements for their completion, authentication, and submission.

In developing the arrangements outlined below, the following rationale for moving towards all subjects having another assessment component beyond written examinations is central. This rationale is informed by deliberations on research commissioned by the NCCA and the SEC, and on the assessment literature more generally. From this work, it is evident that these components have the potential to:

- **Reduce dependence** on written summative examinations and therefore provide for a **broader assessment system**; written examinations have an important role but can be seen as a 'snapshot' of learning and can lead to teaching and learning having an excessive focus on examination preparation; other forms of assessment can mitigate the potential for this narrowing of learning by assessing aspects of student learning better and/or more comprehensively than written examinations alone can do; or assess learning that is not readily assessable through written examinations.
- Support and enhance teachers' understanding and assessment of **key competencies** by contributing to a greater understanding of how students' knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions are assessed.
- Provide opportunities for students and teachers to **reflect on student learning**, boost students' motivation to learn and enhance opportunities for formative feedback practices.
- Extend the range and diversity of assessment opportunities; including **spreading the assessment load** over the course of the last two years of senior cycle and thus contribute to a reduction in or spreading of pressure on students.
- Build and develop **teachers' assessment skills and assessment literacy** as teachers support students in working through the assessment activities as detailed within assessment briefs or guidelines.
- Generate student assessment data which can help reduce the vulnerability of the system to future unprecedented or unexpected system shocks such as COVID.
- Allow for assessment opportunities that are more **authentic** than a system relying on terminal written examinations solely.

It is also important to note that a review of the assessment literature more generally also indicates that when introducing other assessment components, it is necessary to consider how to mitigate risks, for example, of:

- over-assessment of students
- over-rehearsal of assessments
- the assessments becoming overly structured, compartmentalised, repetitive, and routine.

As is already the case where other forms of assessment apply, the new assessment arrangements will be guided by the overarching principles of equity, fairness, and integrity.

In addition, at a programme wide level (i.e. taking account of all subjects and modules implemented across schools), it is necessary to have regard to the overall assessment load on students primarily as well as on schools more generally. Whilst it can be expected that SDGs might focus on the approach to assessment in their own subject initially, they are encouraged to be mindful of the overall assessment load across all subjects and modules. Such programme level considerations will also include the methods of assessment being undertaken. As stated above more than one AAC or written examination may be justified in exceptional circumstances, and the following section outlines the process for such cases.

### 3. Process

This section sets out the process through which a variation to the parameters defined in this document will be considered and decided upon; for example, an additional AAC or a second final written examination.

1. Following extensive discussion by the SDG and after exploration of a range of options for a single suitable AAC/single written examination for the subject, the NCCA Executive generates a written note setting out the strong, clear case being made by the Development Group.
2. The written case is agreed and signed off by the Subject Development Group.
3. The written case is discussed with the Board for Senior Cycle.
4. The written case is discussed with the Council. On foot of this discussion, the Council decides whether or not to send the case forward to the Department.
  - b) Having considered the importance of managing and spreading the assessment load for students, if the Council decides that the case isn't sufficiently strong to merit consideration by the Department, the Council requests the Development Group to work on the basis of the previously set-out parameters in this document applicable to the subject concerned.

OR

- b) Having considered the importance of managing and spreading the assessment load for students, if the Council decides that the case is sufficiently strong to merit consideration by the Department, the Council agrees to send the case forward to the Department of Education.
5. In the case of 4b, the written case is sent to the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Programme Management Office (SCRPMO) in the Department of Education for consideration and response.
6. The Department may convene the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Implementation Group (SCRIG) to support its consideration of the request for a variation. The SCRIG is a Department-led structure established to provide oversight and support the co-ordination of work across the key agencies/organisations contributing to the redevelopment of senior cycle. Its members include senior officials from the Department (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Inspectorate, Teacher Professional Learning [TPL]), NCCA, SEC and Oide.
7. The Department decides to support or decline the request for the variation sought and communicates its decision in writing to the NCCA in a timely manner.
8. The Subject Development Group progresses its work in line with the Council's response (arising from 4a) or the Department's response (arising from 4b and 7).

#### 4. Timelines

The process outlined above will require time. Such time, if involving a number of weeks, could have significant implications for the timeline for specific stages of work on the subject specification and/or the overall completion of the specification ahead of sending it to the Department for consideration. This time factor may necessitate NCCA organising additional online meetings of the Subject Development Group, the Board for Senior Cycle and the Council in order to ensure the development work remains within the overall timelines.

Table 1 below sets out the general parameters and processes to guide the work of the subject development groups (SDG) as they consider the most appropriate assessment for each subject. The specific parameters for each of the Tranche 4 subjects are set out in Table 2.

