



The Economics Network Newsletter

Issue 26
January 2016



Working with the Royal Economic Society and Scottish Economic Society to
support economics education in the UK and internationally

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www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/about/supporters

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Economics Network Newsletter

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programmed by Diane Coyle and the Scottish Economic Society's Student-Teacher Event. Both are now regular entries in the Network's Calendar, and like our own DEE Conference we are pleased to see these events going from strength to strength. At both these events we engage with school students to pursue that part of our mission which is to interest and enthuse A-level and Highers students to study Economics at university level and beyond.

In collaboration with the editors of the *International Review of Economics Education*, we will publish a special edition on an area of increasing pedagogical interest in our subject and beyond, 'flipping' the classroom. This will be published early next year (see page 10) and we welcome submissions that explore the practice and evaluation of this teaching method.

The 2016 National Student Survey is now underway. In this Newsletter we present a few longitudinal summary graphs showing weighted averages of national scores in the subject for

few of the questions in the NSS over the past few years (see page 14).

Since our last newsletter, Alice Beckett has left the Network to join the Civil Service. Alice worked as our intern while she was a student at the University of Bristol and then as a research assistant since she graduated in June 2015. She contributed to our collaborative research project in 2013 and 2014 and made significant contributions to our work including our 'Trends in Economics Education', '2015 Employers' Survey' and 'Year in Economics Education' reports. We wish Alice all the best in her new career.

Alvin Birdi
(Economics Network Director)

Editorial

Happy New Year!

We have had a busy first term at the Economics Network, beginning with our biennial Developments in Economics Education conference in September (see page 5). This year we were delighted to welcome Daniel Franklin (The Economist) and Paul Johnson (Institute for Fiscal Studies) as keynote speakers.

We also contributed to two events in November, the Bristol Festival of Economics



Early Careers Workshop

The Economics Network's spring workshop for new lecturers and graduate teaching assistants will run again in April 2016 and will be hosted by the University of Westminster Business School, London.

14th April 2016: **New Lecturers' Workshop**

15th April 2016: **Early Careers Teaching Workshop
(for new lecturers and GTAs)**

For new lecturers, this is a two day event focused on effective and innovative teaching of economics. The first day will consist of sessions on improving large group teaching, assessment and feedback, using games in the classroom and synthesising teaching and research.



The second day of the workshop is for both new lecturers and graduate teaching assistants, and is an interactive, skills-based workshop with sessions on voice and presence in the classroom (with Pete Bailie, a professional actor), developing students' skills (with Andy Ross, former Deputy Director of the Government Economic Service) and using technology in teaching.

New lecturers are strongly encouraged to attend both days of the workshop.

Further information is available on our website, where booking will also be open shortly:

www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers



Developments in Economics Education Conference 2015

The Economics Network's eighth biennial *Developments in Economics Education* conference took place in September at the University of Birmingham's Business School. We welcomed over a hundred delegates from universities across the UK as well as Australia, Italy, Germany, Norway, Poland, Spain and the United States.

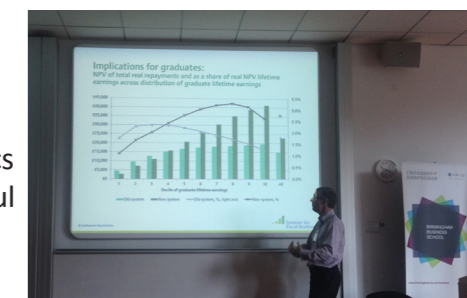


The conference opened with the Network's 'Year in Teaching' special session, followed by a welcome drinks reception sponsored by Oxford University Press. In the special session we presented our research from 2015, including the report on trends in economics education, the results of the 2015 employers' survey and an update on the main developments and themes in economics teaching and learning over the last year. Each of these reports can be found on our website at: <http://economicnetwork.ac.uk/research>.



Within the main conference, there were seven parallel sessions which included both paper presentations and more interactive workshops. The range of topics and the quality of presentations at this year's conference were impressive. Amongst others, delegates could attend sessions on: measuring student learning, assessing the benefit of online resources, teaching quantitative methods, effective feedback, using social media in teaching, publishing in economics education, peer-learning, self-assessment, skills development, flipped classrooms, designing effective assessment, plagiarism, and curriculum content and reform. Many of the slides from these sessions, as well as the full programme, are available on the conference website at: <http://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/dee2015>.

We were delighted to also have exceptional keynote speakers at this year's conference. Daniel Franklin, Executive Editor of *The Economist*, gave a talk inspired by his publication's 'The world if' series entitled 'The world if economics was not so dismal', where he discussed changes that might be made to improve economics as a discipline, including: less emphasis on theory and more on evidence, improvements in the quality and range of economic data available, more teaching of economics through a historical lens and more links between economics at university and the 'real-world'. Our second keynote speaker was Paul Johnson, Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, who spoke about funding higher education. In particular, Paul looked at the impact of funding reforms on student debt and the implications for graduates, concluding that there has been too much change and uncertainty, especially around maintenance grants and support for poorer students, and that with no risk sharing by HEIs, the cost of removing the student number cap is likely to be significant.



As with every DEE conference, delegates found meeting and sharing ideas with other economists who are committed to improving and innovating teaching extremely useful. Indeed, this is always reflected in the feedback we receive on the conference, which this year included: "a great atmosphere and a sense of shared genuine interest in the content covered" and "fantastic conference to meet people with shared interests, it has a real impact on my teaching". A particular highlight of this year's conference, which must be mentioned, was the conference dinner and quiz which was expertly and very entertainingly compered by Martin Poulter. If you missed it... be sure to come along to DEE in 2017!

