

# Employability skills in Undergraduate Economics Degrees

---

*Please read the information sheet and complete the consent form before progressing with the survey. When completing the survey please relate your answers to only one degree. This should be your single honours economics degree if you have one, or your joint economics degree with the most economics content. The joint degree must be at least 50% economics. All answers should relate to the degree in 2018/19.*

*If you have any questions while completing the survey please contact Cloda Jenkins (Project Manager, [cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk)) or Ashley Lait (Economics Network Centre Manager, [ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk)).*

## Section 1 - Information about you and your degree

### 1. Contact information

University	
Your Department (eg, Economics)	
Your Faculty/School (eg, Business School)	
Your name	
Your role (eg, Programme Director)	
Contact email	

### 2. Information about the degree that you are referring to in this survey

Title of degree programme that survey answers relate to	
What proportion of the degree is in economics?	

3. Further contact preferences

We will collate background information on your named degree programme from various sources (e.g. university website, HESA) to allow us to take account of variation in degree programmes when analysing the survey data at aggregate level. Information on individual programmes will not be published in any of our outputs, as emphasised in the information sheet.

We would also like to be able to get in touch if we have any questions about your responses to the survey and to invite you to Focus Group discussions. You can find more information about the Focus Groups in the information sheet.

[Tick box]	Yes	No
Would you like us to supply you with the information that we collect on your programme before we use it?		
Are you happy to be contacted by the project team if they have any questions on your responses?		
Would you like to be sent an invite, for you or a colleague, to attend a focus group meeting, between May and July 2019?		

4. Please tick this box to confirm that you have read the information sheet, completed the consent form and returned the consent form to [cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk).

## Section 2 - Overview of employability skills in your degree

Please take a look at the FAQs on completing the survey before continuing. They may help you interpret some of the questions.

5. Consider the skill categories in the table below. Rank them, from 1 to 5, according to the extent to which they are prioritised in your degree. To be a top priority, a skill area should be explicitly built into learning outcomes for the programme but there should also be evidence of activities being designed in modules that ensure the outcomes are delivered. Please choose n/a if a skill area is not prioritised at all in your degree. If you think two skills are equally important in your degree you can give them the same ranking.

Skill/capability	Ranking Enter: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, n/a
Communication	
Application to real world	
Data analysis	
Collaboration	
Wider employability skills (see Q2 for a breakdown of what this includes)	

6. Use this space to comment on your rankings in Q5 if you wish to.

7. Consider the more granular list of skill areas in the table below, split into the same categories as Q1. Choose three skill areas that you consider are the 'Top 3' in your degree. Choose three skills areas that you consider are the 'Bottom 3' in your degree. Skills would be in the 'Top 3' if they are built into learning outcomes and lecturers have explicitly designed activities to enable students to develop these skills. Skills would be in the 'Bottom 3' if there is little recognition of the need to develop the skill across the programme (eg, it is rarely discussed by lecturers) and there are very little (no) activities designed to help students develop the skill.

Skill/capability	Ranking Choose 'Top 3' and 'Bottom 3'. Leave all other skills blank.
<b>Communication</b>	
Writing for academic audience	
Writing for non-academic audience	
Presentation to academic audience	
Presentation to non-academic audience	
<b>Application to real world</b>	
Applying economics to real world context	
Solving policy or commercial problems	
Simplifying complex ideas/information to make them accessible to wide audience	
<b>Data analysis</b>	
Sourcing and organising quantitative data	
Analysing and interpreting quantitative data	
Ability to analyse data using excel	
Ability to use statistical/econometric packages	
<b>Collaboration</b>	
Team-working with economists	
Collaboration with non-economists	
<b>Wider employability skills</b>	
Flexibility	
Reliability	
Can do attitude	
Independent thinking	
Creativity and imagination	
Resilience	
Commercial awareness	
Time management	
Project management/organisational skills	

8. Use this space to comment on your rankings in Q7 if you wish to.

*For the remainder of the survey, the questions relate to the skill areas that employers of economics graduates have identified as the most important in Economics Network Employers Surveys. If you wish to comment further on what you do to develop other skill areas, please let us know in your answer to Q39.*

9. Across the whole degree, choose the closest frequency that reflects how often an average (typical) student gets an opportunity to develop each skill area?

Skill/capability	Frequency 0- Unable to comment 1 – Not at all 2 – Hardly at all (2-3 times across degree) 3 – Occasionally (2-3 times per year) 4 – Regularly (2-3 times per term) 5 – Very regularly (weekly)
<b>Communication</b>	
Writing for academic audience	
Writing for non-academic audience	
Presentation to academic audience	
Presentation to non-academic audience	
<b>Application to real world</b>	
Apply economics to real world context	
<b>Data analysis</b>	
Sourcing, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data	
<b>Collaboration</b>	
Team-working with economists	
Collaboration with non-economists	

10. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q9 if you wish to.

