



# The Economics Network Newsletter

Issue 29  
December 2017



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

## Supporters

The Economics Network is generously supported by the Royal Economic Society, the Scottish Economic Society and over 50 UK higher education economics departments. More information on our supporters and joining the Network is available on our website at:

[www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/about/supporters](http://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/about/supporters)

Benefits for supporting departments include:

- Free priority access to Economics Network activities such as graduate teaching assistant and new lecturer workshops which are held at selected member institutions.
- Advice, support and consultancy for internal departmental workshops and away days.
- Publicity on the Network's website.
- Reduced or waived fees and priority booking for events and conferences.
- Invitations to participate in the Network's pedagogical research activities.

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# Economics Network Newsletter

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## Editorial

Our year began with our biennial Developments in Economics Education Conference hosted by University College London in September. We welcomed Jagjit Chadha of NIESR as our keynote speaker. Over 120 delegates from 15 countries shared their latest research and practice on the teaching of economics showing that the appetite for innovation and enhancement in economics education remains as strong as ever. A report on the conference with some photographs can be found on pages 6-8 of this newsletter.

Our graduate teaching assistant

(GTA) workshops followed hard on the heels of the conference. These workshops are endorsed by the RES and SES and they continue to attract large numbers of delegates. This year we had 204 GTAs come through our workshops. The feedback from these workshops remains as strong as ever with 97.5% of the responses reporting presenters of a high standard and 91% of respondents reporting that the workshops were of practical use in the improvement of their teaching. We will be running an additional GTA workshop in January 2018, the details of which can be found on page 9, and our Early Careers' Workshop will run in Oxford in April (see page 5).

Recently, the Network has been increasing the work it does at the interface of schools and universities and we have been engaging with other stakeholders such as the Bank of England, GES and the RES to discuss what might be done in this area. We edit the Economic Review, a magazine aimed at A-level students of economics and we run a website entitled *Why Study Economics?* This term, the Network also contributed to the SES's Student-Teacher event in Perth and Bristol's Discover Economics day. More details on the Discover

Economics day, which focused on introducing economics to school-age students, is on page 12.

We recently ran an event at the University of East Anglia entitled "Making the Economy Count". This was a day devoted to thinking about the most effective ways in which data can be incorporated into teaching and the day also touched on the classroom production of data through experiments and games. Teaching in economics has certainly become more data-oriented over the years partly as a result of increased computing power, the wider availability of data sets and improved software. This tendency will almost surely have improved students' skills on graduation. The Network continues to engage with employers to ensure that our teaching is aligned with employability needs and our latest employers survey is currently live on our website (see page 12).

Last, but not least, we hope you have a great break before the new term starts again in January.

**Alvin Birdi**  
(Economics Network Director)





Happy  
Holidays!!

We hope you have a great  
break over Christmas and  
the New Year!

Best wishes for 2018!  
The Economics Network

# Early Careers Workshop

The Economics Network's spring workshop for early careers teaching staff will run again in April 2018.



Dates: **12th & 13th April 2018**

Venue: **University of Oxford**

This workshop is an interactive two-day event for early careers staff focused on effective and innovative economics teaching. The workshop is endorsed by both the Royal Economic Society and Scottish Economic Society, and sessions are mapped against the UK Professional Standards Framework.

Sessions at the workshop include:

- Making large group teaching more engaging
- Using games and the media in teaching
- Voice and presence in the classroom (with a Royal Shakespeare Company trained actor)
- Teaching interpretative sessions
- Teaching analytical sessions

Booking for the event will open in early January. We will notify departments by email and via CHUDE. As in previous years, attendees from subscribing departments will be offered reduced registration fees for this workshop.

Further information is available on our website at:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers)



# Developments in Economics Education Conference 2017

6th - 8th September 2017 | University College London

We hosted our ninth biennial Developments in Economics Education conference at University College London in September. This was our largest DEE to date with 126 delegates from across the globe in attendance.



As always, the conference began with our Associates meeting, a special session and a drinks reception.