Economics on Wikipedia

Martin Poulter, Economics Network and Wikimedia

Wikimedia is a charitable project aiming to freely share the sum of human knowledge with everyone in the world. Its most famous output is Wikipedia, the free multilingual encyclopedia.

Wikipedia is well-known to lecturers as the top site from which students plagiarise essay material, but it could be a platform for teaching critical thinking, if only readers would look “under the bonnet” at the process.

This article looks at the economics content on Wikipedia and its sister projects, at issues of quality in Wikipedia, and at new developments which will ease the free sharing of economic knowledge.

Sharing educational materials

As an encyclopedia, Wikipedia has a highly constrained style. Other Wikimedia projects are less constrained, holding questions, worksheets, or primary texts.

Wikibooks allows more textbook-like material, and more prominent author credits than Wikipedia. A group of economics lecturers in the US shared papers and lecture notes to create a textbook on Fundamentals of Transportation.

Wikiversity allows users to post original research. The FEELE lab at the University of Exeter used the site to create an online handbook for Economic Classroom Experiments. Like the transportation wikibook, this was showcased as a “featured resource” by the wiki community.

Wikisource is a project to create definitive electronic versions of out-of-copyright texts. It includes texts by, and about, 100 economists from Adam Smith to Alan Greenspan.

Economics on Wikipedia

WikiProject Economics is a noticeboard for anyone interested in improving Wikipedia’s articles on the topic. It lists just under ten thousand articles as

relevant to economics. The topics include concepts, economists, specific economies, schools of thought, or events.

The WikiProject also tracks the most popular Economics articles. The top 135 articles each get at least a thousand hits per day.

Looking under the bonnet

Wikipedia has faults, but its open publication process puts them on public display. By looking beyond the current version of the page, students can see how articles are not “fixed in black and white” but emerge from an ongoing dialogue.

Each change to Wikipedia is recorded. The “View History” button at the top of a page reveals previous versions of that page, starting with the most recent. As I write this, there have been more than 80 changes to the Economics article in the past six months, some of which added or removed large chunks of text.

Each article has a Talk page for proposing improvements. For controversial articles such as Economics, the Talk page discussion is many, many times bigger than the article itself.

The Talk page reveals the debates and clashes that shape the article. For example, on Economics, one user’s plea that Austrian Economics is the only true economics is rebuffed by other users reminding him that Wikipedia aims for a balanced summary of mainstream academic sources, not users’ opinions.

The quality scale

Since every article is a work in progress, quality is not indicated by publication but by a rating posted on the Talk page. To badge an article as “Good” or “Featured”, there are formal review processes bringing in uninvolved editors.

Since facts change and quality standards change, articles can drop down the quality scale even

without changing. An example is London Congestion Charge: over several reviews it has been promoted to Featured Article, demoted, and denied a Good Article rating.

These changes also mean that readers should be wary of old reviews. For example, United Kingdom corporation tax still has a Featured Article rating from 2007 but does not reflect changes since then.

Only 80 economics-related articles are at Good Article or higher. It is hard for articles about abstract concepts to reach a high quality, because it is hard to agree the totality of sources to draw on to be truly global and balanced. Economics is a case in point, mired in arguments about the scope of the article or the weighting given to different sections.

Articles about specific events fare better, drawing on a more clearly defined literature. The Featured Articles in economics, including Panic of 1907 and Wage Reform in the Soviet Union, 1956–62, reflect this.

Future developments

Wikipedia articles often highlight facts and figures: several dozen of them in an article like Economy of India. Some consist of tables of numerical information, such as List of minimum wages by country.



Screenshot from 'Economy of India' Wikipedia page

At the moment these figures are updated manually. It would be better to draw them from a central database. That is the goal of Wikidata, which makes

many millions of facts and figures available for use on Wikipedia or anywhere else.

Gradually, economic indicators such as Gini coefficients are being added to Wikidata, eventually to appear automatically in Wikipedia.

Graphs, like other images in Wikipedia, are created with external software then uploaded and embedded in articles. For example, the ONS have uploaded many of their infographics. Updating graphs is a cumbersome process, but a new software extension creates simple graphs and charts from tables of data. Updating or correcting the graph will just require editing its data table.

The most interesting new development is the increasing proportion of articles written by students for course credit. Often these are in social science topics, like Individual Development Account or Overurbanization. With proper planning and support, this is an opportunity for students to have their work reach a huge audience.

Even the process of adding a single, properly cited fact to Wikipedia is an exercise in high-level judgements about knowledge and reliability. Though the site is a long way from being comprehensive and reliable for Economics, and only at best a starting point, it’s as a tool and a community that it has an educational use.

If you have any questions on this article or would like to know more about Wikipedia, please feel free to contact Martin:
<http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/contact/martin>



Teaching and Learning Issues in Economics

Economics Network

In the Spring of last year, the Higher Education Academy established the Teaching and Learning Issues in the Disciplines project in order to 'research the state of higher education teaching and learning in a wide range of subject disciplines from the viewpoint of academic teachers within those disciplines, and through the networks created by relevant learned societies and professional bodies' (HEA, 2015). The aim of the project was to understand the challenges faced by academics at discipline level, how academics saw their disciplines developing in the future and what support they needed from organisations such as the HEA, learned societies or subject bodies.

