

Curriculum Intent

Curriculum Vision

The world of business is one of constant challenge and change.

Students of Business Studies are perhaps more likely than most to have a vocational interest in the subject. It is therefore fundamental that the curriculum provides every student with the ability to able to explore the business world through the perspective of their potential future in it. We use a rich range of local, national and international examples to contextualise our curriculum and provide students with considerable flexibility so that they can explore a myriad of potential personal interests as part of a structured and enriched journey through the taught curriculum.

In addition to content knowledge gained through study of Business we equip our students with skills which enhance their employability, to take advantage of business opportunities when they arise and to identify, understand and solve business problems using their disciplinary knowledge.

The following core features underpin our approach in the Business & Economics Department.

- A **relevant and challenging** curriculum
- The **active promotion of agency**
- **Expert and relentlessly positive teaching**, which is sufficiently strident to inspire, question and motivate

GCSE Business Studies

GCSE Business Studies is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11 for first teaching from September 2024. We will follow the AQA (8132) specification. This course provides us with an appropriate balance between challenge and support for students for both those who are academically able and those whose may pursue a more vocational pathway beyond their studies at GCSE. We have selected the specification as it is organised by the functional areas of business, rather than alternatives which are enterprise-focused as we want our students to develop a knowledge-rich understanding to equip them for high achievement. We will make full use of the opportunities to investigate businesses in the local area through case studies, investigations and visits into and from the school to ensure that our curriculum is relevant and meaningful for our students as they learn about their potential place in the world of business through knowledge of place, in addition to learning about larger national and global business. Both the organisation and assessment of the course are consistent with the A Level specification to ensure progression for those who develop an interest in further study.

A Level Business

Although A Level Business is only assessed in written examinations, learning in the subject requires students to think, listen, read, speak and write as a businessperson, albeit one in development. Our curriculum covers the requirements of the AQA (7132) specification, which we have selected as it enables us to provide a rich contextual understanding of Business at A Level, with the AS providing a clear understanding of the fundamentals and functional areas of a business, which is then extended at A2 into strategic considerations – this supports the revisiting of curricular content at regular and controllable intervals. The structure of the specification and its assessment are also better suited to shared teaching and co-responsibility, than current alternative specifications. We extend this further in ways which are distinctive to provide a high level of challenge and rich individual and shared experiences for our students, which prepare them for further study or employment in business-related areas or to navigate their future lives with critical and informed viewpoints.

Progression and challenge

Whilst there is consistency between the content of our specifications at GCSE and A Level the weighting of assessment objectives differs significantly:

GCSE		Weight	A Level		Weight
AO1	Knowledge	35%	AO1	Knowledge	25%
AO2	Application	35%	AO2	Application	25%
AO3	Analysis and evaluation	30%	AO3	Analysis	25%
			AO4	Evaluation	25%

At Advanced Level the higher order skills, A03 – Analysis and A04 - Evaluation are equally weighted with AO1 and AO2. This difference has important implications for how the GCSE Business Curriculum is geared and where achievement comes from. In short this can be summarised with the statement that high achievement at GCSE is generated by contextual richness both in content knowledge and context knowledge. Sequencing is therefore driven by access to contextual challenge as much as by conceptual difficulty.

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Analysis and evaluation skills – the development chains of explanation of decision-making and choices and of judgement arise from the opportunities generated by context. This is an important reason why our curriculum will be designed around context and in particular, around integration of local knowledge and context to enrich the experience of our students.

Authentic learning

Key to successful engagement and achievement are authentic learning experiences. Business is both a real world and an academic subject and the cross over between the two is perhaps the most important feature of any business curriculum. Our curriculum is carefully sequenced to provide students to encounter learning situations from three directions of theories and models, the real world and from the examination.

We present students with a wide variety of sources to deepen their understanding but also to demonstrate the relevance and imperative for their learning. For example, we make great use of current journalistic sources and a wide range of visual sources – documentaries, clips and other material to enable students to learn to watch and consume business media with a critical understanding directly derived from their learning.

Guided reading is a focus in Year 12, where we set weekly reading tasks over terms 1-3, which progressively enable students to engage with academic and other sources. Starting with class-based reading and modelling these tasks will increasingly be expected to be completed by student in their supervised private study periods or in their own time. Through this we engage them with the voices of authority in the subject and as this process is actively mediated it involves all three S's, but particularly the development of social and speculative thinking.

The importance of agency. Agency is the capacity to speculate, to make positive choices and to take risks with learning and to seize opportunities and for students to have faith in their ability to handle a wide range of tasks and situations. The endpoint of any piece of analysis in business is a critically-informed judgement. The capacity to arrive at this destination in a challenging subject is hard-won. A sense of agency is vital in Business so that students see the subject an opportunity to explore their potential future whilst developing their reach and resilience, to cope with the challenges of a new subject (for most) and to see and appreciate the value and return to and from their hard work.

We actively promote agency in our curriculum because it is relevant and up-to-date, problem-based and supported by resources which our students can readily appreciate have been created specifically to stretch, challenge and motivate them.

Academic Language and Literacy

As a social science, Business is awash with terminology. Our curriculum is language rich – there are hundreds words with specific meanings and purposes in the GCSE and A Level curricula. Formal English increasingly looks and sounds like a second language for most students, even those in a selective school environment, so the role of language in knowledge acquisition and transfer is fundamental. Precision in the use of language, conceptual and mechanical understanding and in enabling students to develop these skills for themselves is a prominent feature of our curriculum and in classroom practice. This should be evident on a word, concept, sentence, argument and text level throughout the course.

GCSE Business



EXAM
FINAL EXAM

Exam
preparation

Big questions
and ideas

Finance - analysing
business performance

PPE

Finance – sources
and cash flow

Marketing – the
Marketing Mix

Marketing –
Understanding
markets

Year 11

Year 11 begins with the fundamentals of *Operations Management* – how goods and services are produced and how business manage processes, including inventory and quality, based on the businesses around us. Many students' favourite part of the course is *Marketing* – we will look at market research and the four Ps model of the Marketing Mix – decisions around Product, Price, Promotion and Place (distribution). The final functional area of *Finance* is introduced gradually throughout the course to allow ideas to take shape and stick, so in Year 11 we focus on financial analysis. Throughout the year we will revisit topics and ideas from Year 10. We round up Year 11 with *Big Questions and Ideas*, a series of synoptic themes to pull our understanding of the subject together before the final exam.

YEAR
11

Operations
Management

HRM part 2

PPE

Work experience
project

HRM part 1

PPE

Influences on
Business

The Economy

Business Planning

Business forms and
ownership

Business around us

YEAR
10

Year 10

We begin with *Business Around Us*, an overview of the course, focusing on a range of businesses located in our area. This will introduce students to their local context through a supported investigation of what is to come throughout the course. We then study *Business in the Real World* and *Influences on Business* over terms 1 – 4, to secure understanding of business objectives, different types of business, business planning and the environment in which businesses operate, before moving to the first of the functional areas of Business - *Human Resource Management*, and a project around the Year 10 work experience.

