

Business Studies Curriculum

In Business Studies at King James's School, we aim to equip students with powerful business knowledge and essential problem-solving skills that enhance both their entrepreneurial mindset and employability. We prepare students for further education and future career opportunities by delivering engaging lessons rooted in strong theoretical foundations and real-world business models. Our curriculum explores both local enterprises and multinational corporations, helping students understand the diverse landscape of modern business. As of 2025, there were 5.64 million small businesses in the UK—over 99% of all businesses—highlighting the importance of entrepreneurial skills in today's economy.

To complement classroom learning, we offer a range of extracurricular activities that give students hands-on experience in running businesses, managing finances, and developing their economic wellbeing. Through these opportunities, students become active participants in their learning journey and gain practical insights into the world of business.

Our Business Studies curriculum is grounded in educational research, including *Rosenshine's Principles in Action*, ensuring that our teaching practices are evidence-based and effective. We place a strong emphasis on real-world business affairs, incorporating current news topics and offering a wide range of extracurricular enterprise opportunities. This helps students connect theoretical knowledge with practical application. As a knowledge-rich curriculum, we believe that both substantive and disciplinary knowledge are essential. These foundations enable our students to apply, analyse, and critically evaluate key business concepts—skills that are vital for academic and professional success.

Lessons are structured around core business models and concepts, which are reinforced through regular practice questions. Each learning cycle includes high-quality assessment and feedback to support continuous student progress. Beyond academic achievement, our curriculum aims to develop students' understanding of their role in society. We strive to nurture well-rounded individuals who recognise the broader social and ethical dimensions of business, not just its drive for profit maximisation.

While the schemes of work and specifications outline the core content for each course, we have carefully reviewed and refined the sequence of our curriculum to ensure that topics and foundational business knowledge are introduced in a logical, accessible way. This sequencing helps students make meaningful connections across different areas of study. Lessons are rooted in strong theoretical foundations, using established business models and theories. Students are encouraged to critically analyse and evaluate these frameworks, developing their own informed judgements and engaging in thoughtful discussion. Learning outcomes are clearly signposted, helping students understand how each lesson fits into the broader curriculum. Our curriculum is structured into learning journey's / half-termly planners, providing regular opportunities for both students and teachers to reflect on progress, celebrate strengths, and identify areas for development within each learning cycle.

At both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, students are provided with key knowledge for each area of the curriculum. The knowledge focuses on key functional business areas, including Human Resources, Marketing, Operations, Finance, Management, and the External Business environment. A key focus of our curriculum is encouraging students to apply their classroom knowledge to real-world business events. This approach fosters critical thinking and helps students understand the relevance of their learning in today's dynamic business landscape. We also use debates and student-led presentations to develop essential life skills such as public speaking, research, and teamwork. These activities challenge students to explore current business issues in depth and articulate their perspectives confidently. Our Business Studies curriculum follows both traditional and vocational pathways. At Key Stage 4, we offer the OCR GCSE Business Studies course. At Key Stage 5, students can choose between the AQA A Level Business Studies and the Level 3 Applied Business qualification, ensuring a route that suits a variety of learning styles and career aspirations.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Business Studies

The delivery of topics in our Business Studies curriculum is closely aligned with the OCR specification, covering key areas such as enterprise, marketing, human resources, operations, finance, and external influences. This alignment ensures transparency for students, as the structure of lessons reflects the specification, textbooks, and online resources they use.

While the core content remains consistent, we have made thoughtful adjustments to the sequence of some topics to ensure students develop a strong foundational understanding. For example, basic financial concepts such as costs, revenue, and profit are introduced early in Year 10 to support comprehension across the curriculum. We also maintain flexibility in our delivery to respond to students' interests and current events. If a relevant news story or economic issue arises, we may adapt lesson content to enhance engagement and contextual understanding. To support progression, we do not assume prior knowledge. Instead, we ensure that students have a secure grasp of key concepts before moving forward, allowing them to build confidence and deepen their understanding over time.

Key Stage 5 A Level and Applied Business

At Key Stage 5, our curriculum follows both the AQA A Level Business Studies and the Level 3 Applied Business specifications, building on the foundational knowledge acquired at GCSE.

At the start of each course, we review prior learning to ensure students are equipped to apply key concepts effectively. While the overall structure aligns with the specifications, we adjust the sequence of topics to better support student understanding. For example, in the Applied Business course, finance is taught alongside the coursework unit to provide students with essential knowledge that directly supports their assignments.

In A Level Business Studies, we begin by developing a strong understanding of business management principles before exploring the individual functions within a business. This approach ensures that students have the necessary context and analytical skills to engage with more complex Year 13 content.