In total, the project engaged with 23 learned societies and professional or subject bodies across a range of disciplines offered in UK HE. The Economics Network conducted the focus groups for economics, through which we gathered feedback from across the sector by engaging with academics from a range of institutions and at various stages of their careers.

General findings

Many of the concerns raised by the focus group participants were not subject specific but rather were comments on the higher education landscape more generally. These issues were common across the disciplines, as presented in the HEA's project summary (<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/teaching-and-learning-disciplines>).

Firstly, academics stated that ever larger cohorts of students are negatively impacting teaching, assessment and the provision of detailed and/or individual feedback. In a subject such as economics, large class numbers can mean that assessment is becoming dominated by multiple choice questions, which can automatically limit the amount and quality of feedback that students receive.

Within these large cohorts of students, there is also a range of abilities and skills, which raises additional challenges for teaching staff. Lecturers who have

worked in UK higher education for many years also commented that the diversity in student ability has grown. In the HEA report, this was linked to growth in international student numbers and/or widening participation. This development has made it hard for teaching staff to set an appropriate level for their courses, to motivate their students and to find appropriate teaching strategies and resources.

Furthermore, academics reported that undergraduate students are not prepared for university and the independent study and self-directed learning that it requires. This was seen to be a result of 'inadequacies in the preparation for undergraduate programmes provided by school- and college-level study' (HEA, 2015) and due to the view that a degree is now a necessary qualification for many jobs. Participants felt that these two developments have contributed to students studying for the exam/qualification rather than engaging in the subject to expand their knowledge or because it particularly interests them.

Lastly, it was clear that teaching staff feel under significant time pressure due to large numbers of teaching hours in addition to the time taken for marking, finding teaching resources and their own research. Consequently, participants reported that they often have insufficient time to consider and implement teaching innovations that would benefit their students' learning.

Economics specific concerns

In addition to these general findings that were reported in the HEA project summary, the focus groups in economics highlighted some concerns that are specific to the discipline.

The absorption of economics departments into business schools or larger departments in many universities was reported negatively in the focus groups. Academics said that such moves had led to a loss of identity among economics students and faculty. Some felt that economics is often seen as a 'service discipline' for other degree programmes, (i.e. students take a module or two of economics as part of their business or finance degrees), rather than a strong discipline in its own right. In



addition to the loss of identity, this is also seen as a reason for students' lack of motivation for studying economics.

Furthermore, the content of economics degrees is thought to be becoming skewed in favour of technical methods and theory at the expense of the development of skills such as abstraction, critical evaluation and application, which are considered valuable by employers. Indeed, technical degree content and the preference for multiple choice questions that can easily assess large cohorts are also seen to exacerbate the problem of poor skills development among students, particularly when it comes to literacy and critical analysis. Some participants argued that the tendency towards more technical degrees also permits less committed teaching staff to solely take students through problem sets rather than providing engaging, discussion based seminars that also address application.

The strong pull from the investment banking sector for students considering potential career paths was also a concern of economics academics. Firstly, the focus group participants reported that lengthy applications and internships are occupying a significant proportion of students' time that should be spent studying and engaging with the subject. Secondly, the draw of the City is encouraging students to focus their studies on finance rather than other areas of economics, which was seen as being to the detriment of a rounded education as an economist.

Expected changes within the discipline

Participants were also asked about any changes or developments they expected to see in economics over the next few years.

Generally it was felt that there would not be a profound shift away from current approaches as the strong rate of applications and graduate employment means there is little pressure for significant change. Nevertheless, there were some changes that were identified in the focus groups, namely:

- The introduction of more history and alternative approaches in undergraduate courses
- Perhaps more variation between courses and

- curricula offered at different universities
- Macroeconomic debates would remain at the fore and macroeconomics teaching would continue to develop and draw from real world experience
- The introduction of monetary policy, macro-prudential policy and comparisons of growth in developed and developing countries into courses were all supported
- A rising interest in behavioural economics and its inclusion in courses

More generally, the academics involved in the focus groups believe that the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will bring wider changes in higher education (see page 12 for a summary of the TEF). This research was conducted before the green paper was published so uncertainty remained around what form these changes would take.

Solutions and support

The discussions in the focus groups on economics showed how academics tackle many of the issues described above, either as individuals or with their departments. These solutions included: meeting with class tutors to set expectations; providing guidance and ensure consistency in courses; using social media to provide group feedback; organising departmental events and seminar series to foster a sense of community in larger departments; and engaging students in group discussions and peer evaluation to encourage engagement and facilitate feedback provision in large classes.

Senior teaching staff and the Heads of Departments present also mentioned requiring or encouraging staff to attend Economics Network training workshops to improve quality and engagement in teaching. Accreditation of these workshops, which would enable them to count towards any university-based professional development programme was also encouraged.

Indeed, the HEA's summary of the project reported that other disciplines wanted to develop this kind of subject-specific training and to establish working groups or networks that supported their subject through events and resource sharing.



IREE: Call for Papers



Special issue of the *International Review of Economics Education* on
'Flipping and Alternative Use of Classroom Time'

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the practice of classroom flipping in which much or all of the expository content of a lecture is moved outside the classroom to free up time for more active and participatory learning within the classroom.

For this special issue, we are inviting papers that explore the practice of flipping and its effect on student learning from a variety of angles within economics. The subject matter of economics may lend itself well to flipped classroom settings because of the possibility of freeing up time for practical data-based work, experiments/games and case study work. In addition, the basic diagrammatic and conceptual apparatus common in 1st level economics teaching, and simple mathematical derivations, may be particularly suitable for transferring into podcast form.