**Table 1: Assessment parameters and processes – general application to tranche 4 subjects**

Considerations	Parameters to guide the work of the development group.
<b>Nature</b>	<p>The purpose and nature of the assessment component will be clearly outlined in the subject specification and accompanying guidelines to support the completion of the assessment. Details will be provided on the nature of the component. Existing examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research project/extended essay</li><li>• oral assessment</li><li>• performance assessment</li><li>• portfolio assessment</li><li>• creation of an artefact</li><li>• field study</li><li>• experiment/ proof of concept/ practical investigation.</li></ul> <p>The subject specification and the accompanying guidelines will articulate clearly what the students are required to do, the form(s) in which it can be carried out and submitted, and the workload expectations associated with the assessment. The alignment of the assessment component to a particular set of learning outcomes from the subject specification will be provided, as well as details on which key competencies and associated learning outcomes will be assessed. This does not preclude the same LOs from being assessed in the final examination.</p>
<b>Weighting</b>	The assessment component in each subject will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks.
<b>Timing</b>	The SDG will advise on the time required for the carrying out of the assessment component across the course of study.
<b>Completion and Submission</b>	While the SDG may suggest when this may occur (as referenced above having regard to the assessment load on students in particular), a final decision will be made by the SEC following consideration of the overall

	<p>schedule of completion dates for all assessments across all subjects. This will be finalised by the SEC following engagement with the NCCA and DE.</p> <p>The dates for final completion and\or submission of the assessment component by the student will be published by the SEC and this detail will not be included in the subject specification.</p>
<b>Design</b>	<p>The majority of assessment components will result in a completed item that is materially different to a traditional written examination, and which tests different competencies being transmitted to the SEC and assessed by the SEC.</p> <p>In some instances, the design of the assessment may require examiners to visit schools to conduct the assessment but manageability at school and system level will need to be considered.</p>
<b>Guidance</b>	<p>Guidelines to support the assessment components will be specific to each subject. These guidelines will be developed collaboratively by the NCCA and SEC. They will be informed by the deliberations of the SDG during the development of the specification and will detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the purpose of the component concerned i.e., what it is intended to assess.</li> <li>• the nature of the assessment component/activity.</li> <li>• descriptors of quality in the form of a graduated rubric and details on assessment standards at higher and ordinary levels if deemed necessary by the assessment method.</li> <li>• details on the timing of the assessment (its duration and when it could happen).</li> <li>• guidance on the processes that may be used for the administration of the assessment.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Parameters for assessment arrangements for each Tranche 4 subject**

Subject	Current arrangements	Parameters for new assessment arrangements
Art	<p><i>Practical coursework: 50% (completed over 12 weeks); In December Year 6 SEC issue a sketchbook and brief with 3 themes and students choose 1. They must create 2 artefacts in 2 distinct areas of practice. 1 artefact is completed in this period, and they must engage in</i></p>	<p>Written examination: minimum of 30% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum of 60% weighting in response to a brief issued by the SEC.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>

	<p>planning for the second artefact to be produced in the practical exam.</p> <p><i>Practical Examination:</i> 20% (5 hours); invigilated exam. Takes place 10 days after completion of practical coursework (above). The focus is the completion of the second artefact. Planning for this assessment is included in the sketchbook.</p> <p>SEC visit the school to assess both artefacts and the sketchbook.</p> <p><i>Written examination:</i> 30% (2.5 hours)</p>	
<b>Economics</b>	<p>Written examination is 2.5 hours duration for higher level and ordinary level students and is awarded 400 of the 500 marks available (80%).</p> <p>Coursework is an individual student research project which is done in response to a common brief from SEC and is worth 100 marks (20%). It is based on the learning outcomes from the specification. The common brief is graded in line with the standards that apply to the level at which the candidate sits the written examination.</p>	<p>Written examination: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a brief.</p>
<b>French</b>	<p>Oral examination: HL: 25% OL: 20%</p> <p>Listening Comprehension: HL: 20% OL: 25%</p> <p>Reading Comprehension: HL: 30% OL: 40%</p> <p>Written Expression: HL: 25% OL: 15%</p> <p>Oral examination is approx. a 15-minute conversation conducted over the Easter period</p>	<p>Written examination: min 45% weighting.</p> <p><b>Assessment components:</b></p> <p>Oral assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Aural assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>

