

## **A Level (including AS Level) Economics (9708)**

### **What is the course book?**

Ideally teachers and candidates will use a variety of books, but there is now an endorsed text book, *Economics International AS and A Level*, by CG Bamford and others, published by Cambridge University Press (isbn 052100781X). The resource list gives a number of alternative books designed for A Level Economics. In general, we would hope that teachers would make use of a variety of resources and encourage their students to do the same: at AS Level and A Level wide reading is to be encouraged. Moreover, students will often find that a topic which they do not understand when reading one book becomes much clearer in another book – yet the choice of best book will differ between topics and between students.

### **Where is the resource list?**

It is one of the appendices in the syllabus booklet.

### **Should I assume that any book not on the resource list is inappropriate?**

Not necessarily. As stated above, students and teachers quite legitimately prefer different books. CIE usually does not list books which are out of print (even though sections of them at least may remain very useful), or books which might be readily obtainable in only one of the countries where CIE's examinations are taken.

### **Where can I obtain the books on the resource list?**

Most of the texts can be obtained over the internet. The following websites may be of interest:

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

[www.heffers.co.uk](http://www.heffers.co.uk)

### **Are there any teacher support materials for the syllabus?**

Yes. There are specimen papers (with mark schemes) and there is a separate 'Standards Booklet' containing candidates' answers to some recent A Level questions and an indication of what grade these answers are considered to be worth. Past papers for the last two years are available for purchase from CIE Publications.

### **Is the list of terms part of the syllabus? There seem to be some terms missing from it.**

The list of terms is an additional aid for teachers and is included in the syllabus booklet for convenience. There is a warning at the top of it that it is not exhaustive. In the event of a contradiction between the list of terms and the syllabus itself, the syllabus must be regarded as the definitive document.

### **Are mark schemes published?**

The mark schemes for the new syllabus are published, starting with that for the AS Paper for June 2001. They are available for purchase from CIE Publications.

### **Is the use of calculators allowed?**

Yes. For details of the restrictions on graphic display, data banks, etc, which apply to all CIE examinations, see the *Handbook for Centres*.

**Does a candidate have to pass each separate paper?**

No. The candidate's grade is determined solely by the total number of marks they have earned (weighted according to the published weightings of the papers), so a good performance on one paper can make up for a poor performance on another paper.

**What are the weightings of the papers?**

|                               | old A Level syllabus 9074 | new AS Level syllabus | new A Level syllabus                      |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Multiple Choice               | 30%                       | 40%                   | 20% Paper 1 (AS), plus 15% Paper 3 ('A2') |
| Data Response Paper           | 20%                       | -                     | -   |
| Essay Paper                   | 50%                       | -                     | -   |
| Data Response and Essay Paper | -                         | 60%                   | 30% Paper 2 (AS), plus 35% Paper 4 ('A2') |

**Where can I find the keys to the multiple choice questions?**

They are in the published 'Report on the Examination', which is sent to Centres that had entries about three months after the examination and can be sent to others on request.

**Are marks deducted for wrong answers in the multiple choice?**

No. The candidate's mark is the total number of questions answered correctly.

**Sometimes the essay questions start with a statement, e.g. about Egypt or Botswana. Do the candidates have to know about these economies?**

No, they do not. Such introductory quotations or statements are intended as stimulus material only. Candidates are expected to answer with reference to their own economy or other economies that they have studied.

**Are the A2 papers just on the A2 topics or do candidates have to revise the AS material as well?**

Each of the questions on the A2 papers examines at least one A2 topic, but may also assume a knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in the AS syllabus.

**Is the old syllabus available for re-takers in 2002?**

No. Candidates must take the new syllabus. There are not many differences in content between the old syllabus and the new one. They are listed in Appendix A of the syllabus booklet for the new syllabus.

**Do the candidates have to know about the UK economy?**

No. Candidates should answer with reference to their own economy or other economies they have studied (which may, of course, be the UK economy in some cases).

**How important is it to be up to date with the latest UK monetary, fiscal and other economic policies?**

Specifically UK policies are not part of the syllabus. When writing essays on a topic, candidates ought to show some awareness of the tools of policy in their own economy or an economy they have studied.

**Are candidates allowed a break between Papers 1 and 2?**

If two papers are timetabled in the same morning or afternoon, as has been the case with Paper 1 and Paper 2 on the old A Level syllabus, Centres may allow the candidates a break of up to 15 minutes between the papers. Note that it is **not** acceptable to give out the second paper until the time allocated for the first paper has been allowed and the answer sheets have been collected.

**Will AS Level multiple choice questions be as difficult as those for A Level?**

They will be easier in so far as AS Level topics are inherently easier than A2 topics and because an individual AS Level question cannot draw on knowledge required only for the A2, whereas an A2 question could draw on knowledge of both the AS and the A2 parts of the syllabus. However, AS Level MCQs may be drawn from the bank of A Level MCQs on those topics, and the Specimen Paper reflects this.

**How can causes of inflation be dealt with at AS Level if aggregate demand and aggregate supply analysis is in the 'A2' syllabus?**

Possibly by adopting more of a narrative and algebraic approach covering such matters as the Quantity Theory of Money and cost-push inflation. Teachers may, of course, introduce aggregate demand and supply analysis in the AS if they find it helpful in the teaching of this or any other AS topic.

**How are budget lines, income effects and substitution effects meant to be treated?**

This question has arisen at various times since indifference analysis was removed from the A Level syllabus in 1993. Candidates should be aware that the price effect consists of the income effect and the substitution effect and should know how these operate for normal goods and inferior goods. (Giffen goods are not on the syllabus but could be mentioned as a theoretical concept here.) Candidates should be able to work out the meaning of a curve showing the combinations of two goods which a consumer could afford (i.e. a budget line). They are not required to have covered indifference analysis but teachers are of course free to cover this too if they find it helpful.

**In what context would migration, death rate, birth rate, natural increase and urbanisation be taught, now that living standards and development are part of the 'A2' syllabus?**

Some of this could come up in the introductory context of labour as a factor of production, or when interpreting employment statistics. However, we have reclassified these terms in the checklist for the 2004 edition of the syllabus, as it is a perfectly valid point that these concepts are most relevant to economic growth and development, which were in the core part of the original consultation version of the syllabus but were then shifted to the extension in the light of the consultation.