11. Consider the list of employability activities and support opportunities that are not linked to economics modules below. To what extent are these opportunities available to students on your degree?

<b>Employability activities/support</b>	<b>Extent to which opportunity is available</b> 0 – unable to comment 1 – not available 2 – available but not actively promoted as part of economics degree experience 3 – available but only to a proportion of students on the degree 4 – available to all students and actively promoted as an optional part of economics degree experience 5 – available to all students and explicitly integrated into economics degree experience
Year on placement	
Short-term internships organised by Department/School	
Mentoring organised by Department/School	
Events organised by University Careers Service	
Support provided by University Careers Service	
Expert careers advisor providing one-on-one support in Department/School	
Employer events organised by Department/School	
Alumni events organised by Department/School	

Employability activities/support	Extent to which opportunity is available 0 – unable to comment 1 – not available 2 – available but not actively promoted as part of economics degree experience 3 – available but only to a proportion of students on the degree 4 – available to all students and actively promoted as an optional part of economics degree experience 5 – available to all students and explicitly integrated into economics degree experience
Careers support from personal tutor or academic careers lead	
Bespoke skills modules delivered by Department/School (e.g. writing, presenting)	
Tailored employment or careers modules delivered by Department/School	
Events and support provided by student societies linked to the programme	
Other [please specify]	

12. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q11 if you wish to. You can also submit a case study on your experiences in any of these areas [see Q38].

13. The table below lists potential challenges to helping students develop employability skills as part of their economics degree. For each challenge, please indicate the extent to which you and colleagues involved with teaching on the programme consider it relevant to your degree.

Potential challenge	Extent to which it is a problem 0 – unable to comment 1- not a problem at all 2- a problem 3 – a significant problem
There is not enough time in a module to teach content and develop employability skills	
The cohort is too large to organise skills-related activities or assessments	
Lecture staff are not aware of how to adjust module content and assessments in order to allow development of employability skills	
Lecture staff are not interested in adjusting their modules to allow for development of employability skills	
Facilities, such as teaching rooms with computers, are not easily available to allow for employability skills to be developed in modules	
Students do not choose optional skills-focused modules	
Students do not engage with skills activities embedded within modules	
Students do not seem to recognise that they are developing skills even when lecturers have designed skills-related learning activities	
The Department thinks it is more appropriate for employability skills support to be provided by the University Careers service rather than through the economics degree	
Other [please specify]	

14. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q13 if you wish to.



15. Do you think your degree programme is doing enough to help students develop employability skills?

Yes  No

16. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q15 if you wish to.

17. Have students told you, for example in NSS surveys or similar, that they think you are doing enough to help them develop employability skills?

Yes  No

18. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q17 if you wish to.

19. Do you have any plans to do more on employability skills in your degree in the next one to two years?

Yes  No

20. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q19 if you wish to.

### Section 3 - How are skills taught and assessed in your degree?

In most degree programmes students can follow different paths, taking different combinations of optional modules. We ask you to consider the experience of a ‘typical’ student who takes compulsory modules and a combination of the most popular optional modules and engages with any skills or careers modules that you run.

21. In which year(s) of study does a typical student get the most opportunities to develop each of the following skills?

- It doesn’t have to be that you are doing a lot in that year; we are trying to identify if activities are clustered in particular years or spread across years. For example, if you only develop a skill in one module in the final year then tick ‘Final Year’.
- Tick all years that apply if the opportunities are equally spread in different years.
- **If a skill is not developed in the degree leave that row blank.**

	YEAR OF STUDY			
	1	2	Final year (year 3 and/or 4)	3 (placement year)
<b>Communication</b>				
Writing for academic audience				
Writing for non-academic audience				
Presentation to academic audience				
Presentation to non-academic audience				
<b>Application to real world</b>				
Applying economics to real world context				
<b>Data analysis</b>				
Sourcing, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data				
<b>Collaboration</b>				
Team-working with economists				
Collaboration with non-economists				

22. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q21 if you wish to.

23. Over the course of the degree programme, in which type of module does a typical student get the most opportunities to develop each of the following skills?

- We are trying to identify if activities are clustered in optional, compulsory or skills-specific modules. Please therefore think about whether the skill area is ‘mainly’ developed in the module type. For example, if you do a lot of activities in optional modules and only one activity in one compulsory module choose ‘Optional Economics Modules’. If you only do one or two activities but they are equally spread between optional and compulsory modules, then choose both.
- Tick all modules types that apply if the opportunities are spread evenly across different types.
- If a skill is not developed in the degree leave that row blank.