The following list of potential topics for inclusion in the special issue is intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive:

- Evaluations of the effect of flipping on learning.
- The effectiveness of the type of activities that take place in a flipped class, particularly with regard to their conceptual complexity.
- The importance of timing and sequencing of learning activities.
- The use of flipping in small and large group settings.
- The effect of flipping on student preparedness, engagement, interest and study patterns, including any adjustment costs of a new mode of learning for students.
- Is flipping more beneficial in certain settings or in teaching certain topics (e.g. data based courses)?
- Are lessons learned from other disciplines transferable to economics teaching?

We acknowledge that the type and quality of empirical evidence that can be collected in order to support the evaluation of the effectiveness of flipped classrooms can be limited. However, we expect that the conclusions drawn by authors are supported by carefully examined empirical evidence which could be of qualitative and/or quantitative nature.

Submission

All manuscripts will be reviewed as a cohort for this special issue. Manuscripts will be reviewed using the standard review processes for IREE. For further details please contact the editors of the special issue or the editor of IREE.

The deadline for submission of papers is **31st July 2016**. The special issue is planned for publication in early 2017.

Guest editors

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For further information

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/international-review-of-economics-education/call-for-papers/special-issue-on-flipping-and-alternative-use-of-classroom-t/>

EconoFun: An economics board game

Serena Patel, University of Sussex Alumni

EconoFun is an economics board game designed to be used in the classroom, primarily for AS, A2 and IB Economics, but also for undergraduate courses. Players work their way to the centre of the board by answering a range of questions based on Economics theory, describing economic terms and drawing and analysing graphs.

The main topics covered are:

- General Economics Concepts
- Markets – How they work and fail
- Business Economics
- Macroeconomics and economic policy
- The Global Economy

The game aims to promote interaction and engagement in the classroom, by encouraging students to get competitive and teach each other.

I developed the game in 2011 as part of my Extended Project (EPQ) whilst at school. The idea initially came about as I found it difficult to stay focused in class. While the content itself was interesting, I thought there wasn't a wide enough variety of teaching methods to engage the students. I found it a shame that many students did not go on to study Economics at university based on the perception they had of the subject from school. This inspired me to develop a revision tool to increase engagement in the classroom and with the subject itself.

At university I received an award of £2,000 to develop the concept further. This facilitated the creation of several initial prototypes, a website and a promotional video. I presented some of the early stages of the game's development at the Economics Network's *Developments in Economics Education* conference in 2013 at the University of Exeter, where I gained useful feedback from academics teaching undergraduate economics. I subsequently raised an additional £1,900 of funding from Un Ltd, a charity that supports social enterprises. This enabled me to hold trials with further prototypes and iterations. The game has now been tested in over 15 schools. I then worked closely with a teacher to rewrite the questions and broadly align them with certain topics to ensure the questions are suitable for both A-level and IB economics curricula.

Econofun has now been produced and will be ready for sale from mid-February (copies will be limited). For further information or to order a copy, please get in touch with me at serena@econofun.co.uk, on online at www.econofun.co.uk.

Testimonial:

'It's easy to set up, visually appealing and quick to learn.'

John Sloman, author and Visiting Fellow at the Economics Network



SUMMARY - Higher Education Green Paper: “Fulfilling Our Potential”

Professor Alvin Birdi, Economics Network

Introduction

A large part of the Green Paper concerns plans for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Other parts outline plans for increasing social mobility and widening access, simplifying the architecture of higher education and opening the sector to new/alternative providers. There is a small section at the end on funding for research.

The main drivers of TEF are:

- Improving the incentives for excellence in teaching.
- Better service for employers by producing work-ready graduates. The Paper suggests that a closer alignment with the needs of employers will enable students to attain better jobs and higher wages thereby also reducing the pressure on public finances by quicker repayment of loans.
- Improved information for students about their courses allowing clearer comparisons between courses. The paper notes that currently only “imperfect proxies” about teaching quality exist and that students are not receiving the information they need.

More generally, the proposals include measures to:

- Level the playing field between existing and new providers and between different types of institution (e.g. HECs and older charter universities).
- Increase access and outcomes for disadvantaged groups (e.g. 20% increase in BME students). The TEF metrics will be disaggregated by under-represented groups. The belief is that better information about value for money for students will encourage participation.

Timelines

The Green Paper consultation closed on 15th January 2016. There will be a technical consultation that follows in the Spring which will look more closely at the metrics that will be used in the TEF.

The proposal for the TEF is that it will be introduced in 2016/17. For this initial year it will be a threshold test to establish whether a provider satisfies quality

standards or not, similar to the current QAA Higher Education Reviews, and providers will be allowed to increase fees in line with inflation from 2017.

From 2017/18, there will be a more detailed TEF layered on top of the 2016/17 TEF which will separate providers into 4 levels.

It is envisaged that the metrics used will evolve alongside the TEF and that eventually the TEF will become disciplinary rather than institutional, though there are no timescales proposed for this.

Many of the changes, including the introduction of TEF, will not need primary legislation. However, there are many aspects of the Green Paper, most importantly the dissolution of HEFCE and the incorporation of its functions into a new Office for Students, which will require primary legislation.

