

## Change to all A Levels

Changes are under way for all A levels in all schools and colleges and some awarding bodies are still revising their syllabuses for 2015. As a result, this guide is an illustration of the content but the exact details may change.

The most significant changes in A Levels and AS exams (but see below for the different timescale in this subject) are:

- All assessment for A Levels will be through end of course exams with no practical element in most subjects.
- There will still be AS as one year “half A Levels” but you won’t be able to add an A2 to make them into a full A Level.
- This means if you want a full A Level you will need to decide that at the start of your course.
- You will still be able to combine A Levels with other types of qualifications such as BTECs.
- These changes are happening at different times for different subjects.
- You’ll have lots of support from us before you have to make your final choice of subjects.

Specifics for this subject:

**The first teaching for the new examinations is in September 2015 leading to an end of course exam in 2017.**



## What is Economics?

Economics gives you a deep understanding of big questions facing society.

- How should we use scarce natural resources?
- What causes unemployment?
- What determines prices?
- Why do we have recessions?
- Why are some people/countries richer than others?
- What can Governments do to increase economic growth
- What happens when they intervene in markets?
- Who benefits from trade?

You will study two branches of Economics. “Microeconomics” looks at what happens at a small scale. How individuals and companies make economic decisions, what determines prices, what decides who has power in a market. “Macroeconomics” scales this up for the whole country, continent or global economy. What causes economies to do well or badly and what can Governments do to affect this? There is some overlap with Business, especially in microeconomics, although Business is more about the success of individual organisations. You wouldn’t normally study Business and Economics unless you were sure you wanted a future career in business or management.

## What GCSEs do I need to study Economics?

You don’t need to have studied Economics at GCSE. Previous subjects that will help you do well in Economics are English (for essay writing), Maths (to understand diagrams and economic data), History, Business and Science. Economics combines well with most subjects because it helps explain the context in which businesses and public sector organisations operate.



## What could I do with it afterwards?

Economics is a very popular university subject because it is all about the world of work and the things organisations need to do to succeed. It can help you to get business-related jobs or self-employment or to aim for management roles in public and private sector organisations. It links well with Science and Engineering because it explains why concepts like efficiency, scarcity and choice matter.



## What form does the assessment take?

There are end of course exams. These are generally a combination of short responses to a newspaper article or a set of figures and longer essay questions. There are also topical questions where you can demonstrate your understanding of how Economics links to big questions currently facing society.

## Course details

### Microeconomics

#### Scarce resources & choices on how to use them

- Scarce resources v unlimited wants
- How economic society works
- Specialisation and trade

#### Markets

- How we allocate resources
- What motivates producers and consumers
- How prices and market volumes are set
- What happens when something changes
- What efficiency means

#### Competition and power

- How competition works
- What determines power in a market

#### Labour markets

- Why some jobs are highly paid
- Short and long term pressures on wages
- What happens when governments intervene

#### Market failure and government intervention

- What happens when markets work badly
- Problems markets fail to solve
- Balance of information
- When and how governments intervene.

### Macroeconomics

#### Policy, indicators and economic trends

- Growth
- Unemployment
- Inflation

#### Aggregate supply and demand

- What determines total supply and demand
- When and how these balance
- Trade-offs, e.g. unemployment v inflation
- Booms, slumps and the economic cycle

#### Government policy levers

- Taxes and spending
- Monetary policy
- Regulation
- Policy conflicts and choices

#### The Global economy

- Globalisation and its impacts
- International trade & balance of payments
- Exchange rates between currencies
- Trade policy and agreements

#### The financial sector

- Impact on the real economy
- Role in emerging economies
- What the central bank does
- Financial regulation