The special session this year focused on 'communicating economics'. Bob Denham and Romesh Vaitilingam gave a short introduction to their newly established project on communicating economics (find out more at [www.communicatingeconomics.com/about/](http://www.communicatingeconomics.com/about/)). The Network also presented the results of its national survey with ING which focused on the understanding of economics in the general population. These afternoon sessions were followed by the drinks reception hosted by Oxford University Press.



Jose Vasquez from the University of Illinois opened the main part of the conference with a plenary on motivation in learning and its relationship to the release and design of information in teaching. It was an object lesson in practising what you preach as it inspired many other delegates to refer to its theme in their own sessions and the phrase "piquing your

interest" became something of a unifying thread for the conference.

The conference sessions covered a range of diverse topics underlining that interest in the development



and enhancement of economics teaching, and innovation in pedagogy, seems to be growing. The sessions included discussion of online learning systems, development of student skills, approaches to the flipped classroom, lessons from employers, peer learning and student engagement and uses of technology and experiments. We also had two panel sessions, which focused on the Teaching Excellence Framework and more broadly how we might measure the quality of an economics degree, and then a discussion of our disciplinary assessment practices, what we can learn from other disciplines and whether our practices are fit for purpose in a rapidly changing educational environment. The programme, abstracts and presentations from the conference are available on our website at: [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2017/](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2017/).



The conference keynote lecture was given by Jagjit Chadha (National Institute for Economic and Social Research). His theme was also around communication and had the title: 'Communicating Economics: A Year on the Front Line'. His particular focus was on the difficulties of effectively

communicating economic news and forecasts in the popular media and he drew on the work of NIESR and other expert think tanks and consultancies in the lead up to the EU referendum.



The DEE conference remains true to the purpose of the Network as a network and it provides a welcoming forum for teachers of economics to network and share ideas with others interested in the forefront of educational improvement in economics. To round this off, this year's conference dinner was hosted at the exceptional Churchill War Rooms in Westminster to which delegates had free and exclusive access. It was a high point and matching it in future will require some hard thinking.

## Feedback:

It is always reassuring to know that the excitement around the conference is shared by delegates. This year's feedback showed that 100% of attendees said they would recommend the conference to their colleagues and 100% rated the keynotes and paper sessions as either good or excellent. Some specific comments from this year's conference include:

- "Great location in the centre of London, the choice of the Churchill War Rooms for the dinner was inspired. Brilliant!"
- "The flipped classroom workshops were particularly interesting. They were very practical, the speakers shared their experience in a very open way, successes and failures. I came with lots of questions from my previous experiences with flipped classrooms. I now know why some attempts didn't work and how to improve in the future."
- "Jose Vasquez's keynote was excellent - it peaked my 'curiosity' and he used the psychology he was teaching on us so it was easy to see how to put themes into practice - excellent!"

- "As ever I leave with a wide range of incremental changes to consider - I won't implement them all but it will set an agenda for my professional development for the coming year."
- "I always learn new techniques every time I come to this conference."
- "Thanks for the excellent organisation and support over the years from the EN. The Economics Network has been the single most important constant in my career in HE teaching."
- "A friendly, welcoming conference for a newcomer."

## DEE 2019:

Lastly, we are pleased to announce that the next DEE conference will be taking place on 11th-13th September 2019 at the University of Warwick. We hope you'll save the date in your calendars! Further details will be added to the website in due course.

If you have never attended a DEE conference but are interested in doing so, there's a video (filmed at DEE 2015) on our website where you find out more: [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/news](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/news).



## Follow-up:

All the tweets from the conference have been collected and are available at: [storify.com/economics\\_net/developments-in-economics-education-2017](https://storify.com/economics_net/developments-in-economics-education-2017)

The presentations, abstracts and programme are also available on our website at: [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2017/](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2017/).

# A snapshot of DEE 2017



#dee2017

We have high resolution copies of all these photos and those on the previous page, so if you would like a copy, please just email Ashley ([ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk)) to let us know.