Proposals on TEF

The initial TEF introduced in 2016/17 will be at the institutional (rather than disciplinary) level and will be an assessment of threshold quality. Existing successful QAA reviews will be accepted as satisfying TEF requirements and successful providers will be allowed to increase fees in line with inflation for the student cohort arriving in 2017/18 with students’ fees fixed for the entire programme.

From 2017/18 three further levels of TEF will be layered on top of the threshold level to distinguish providers. Financial incentives for institutions will be aligned with these levels although the details of these incentives are not clear. Providers will voluntarily enter into assessment for these higher levels.

A 5 year frequency for the TEF is proposed, although the initial assessments in 2016/17 will only be effective for 3 years. Re-assessment can also be triggered by institutions who want a higher level award or by some significant change in status/risk (e.g. change in ownership). It is envisaged that the system would be rolling, with a window for applications each year, rather than comprehensive and periodic as with the REF. This implies that some institutions will have assessments that are more

recent than others. The costs of the TEF will be borne by the institutions.

The TEF assessment will be based on common quantitative metrics supplemented with a qualitative case. The metrics will initially be ones that are readily available such as the DLHE data (and matched HMRC data), HESA data on retentions and NSS. The qualitative case could involve a narrative about such things as the context of the institution and the types of students it admits, contributions to social mobility and incentives for excellent teaching. No visit to the institution is envisaged as part of the assessment but one could be “invited”.

It is envisaged that the metrics will be based around the broad themes of learning environment (e.g. incentives for teachers) and student outcomes. They will evolve as more reliable metrics become available and are tested in the future. The paper stresses that any metrics used need to be valid, robust, comprehensive, credible with the sector and current. There are a number of ongoing projects in the sector looking at, for example, learning gain, engagement with study and teaching “intensity”. All metrics used will be broken down, where possible, by disadvantaged groups.

Eventually the TEF will become disciplinary with results aggregated to provide an institutional award. The assessment will be by subject expert peer panel which may include academics, students and employers.

Proposals around social mobility

There is a clear steer in the Green Paper that the TEF will explicitly consider social mobility within its assessment. As noted previously, all metrics will be disaggregated by disadvantaged groups and qualitative cases would be expected to explain how institutions encourage success within these groups. The focus is more evenly on progression and success of these students and not just admission into higher education.

Other proposals in this section include “name blind” recruitment (to overcome perceived unconscious biases in the admissions processes of institutions), degree apprenticeships and sharia-compliant student finance.

Proposals for new/alternative providers

The Green Paper includes measures to encourage and ease the introduction of new providers into HE and measures to “level the playing field” between

new and old providers.

There is an expedited process suggested for gaining degree-awarding powers (DAP) so that a new provider could attain DAP within 4 years and university status within 5-6 years (as opposed to 5 and 8 years respectively at present). The Paper also considers extending the validation system by which new providers currently offer degrees – specifically, the Office for Students is named as a body that could potentially validate degrees for new providers. In addition, the Paper talks about opening validation powers to other non-teaching bodies who have no incumbency interest. There are also plans to relax student number controls on new providers based on performance.

There are also proposals to ease the mechanisms by which institutions can change their governing articles which currently require approval from the Privy Council, a process which can create inflexibility for older institutions. There are also proposals to allow some institutions (Higher Education Corporations) to dissolve themselves in order to exit from the industry (currently this power rests with the Secretary of State). A part of the Green Paper discusses mandating the existence of contingency provisions for students who may be affected by closure of an institution.

It is also suggested that universities may be exempted from the Public Body requirement around FOI requests (a requirement which does not apply to new providers).

Proposals on HE architecture, research and funding

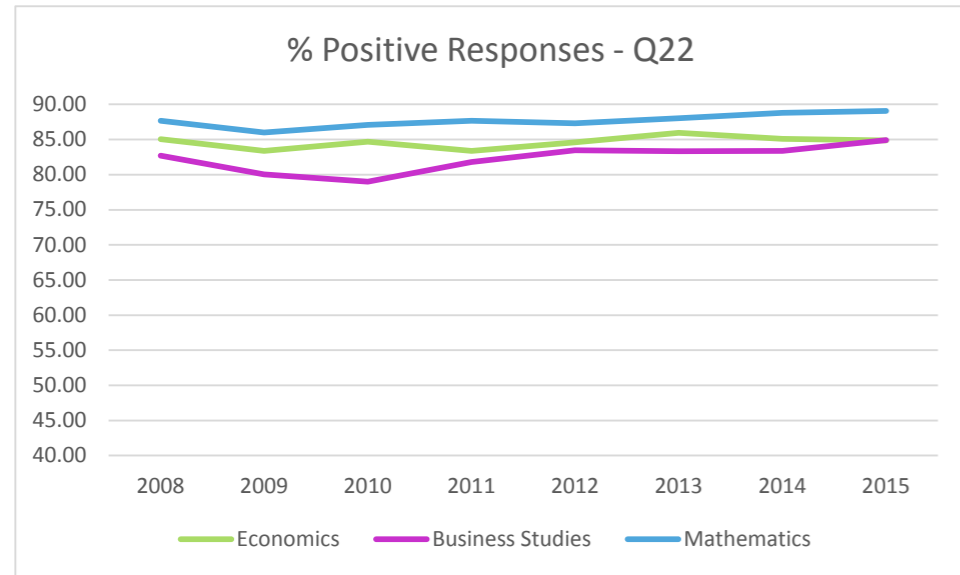
It is proposed that HEFCE’s, OFFA’s and the QAA’s functions are incorporated under a new “arms-length” Office for Students which will be subscription-funded by institutions. The new Office will have responsibility for funding matters related to teaching whereas research funding will now be divorced and taken into the control of the research councils (and Research UK). The paper reiterates the Haldane Principle in decisions on research funding and the desire to continue the dual-funding model (QR and grants) but it is not clear whether QR funding and REF will pass to Research UK.