	Compulsory economics modules	Optional economics modules	Compulsory bespoke skills module(s)	Optional bespoke skills module(s)	Bespoke careers module(s)
<b>Communication</b>					
Writing for academic audience					
Writing for non-academic audience					
Presentation to academic audience					
Presentation to non-academic audience					
<b>Application to real world</b>					
Applying economics to real world context					
<b>Data analysis</b>					
Sourcing, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data					
<b>Collaboration</b>					
Team-working with economists					
Collaboration with non-economists					

24. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q23 if you wish to

--

25. Consider a typical student’s experience developing skills across the degree. What type of activities are used to give students the opportunity to practice the skill? Tick all that apply, even if some of them are only used in one or two modules. If a skill is not developed in the degree leave that row blank.

	Discussion, presentation, in-class questions or other activity in large group	Discussion, presentation, in-class questions or other activity in small group	Computer-based activity in a lab class	Computer-based activity (take-home)	Take-home problem set	Take-home academic essay	Take-home report (e.g. on case study)	Dissertation/long research project	Closed-book exam questions	Other [please specify]
<b>Communication</b>										
Writing for academic audience										
Writing for non-academic audience										
Presentation to academic audience										
Presentation to non-academic audience										
<b>Application to real world</b>										
Applying economics to real world context										
<b>Data analysis</b>										
Sourcing, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data										
<b>Collaboration</b>										
Team-working with economists										
Collaboration with non-economists										

26. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q0 if you wish to.

27. Consider all the activities that students do to develop their employability skills across the programme as a whole. For a typical student engaging with these opportunities, what proportion of them, for each skill area, is summatively assessed (i.e. counts toward the final grade for the degree)?

We are trying to establish whether activities that students engage with to develop skills tend to be formative or summative. Please focus only on the activities that are linked to development of the skills. **If a skill is not developed in the degree leave that row blank.**

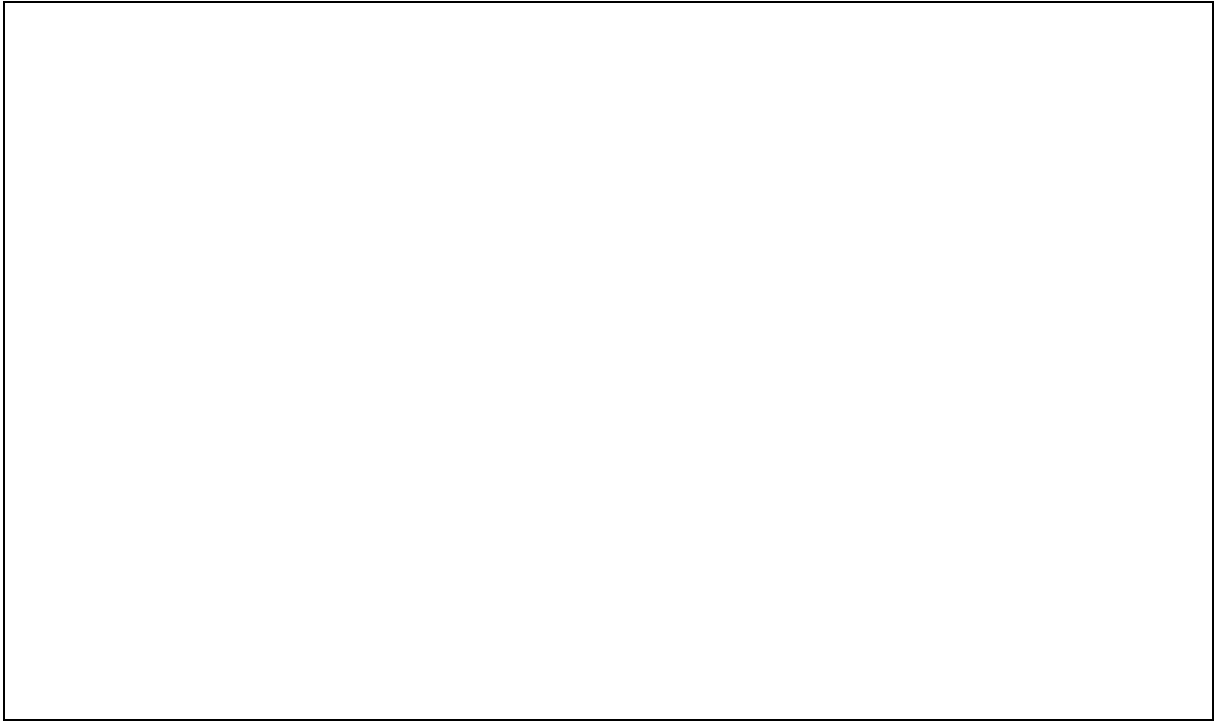
% of skill development work that is summatively assessed	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
<b>Communication</b>					
Writing for academic audience					
Writing for non-academic audience					
Presentation to academic audience					
Presentation to non-academic audience					
<b>Application to real world</b>					
Applying economics to real world context					
<b>Data analysis</b>					
Sourcing, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data					
<b>Collaboration</b>					
Team-working with economists					
Collaboration with non-economists					

28. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q27 if you wish to.