## New Handbook Chapter | Plagiarism: Deterrence, Detection and Prevention

We have just published a new chapter in our *Handbook for Economics Lecturers* by Carlos Cortinhas (University of Exeter), which focuses on plagiarism, and in particular the new wave of this practice assisted by 'essay mills'.



Access the new chapter at: [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook/plagiarism\\_he](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook/plagiarism_he)

Other new/updated chapters (available at [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/handbook)) include:

- Teaching heterodox economics and pluralism (Andrew Mearman, University of Leeds)
- Motivating international students (Margarida Dolan and Irene Macias)
- Open educational resources in economics (Martin Poulter, Economics Network)
- Module and curriculum design (Peter Smith, University of Southampton)

## Additional GTA Workshop

We are running an additional graduate teaching assistant workshop in January.

Date: **10th January 2018**

Venue: **University of Bristol**

The workshop will complement any generic, institutional training delegates might receive (and in some institutions exempts attendees from parts of such training). They are facilitated by experienced economics lecturers and endorsed by both the Royal Economic Society and Scottish Economic Society.

The workshops enable participants to discuss and evaluate the effective teaching of economics in small-group classes, tutorials, seminars and workshops, including:

- managing student expectations
- students learning styles
- different seminar types
- dealing with diversity
- marking and feedback

## WORKSHOP



There are just a few places remaining, so to sign up and find additional information, please visit our website at:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/gta](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/gta)

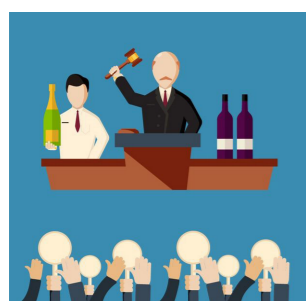


## New initiatives to engage school students

For a number of years now, the Economics Network has collaborated with the University of Bristol and Bristol's Festival of Economics to run an event designed to encourage local school students to engage with economics. As with our contribution to the Scottish Economic Society's Student-Teacher Event, this work forms part of our work to promote the discipline and improve understanding of economics among school age students.

The Bristol event was expanded this year, with the aim of increasing participation from students who have never studied economics, including those who attend schools that don't offer economics A-level. It was hoped that this would also lead to a more diverse group of participants, as university-level economics currently struggles to attract a broad range of students. As Sarah Smith, Chair of the RES Women's Committee and Head of Department at Bristol highlights: 'Women make up 57 per cent of all undergraduate students in the UK but only 33 per cent of those studying economics, including economics with other subjects... and one-quarter of economics students are privately educated, compared to 10 per cent of all undergraduates'.

Thus, the goal of Bristol's Discover Economics day was to introduce economics to a broad range of students as a subject that is engaging and relevant. This year, over one hundred students from ten different schools attended (five private schools and five state schools). Just under half (46%) of the attendees were female.



During the Discover Economics day, the students played two games (the dictator game and an auction game). Details of the auction game, in which groups of students represented restaurants bidding for raw ingredients

to create their menus can be found on our website at: [economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/hedges\\_active5.htm](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/hedges_active5.htm).

This was followed by a 'Meet an Economist' session, in which students were introduced to economists working in finance, the Government Economic Service, research (NIER and IFS) and journalism (the Financial Times). One of the teachers commented that "the presenters talking about their careers were really interesting and the opportunity to speak to them individually afterwards was valuable for my students. It was great to see so much diversity to challenge some of the stereotypes around economists".

The programme also included one of the main panel sessions of the Festival of Economics, entitled "Statistics, Lies and Truth in the Post-Face world", chaired by Alvin Birdi (Economics Network Director) with panel members including Matt Dickson (University of Bath), Gloria Origgi (Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique), Felix Ritchie (University of the West of England) and Hetan Shah (Royal Statistical Society).



The final part of the day consisted of the schools' challenge, run by Economics Network Associate Steve Proud and his University of Bristol colleague Babak Somekh. The challenge invites students to propose an informed policy response to a particular applied issue. This year the topic was the appropriate response to the rise of automation.