	<p>Reading and Writing assessment completed during a 2.5-hour exam in June</p> <p>Listening Skills assessment during a 40-minute examination following the reading and writing assessment.</p> <p>No prescribed text.</p> <p>Focus of oral assessment is a general conversation based on the syllabus content and may include a literary work or a project the student has worked on.</p>	
Gaeilge	<p><b>Higher and Ordinary Levels</b></p> <p>Written examination with 2 papers:</p> <p>Paper 1: HL 2 hr 20; OL 1 hr 50 (160 marks)</p> <p>Aural (60 marks)</p> <p>Composition (100 marks)</p> <p>Paper 2: HL 3 hr 5; OL 2 hr 20 (200 marks)</p> <p>Reading comprehension (HL and OL: 100m)</p> <p>Prose (HL 30m; OL 50m)</p> <p>Poetry (HL 30m; OL 50m)</p> <p>Additional Literature (HL 40m)</p> <p>Oral Examination: 240 marks</p> <p>For HL and OL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction: 5m</li> <li>▪ Poetry reading: 35m</li> <li>▪ Conversation: 120m</li> <li>▪ Picture sequence: 80m</li> </ul> <p><b>Foundation Level</b></p> <p>One written paper: 2 hr 20 (360 marks)</p> <p>Aural (120m)</p>	<p>Written examination (inclusive of aural, composition and comprehension): minimum 50% weighting</p> <p>Oral assessment: minimum 40% weighting</p>

	<p>Reading Comprehension (150m) Writing (90m)</p> <p>Oral examination: (240 marks)</p> <p>This is divided into 4 blocks as follows:</p> <p>Block 1: Family and Home Block 2: School Matters Block 3: Pastimes Block 4: Holidays, time, weather and work.</p>	
German	<p>Oral examination: HL: 25% OL: 20% Listening Comprehension: HL: 20% OL: 25% Reading Comprehension: HL: 30% OL: 40% Written Expression: HL: 25% OL: 15%</p> <p>Oral examination is approx. a 15-minute conversation conducted over the Easter period Reading and Writing assessment completed during a 2.5-hour exam in June Listening Skills assessment during a 40-minute examination following the reading and writing assessment.</p> <p>No prescribed text.</p> <p>Oral has 3 parts: A: General conversation based on the syllabus content B: Discussion of project or picture sequence C: Role play situation</p>	<p>Written examination: min 45% weighting.</p> <p><b>Assessment components:</b></p> <p>Oral assessment: minimum 20% weighting Aural assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>
Italian	<p>Oral examination: HL: 25% OL: 20% Listening Comprehension: HL: 20% OL: 25% Reading Comprehension: HL: 30% OL: 40%</p>	<p>Written examination: min 45% weighting.</p> <p><b>Assessment components:</b></p>

	<p>Written Expression: HL: 25% OL: 15%</p> <p>Oral examination is approx. a 15-minute conversation conducted over the Easter period</p> <p>Reading and Writing assessment completed during a 2.5-hour exam in June</p> <p>Listening Skills assessment during a 40-minute examination following the reading and writing assessment.</p> <p>Option of studying a prescribed text.</p> <p>Oral has 3 parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A: General conversation based on the syllabus content</li> <li>B: Role play situation</li> <li>C: Picture sequence</li> </ul>	<p>Oral assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Aural assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>
Politics and Society	<p>Written examination is worth 80% of the total marks available, and the exam is 2 hour 30 minutes in duration.</p> <p>Coursework is a report on a Citizenship project and is allocated the remaining 20%.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a brief.</p>
Spanish	<p>Oral examination: HL: 25% OL: 20%</p> <p>Listening Comprehension: HL: 20% OL: 25%</p> <p>Reading Comprehension: HL: 30% OL: 40%</p> <p>Written Expression: HL: 25% OL: 15%</p> <p>Oral examination is approx. a 15-minute conversation conducted over the Easter period</p>	<p>Written examination: min 45% weighting.</p> <p><b>Assessment components:</b></p> <p>Oral assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Aural assessment: minimum 20% weighting</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>

	<p>Reading and Writing assessment completed during a 2.5-hour exam in June</p> <p>Listening Skills assessment during a 40-minute examination following the reading and writing assessment.</p> <p>Option of studying a prescribed text.</p> <p>Oral has 2 parts:</p> <p>A: General conversation based on the syllabus content with the option of discussing a literary work</p> <p>B: Role play situation</p>	
<b>Technology</b>	<p>Written examination at both higher and ordinary levels is worth 200 marks (50%).</p> <p>The higher-level written examination is 2.5 hours in duration and the ordinary level written examination is 2 hours in duration.</p> <p>Coursework at both higher and ordinary levels is worth 200 marks (50%).</p> <p>The coursework differs with separate briefs set for higher level and ordinary level.</p> <p>Briefs are issued around 1st October (Year 6) with a completion date of 30th March approx.</p>	<p>Written examination: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a brief.</p>



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