29. Consider a typical student's experience developing writing skills in their economics modules. Do students get the opportunity to produce the following written output types in their degree? Please say yes even if students only get the opportunity once or twice in optional and/or compulsory modules. We want to understand the range of experiences students have rather than how much exposure they have to different opportunities.

	<b>Opportunity available</b>
	0- unable to comment 1 – No 2 – Yes, in optional modules only 3 – Yes, in compulsory modules only 4 – Yes, in optional and compulsory modules
Short answer question (<500 words)	
Academic Essay (1,000 words+)	
Academic Report (e.g. project or case study)	
Report targeted to non-academic audience	
Newspaper or newsmagazine article	
Wiki	
Blog	
Poster	
Dissertation	
Other [please specify]	

30. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q29 if you wish to.



31. Consider a typical student's experience developing presentation skills in their economics modules. Do students get the opportunity to present in the following different ways in their degree? Please say yes even if students only get the opportunity once or twice in optional and/or compulsory modules. We want to understand the range of experiences students have rather than how much exposure they have to different opportunities.

	<b>Opportunity available</b> 0- unable to comment 1 – No 2 – Yes, in optional modules only 3 – Yes, in compulsory modules only 4 – Yes, in optional and compulsory modules
Informal discussion or answering of questions in lecture	
Informal discussion or answering of questions in tutorials/seminars	
Formal presentation (with slides or similar) in tutorials/seminars aimed at academic audience	
Formal presentation (with slides or similar) in tutorials/seminars aimed at non-academic audience	
Formal presentation of poster in tutorials/seminars	
Video presentation	
Podcast presentation	
Formal presentation at conference	
Other [please specify]	

32. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q0 if you wish to.



33. Consider a typical student’s experience developing data analysis skills in their economics modules. Do students engage with the following activities themselves that allow them to develop these skills in their degree? Please say yes even if students only get the opportunity once or twice in optional and/or compulsory modules. We want to understand the range of experiences students have rather than how much exposure they have to different opportunities.

	<b>Opportunity available</b>
	0- unable to comment 1 – No 2 – Yes, in optional modules only 3 – Yes, in compulsory modules only 4 – Yes, in optional and compulsory modules
See how data is used and analysed by academic economics researchers (e.g. in lectures or required readings)	
Identify data sources and download datasets	
Clean and organise data, dealing with problems such as missing values	
Analyse data by drawing charts and/or creating summary statistics	
Analyse data using econometric techniques	
Present analysis of data in a written report or oral presentation	
Learn and make use of coding skills	
Other [please specify]	

34. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q0 if you wish to.

35. Consider a typical student's experience developing data analysis skills in their economics modules. What data analysis, mathematical, econometrics and/or coding software packages do students use themselves in your degree?

	<b>Do students use the package?</b> Tick if yes
C	
Excel	
Eviews	
Gretl	
Java	
Mathematica	
Matlab	
Python	
R	
Ruby	
SAS	
SPSS	
Stata	
Other [please specify]	

36. Use this space to briefly comment on your answer to Q35 if you wish to.

37. How does a typical student get the opportunity to work with others in teams and develop collaboration skills in the degree?

## Section 4 - Case study examples from your degree

38. Are you, or any other module lecturers, willing to share information about activities that have been designed, including assessed activities, with the aim of developing students' employability skills in the economics degree? Please note that the case studies can relate to activities in economics modules, your experience with placement year opportunities, experiences designing bespoke skills or careers modules or any other related support activities that you have in your economics degree.

Yes

No

If you have answered 'yes', please complete the case study form sent with the survey email and return to [cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:cloda.jenkins@ucl.ac.uk). Please return one form for each case study that you or a colleague want to be considered by the project team.

## Section 5 - Any other comments

39. Please use this space to provide any additional comments on the development of employability skills in your degree that you think would be of interest to the project team.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing comments on the survey.

40. Please use this space to provide any comments on the survey. For example, you may wish to comment on how easy or hard it was to complete, or you may want to note whether the answers would be different from one year to the next.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing comments on the survey.