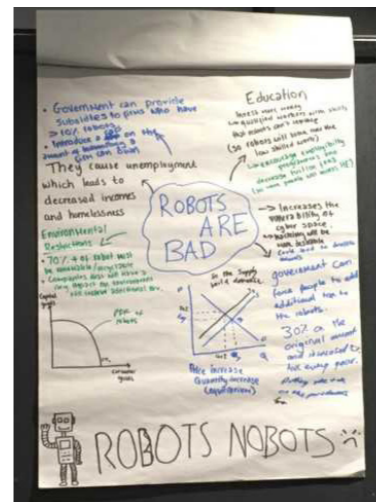


In previous years the theme of the challenge has included healthy eating, congestion, and charitable giving.

As Sarah Smith reports, the teams 'showed great economic insight as well as creative thinking'. Ideas included taxing robots that replaced human jobs, subsidising those that assisted humans,



Panel photo from Bhagesh Sachania



incentivising the creation of robots using sustainable and recycled materials, and investment in retraining and education.

The event was a great success and we received excellent feedback from the teachers and

participants and we intend to repeat and further develop the programme in future years. We are aware of a number of similar initiatives that other universities are running but would be keen to hear more. If you or your department has run something similar, please let us know, especially as we are keen to run surveys at such events to improve our understanding of what school-age students think of economics, which we hope will help us to promote the discipline more effectively. Furthermore, if you are interested in finding out more about our event and seeing the full programme and resources, please contact Ashley ([ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk)).



The Financial Times are offering free access to [FT.com](http://FT.com) to any school with students aged 16-19, allowing teachers and students to read articles, video, podcasts and other content online from the school's premises/ISP address. Register at: [enterprise.ft.com/en-gb/secondary-schools/](http://enterprise.ft.com/en-gb/secondary-schools/).

Content and discussion relevant for school students is made available each week, including relevant articles, quizzes, ideas for class discussions and debates and reading guides.

The end of year quiz is currently open until 12 January. The prizes include FT and Bank of England work experience (top three students), plus retail vouchers, and two schools will win £4,000 each for educational purposes. To enter, visit: [www.ft.com/schoolsquiz](http://www.ft.com/schoolsquiz).



Twitter account @FT4S

The Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) will hold its annual conference in London on 16 – 17 May 2018 on the theme of Economic Measurement.

The ESCoE is pleased to announce their annual conference which will be held in May. The ONS and the Bank of England are cosponsors.

Keynote speakers include: Nicholas Bloom (Stanford University and ESCoE) and Hal Varian (University of California at Berkeley and Google)

Organisers have issued a call for papers on all aspects of the measurement and use of economic statistics, including: the productivity puzzle, the digital economy, National Accounts and 'Beyond GDP', regional statistics, measurement using big data and administrative data, international trade flows and the location of economic activity.

For more details, please visit: [escoe.ac.uk/call-for-papers-escoe-conference-on-economic-measurement-2018/](http://escoe.ac.uk/call-for-papers-escoe-conference-on-economic-measurement-2018/)



## News from the International Review of Economics Education

The International Review of Economics Education (IREE) is now on Twitter - follow [@IREE\\_Journal](https://twitter.com/IREE_Journal) for notifications of new articles and calls for papers.

Recent publications from IREE include:

- 'Introducing economics to millennials', Jose A. Carrasco-Gallego
- 'Using Twitter for economics business case discussions in large lectures', Michael D. Jones and Max Baltzersen
- 'Failures in adopting green technology under perfect pollution pricing and monopoly', Andrew Davis
- 'Will this be on the test? How exam structure affects perceptions of innovative assignments in a masters of science microeconomics course', Kelly A. Grogan

To access these articles and find out more about the journal, please visit: [journals.elsevier.com/international-review-of-economics-education/](http://journals.elsevier.com/international-review-of-economics-education/)



# Employers Survey

Our new survey of employers of economics graduates is now live!