Though the Office for Students will not have formal powers over research funding, it will have overall regulatory power over universities not just with regard to teaching and learning functions. For example, it will have overall responsibility over the financial sustainability, management and governance of institutions. It is envisaged that the SLC will continue to fund students through loans.

National Student Survey

Ashley Lait & Alice Beckett, Economics Network

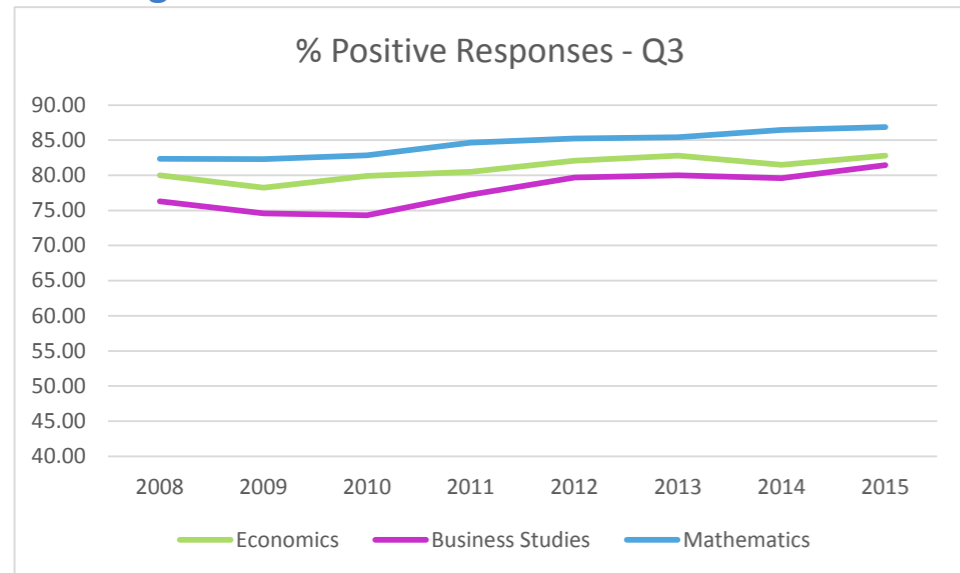
As the National Student Survey has recently opened for 2016, we thought it might be interesting to look at the development of results in economics over the last eight years and how it compares to related disciplines. The results below are report overall satisfaction, and selected questions from the teaching and assessment & feedback sections.



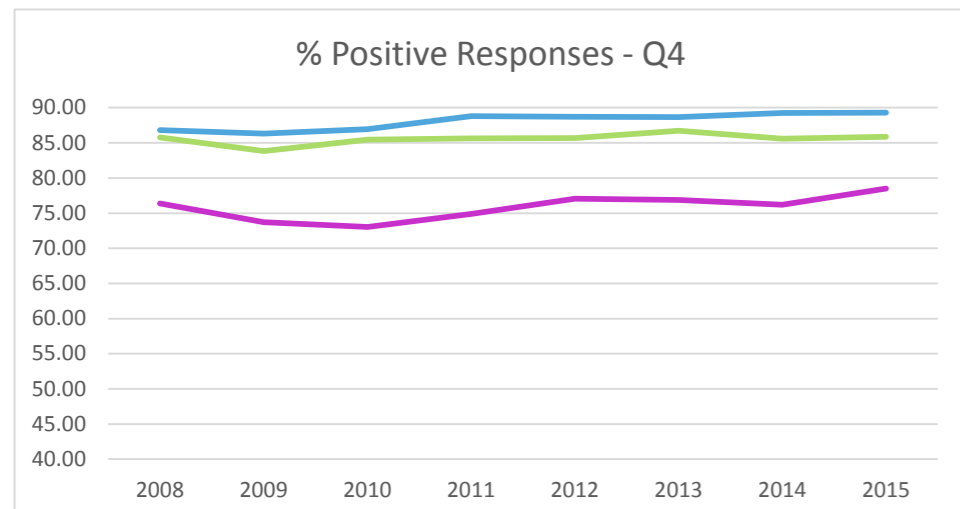
Question 22: "Overall I'm satisfied with the quality of the course"

In 2015: **84.9%** of NSS surveyed students of economics were satisfied with the quality of their course.

