

# Motivating students and improving their maths skills

## Results of the 2009 lecturer survey

The Economics Network conducted its fifth biennial national lecturer survey in April/May of 2009 as part of its research programme into teaching and learning, which also includes surveys of students, alumni and employers. 198 lecturers from 70 UK universities completed the survey, compared with 193 in 2007.

The survey was observational, conducted online and consisted of 18 questions focusing on lecturer perceptions of the most important issues in teaching practice over the previous two years, the changes they had instituted, their use of Economics Network (EN) services and their views on the development of specialist areas networks to share teaching resources and ideas.

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The results of the survey describe our typical respondent as:

- Male (69.2%)
- First language English (73.7%)
- In the post of Lecturer or Senior Lecturer (56.6%)
- With more than 10 years of experience in teaching in HE (53.0%)
- Having one or more of the administrative roles (82.8%)

The survey confirms a trend amongst increasing numbers of lecturers to change their teaching methods over the past two years due to changes in students' skills and abilities, larger classes and feedback that they receive from students. This continuing trend for change of teaching practice increases the demand for services and resources provided by Economics Network.

As in 2007, nearly two thirds of lecturers highlighted motivating students and dealing with students' maths skills as important issues in their current teaching. The importance of issues associated with large group sizes in seminars increased from 72 respondents mentioning it in 2007 to 89 in 2009 and with the large numbers of students in lectures from 45 to 99. One issue that has seen a large increase in its importance is the specific needs of international students (it was mentioned by 24 lecturers in 2007 and by 74 in 2009). The issues of fewer resources and lecturers' time constraints have also seen their importance increased.

Student retention and student recruitment were mentioned less in 2009 than in 2007, as well as falling numbers for single honours. This reflects the substantial increases in recruitment to economics degree in 2008 (20%) and a further modest increase in 2009 (3%).

### Respondents described the most important issues in more detail

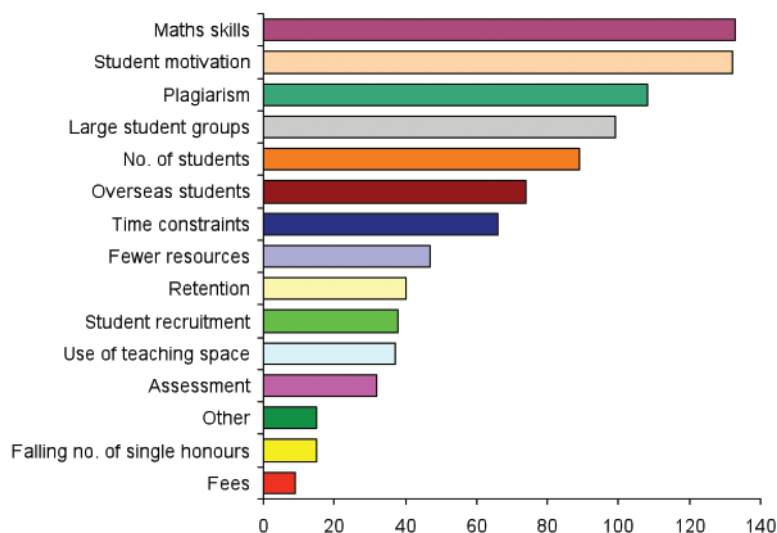
#### Maths skills of students

- Maths skills are becoming increasingly problematic as is the cut-and-paste structure encouraged by 'A'-levels
- As I teach in third year or postgraduate, students have taken core economics and maths modules, yet many seem unable or unwilling to remember and retain a fear of equations
- Maths is a key issue in our department as students are often very weak at maths and disengage from the subject early on. We are trying a new system this year of delivering the material in smaller groups as opposed to through lectures and we are separating A-Level and non A-level

#### Student motivation

- Motivation is a particular issue in year 1 alongside growing difficulties of student transition to university and university learning

*continued over...*



- Motivation of students is often to pass the exam rather than to learn
- Problems with some second year students who don't attend lectures and/or tutorials
- Too many students who are not well prepared and don't want to work to learn
- The majority of our students see no need to do any work and have no real interest in the topic they have chosen to study

### Number of students and large size groups

- There seems to be continual pressure to teach greater numbers of students more cost effectively
- We're caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The university has a policy on contact hours and class sizes. Given the challenging outlook in terms of public finances, it is likely that student/staff ratios will rise further over the next 5 years. With pressure to conduct research that maintains our position in the top 5, something has to give
- The course has nearly 800 registered students. The content is very difficult, and we often do not have time to cover it in the detail we would like during classes
- Biggest problem is some teaching rooms not being big enough especially lecture theatres