This survey aims to improve understanding of the skills economics graduates need in the workplace, to establish whether employers think these graduates generally possess the required skills and knowledge, and to reveal any clear shortfalls in order to inform the UK economics academic community.

The results of this survey will be analysed and published on our website. They will also be compared to the results of our previous surveys to identify any changes in graduate performance over time.

If you are an employer of economics graduates we would appreciate it if you could spare a few minutes to complete this form. Otherwise, we would be grateful if you could circulate the link to the survey with any relevant contacts you have.

For further information, contact Ashley ([ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk))

Access the survey at:  
[economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/surveys/employers2017](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/surveys/employers2017)





BANK OF ENGLAND

# EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Bank of England has developed a range of resources intended for teachers of pupils aged 11-16. This project, entitled **econoME**, offers a range of engaging classroom resources that will provide young people with the analytical skills to make informed decisions that will benefit themselves and the world around them. The programme uses real-world examples and best-practice strategies from experts at the Bank of England.

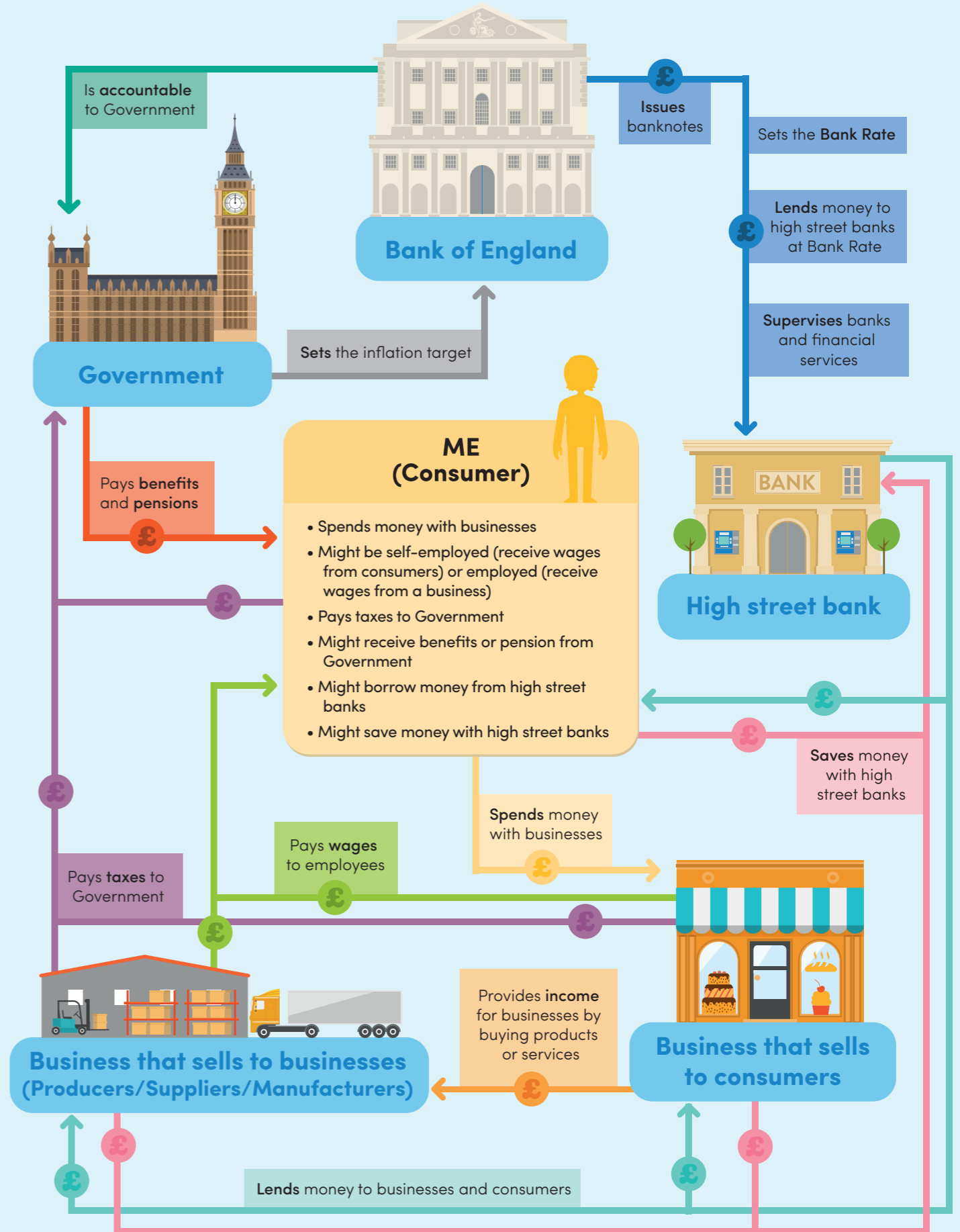
Through three engaging lessons using interactive activities, videos and case studies, students will understand how their decisions are affected by, and influence the economy. They will also explore the steps required to make an informed choice, including: gathering and analysing trustworthy information, identifying different options and weighing pros and cons, and arriving at a decision.