Teaching

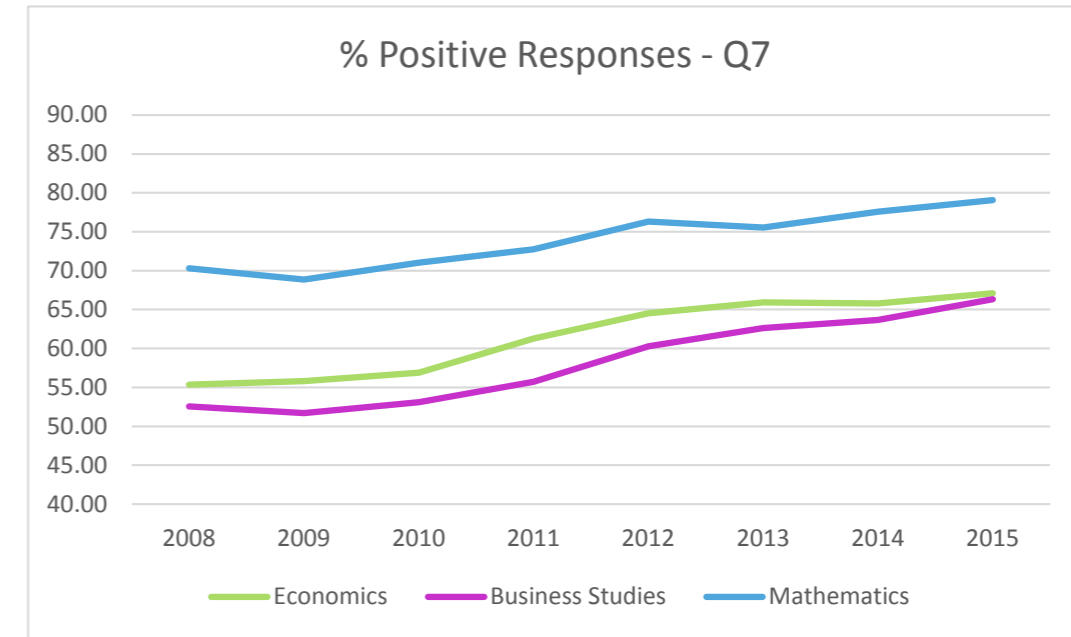


Question 3: "Staff are enthusiastic about what they're teaching"

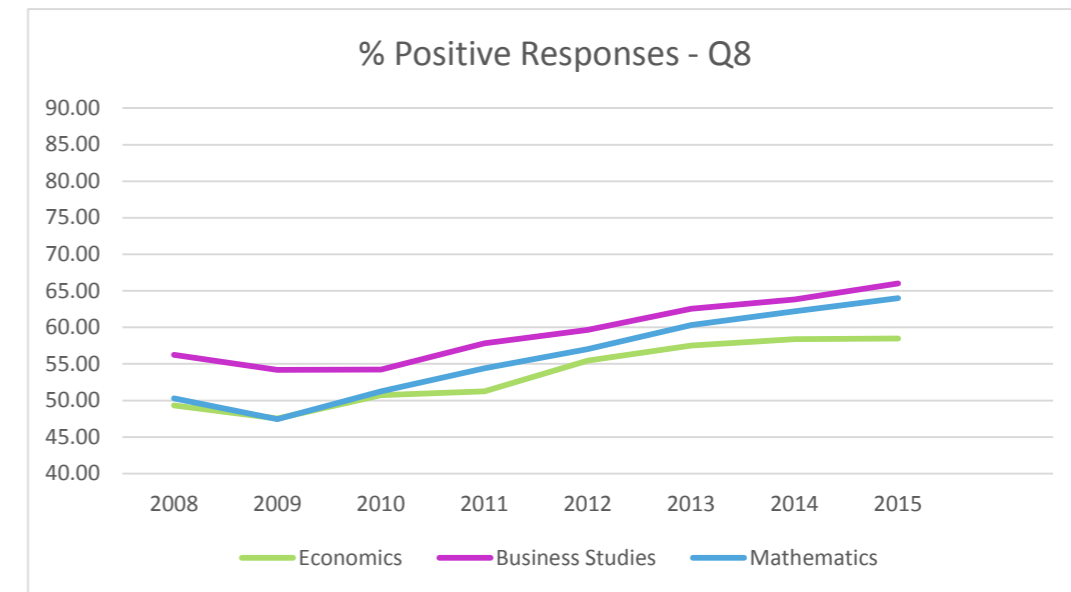


Question 4: "The course is intellectually stimulating"

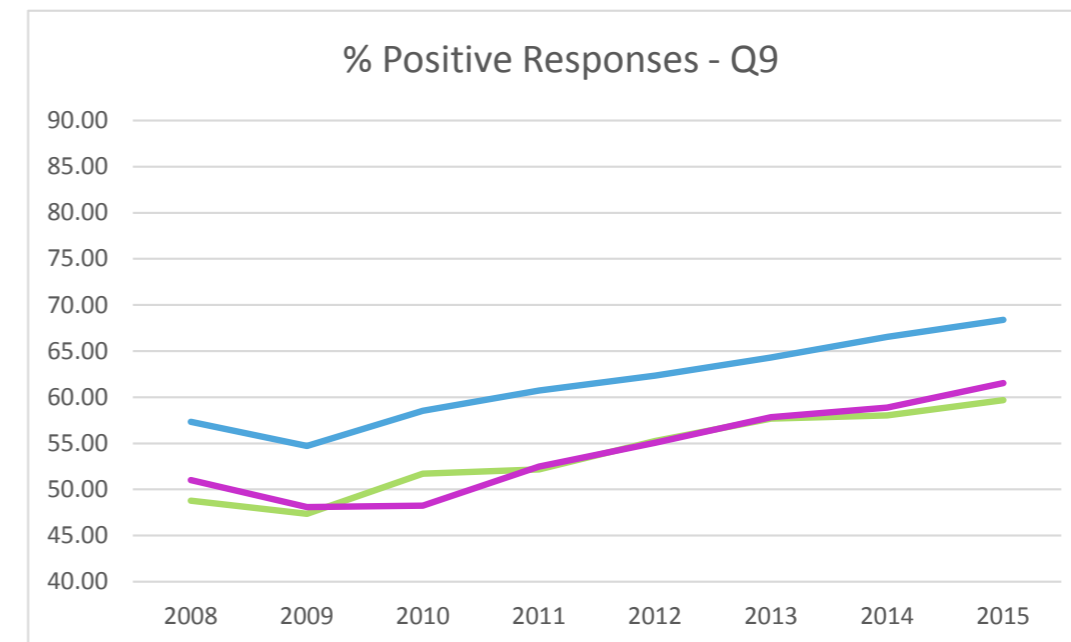
Assessment and Feedback



Question 7: "Feedback on my work has been prompt"



Question 8: "I have received detailed comments on my work"



Question 9: "Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand"

Workshop: Implementing and Teaching CORE

With Wendy Carlin and Sam Bowles (lead authors of CORE)

The aim of this workshop is to introduce delegates to CORE, including what differentiates it from other first year economics principles modules, and the impact its implementation has on teaching.

Presenters will share their experiences of teaching CORE in a number of universities and address both the benefits and difficulties of implementing such a course. Delegates will also be introduced to the additional resources available for teachers, as well as given examples of how the material has been used in the classroom in a variety of settings.

This workshop will be hosted by the Centre for Global Finance, Faculty of Business & Law, UWE Bristol. There will be further workshops hosted at other institutions later in the year.

WHEN: Thursday 28th January, 12pm to 6pm

WHERE: Wye Room, UWE Bristol Exhibition and Conference Centre, Filton Rd, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8QZ

BOOKING: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/workshop-implementing-and-teaching-core-tickets-19890026605>

Find out more about CORE at core-econ.org

**core
econ**


**FRIENDS
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BRISTOL**

Royal Economic Society 2016 Annual Conference

University of Sussex, Brighton
21st to 23rd March 2016

Keynote Speakers

Esther Duflo (MIT), EJ Lecture

Kristin Forbes (MIT and MPC), Hahn Lecture

Susanne Schennach (Brown), Sargan Lecture

Reception at Brighton Museum with Royal Pavilion tour
Gala dinner at Brighton's iconic seafront Grand Hotel

Call for Papers

The Programme Committee invites submissions of papers for General Sessions from academic, government and business economists in any field of economics and econometrics.

- Deadline for submissions: 11 October 2015.
- Notification of acceptance: end of December 2015.
- Online registration open from January 2016.

Proposals for Special Sessions should be sent by email to the Programme Chair (Conference2016@res.org.uk) by 1 November 2015.

Further details and a link for submitting papers can be found on the conference website:
www.res.org.uk/view/0/2016conference_home.html


University of Sussex





THE SCOTTISH ECONOMIC SOCIETY
SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

**Scottish Economic Society
2016 Annual Conference**
Monday 18th - Wednesday 20th April
Perth, Scotland

[Call for papers and proposals for organised sessions](#)

The Society invites submissions of papers and proposals for organised sessions at its Annual Conference from all areas of Economics, Economic Policy, and Econometrics from academics, PG students, practitioners in government, local authorities, public bodies, private sector and charities.

The Society emphasises application of economics to policy. There will be invited sessions in separate policy and pedagogy streams and sessions specifically designed to support PhD students and young lecturers.

[President's Lecture](#)

Professor Sir Christopher Pissarides
Nobel Laureate, LSE

[Sir Alec Cairncross Prize](#)

The Society awards a prize of £1000 for the best paper presented at its Annual Conference by an economist currently registered for a PhD who has successfully completed within the last five years.

Full details can be found on the Society's website:
www.scotecon.org



New submissions to the ideas bank

We are pleased to announce the following new case studies that have been published in the Ideas Bank on the Economics Network website:

- Sara Gundersen, 'Meet me halfway: using challenging group preview questions to engage students in heterogeneous classrooms'
http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/gundersen_questions
- Damian Park, 'Peer-assessed videos as a substitute for in-class presentations'
http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/park_video
- Mario Pezzino, 'The use of professional guest lectures in Business Economics modules'
http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/pezzino_guestlectures
- Steve Cook, 'Visual identification of ARIMA models'
http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/cook_arima
- Steve Cook, 'Analysing forecasting bias: significance, methods and samples'
https://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/cook_bias

To see more of our teaching case studies or to find out about submitting and sharing your own, please visit:

<http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase>



Events 'round-up'

Jan 2016

28

Workshop: Implementing and teaching CORE

University of the West of England

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/workshop-implementing-and-teaching-core-tickets-19890026605>



Mar 2016

21-23

Royal Economic Society Annual Conference

University of Sussex

<http://www.res.org.uk/view/newsevents.html>



Apr 2016

8

Teaching Economics in the 21st Century

University of Dundee

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/teaching-economics-in-the-21st-century-tickets-20026208930>



Apr 2016

14-15

Economics Network Early Careers Workshop

University of Westminster

<https://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers>



Apr 2016

18-20

Scottish Economic Society Annual Conference

Mercure Perth Hotel, Perth, Scotland

<http://www.scotecon.org/conference.html>



Jun 2016

1-3

American Economic Association Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education

JW Marriott Atlanta Buckhead, USA

<https://www.aeaweb.org/committees/AEACEE/Conference/>



Aug 2016

22-24

Association of European Economics Education Conference

Kufstein University of Applied Sciences, Austria

<http://www.economicseducation.eu/conferences/kufstein-austria-2016>



Aug 2016

22-26

European Economic Association Conference

Geneva School of Economics and Management, Switzerland

<http://www.eea-esem-congresses.org/>