The resources have been produced and reviewed by educational experts in consultation with the Bank of England and are designed to have clear links to the curriculum programmes of study in PSHE/PSE/Health and Well Being/Social Studies/Learning for Life and Work/Thinking, Problem-solving and Decision-Making, Citizenship, and Economics.

We have included an example graphic from the resource page on the opposite page, but you can find full details at: [bankofengland.co.uk/education-and-engagement/econome](http://bankofengland.co.uk/education-and-engagement/econome).

The resources are still in development stages, so if you are interested in providing feedback and contributing the development of the econoME resources, please contact Ashley ([ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk)).

## The Economy and ME





# Professional Development



The Society is excited to announce the launch of a Professional Development Programme - to learn more come along and meet us at a reception on Monday 8 January, 6pm at the Westminster Business School of Westminster University.

The demand for applying the knowledge and skills of economists to the practical challenges facing our society has never been greater. As the breadth and depth of the discipline of Economics has expanded, however, it has become increasingly difficult for professional economists to stay abreast of the latest and most cutting-edge developments of economic theory and practice.

Accordingly, your Council believes that the Society of Business Economists can offer a valuable service to its members by providing, in addition to the regular monthly speaker meetings and the highly successful Master Class programme, an insightful and well-structured Continuous Professional Development programme.

To register for the reception, please email Katie Abberton at [admin@sbe.co.uk](mailto:admin@sbe.co.uk).

## Scottish Economic Society 2018 Annual Conference

Sunday 15th - Tuesday 17th April  
Perth Concert Hall, Perth, Scotland

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

The Society invites submissions of papers and proposals for organised sessions from all areas of Economics, Economic Policy, and Econometrics. The Society emphasises application of economics to policy.

Deadline for submissions:  
8th January 2018

[President's Lecture](#)

“What Behavioural Economics Says about the Behaviour of Economists”  
Professor Julie Nelson, University of Massachusetts Boston

[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](http://www.scotecon.org)



# Events 'round-up'

Jan 2018

10

**Economics Network GTA Workshop**  
University of Bristol, UK  
[economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/gta](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/gta)



Mar 2018

26-29

**Royal Economic Society Annual Conference**  
University of Sussex, UK  
[www.res.org.uk](http://www.res.org.uk)



Apr 2018

12-13

**Economics Network Early Careers Workshop**  
University of Oxford, UK  
[economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers](http://economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/earlycareers)



Apr 2018

23-25

**Scottish Economic Society Annual Conference**  
Perth, UK  
[scotecon.org/conference.html](http://scotecon.org/conference.html)



May 2018

16-17

**Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence Annual Conference**  
London, UK  
[escoe.ac.uk/call-for-papers-escoe-conference-on-economic-measurement-2018/](http://escoe.ac.uk/call-for-papers-escoe-conference-on-economic-measurement-2018/)



May-Jun 2018

30-1

**American Economic Association Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education**  
San Antonio, USA  
[aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/economic-education](http://aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/economic-education)