As in our previous surveys there were comments left by respondents

regarding the various pressures on their time and differential rewards for success in research and teaching:

- A central issue for me over the last few years has been that the institution in which I work has shortened the academic year in order to pursue a research agenda, leaving students with insufficient time to learn effectively and staff with insufficient time to provide adequate feedback to students. This has led to continuing tensions
- The idea that resources are overstretched and that we over teach is a self-serving fiction used by academics to justify reducing their teaching loads at the expense of students and maximizing the time they have for career-promoting research. I teach at most six hours a week (which is on the higher than average) and would be happy to do more and thereby help reduce class sizes, increase contact hours and improve the experience of students. However, to say this openly would mark me down as not being serious about research, jeopardize my future, and have no effect whatsoever on the powers that be. Instead, we have been told that next year we must drop courses (including one of my own, which recruits well and has always had excellent reviews from students) and reduce contact hours on those that remain in order to free up

**"...nearly two thirds of lecturers highlighted motivating students and dealing with students' maths skills as important issues..."**

resources for research. This is a travesty that is typical of UK HE nowadays, and which (I judge) 90% of academics connive in for selfish and self-serving reasons

- There is drive by universities to be simultaneously better at teaching, better at research and to generate more income without addressing the conflicts of interest

Those comments are supported by the results of the recent study by Malcolm Tight of Lancaster University "Higher Education in the United Kingdom since 1945", where he compares academic workloads over the past 60 years and concludes that "the balance of the average academic's workload has changed in an undesirable way...(making) it more difficult to pay as much attention to teaching as most academics would like to do."

The survey results inform the Economics Networks' planning. If you have any comments, queries or suggestions please contact **Inna Pomorina** (inna.pomorina@bristol.ac.uk)

The full survey report is available at [www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/projects/lec\\_survey2009](http://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/projects/lec_survey2009)

### Student Survey Reminder

The Economics Network's latest student survey is now online. Please encourage your students to fill in this short online survey. Replies from individual students will be anonymous. Departments will receive a confidential report summarising the results from their students. Closing date 15th February.

# Project Funding News

## Economics Network Learning and Teaching Development Projects 2010/11

### Would you like us to fund YOUR project up to £5000?

Proposals are invited from the UK Economics community for small projects to be funded by the Economics Network. Projects will address the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in Economics Higher Education.

### Who can apply?

Any academic or group of academics involved in teaching Economics at either undergraduate or postgraduate level in the UK.

### Programme aims

- To encourage and support curriculum developments, learning and teaching research, and other innovations to enhance students' learning experiences.
- To encourage collaboration and facilitate dissemination and sharing of good practice between departments, local support services and institutions.

### Priority areas

Projects proposals focusing on the following areas will be prioritised:

- Sustainable Development: developing curricula and teaching that give students the skills and knowledge to live and work sustainably
- Teaching international students.
- Assessment and feedback
- Employability and employer engagement, including workbased learning

- External examiners: for example using external examiner experiences as a resource
- Student engagement: for example recruitment, retention, participation, attendance etc.

Proposals should be received no later than **Friday 30 April 2010**. Further information, including application forms from: [www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/mini/call](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/mini/call)

### e-learning support

As part of the JISC/Higher Education Academy's *Discipline-focused Learning Technology Enhancement* programme, the Economics Network is looking to support a department in a HEFCE-funded institution with using technology to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. This 12-month project, running until November 2010, will enable departmental teams to benefit from consultancy support, and attend two workshops.

To find out more or download a programme outline and a proposal form, please see:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/node/901](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/node/901)

### Key details

Funding range	
Development of Project Ideas	£1000
New Learning and Teaching Projects	£2000 for individuals; £5000 for projects involving more than one university
Extension of Projects	£2000
Project length	No longer than 12 months

### Key dates

Closing date for proposals	Friday 30 April 2010
Successful bids announced	Friday 21 May 2010
Initial Project meeting	June 2010

## Does your department need support in tackling student survey results?

The Economics Network is pleased to announce its Student Focus Group scheme. From March 2010 to July 2010 the Economics Network can provide up to 10 student focus groups free of charge to departments. These will be allocated on a first-come, first-

served basis, and the groups will be fully confidential to the department.

Designed to complement the Economics Network student survey and the National Student Survey, a student focus group can help departments explore and tackle

issues that such surveys may highlight. The student focus groups will be run by one of independent evaluators who will return a confidential report to your department for your use in planning. The deadline for requests is 26th February 2010.

Further details about the scheme and an online request form are available at:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/surveys/focus\\_group](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/surveys/focus_group)

If you need any additional information please contact **Inna Pomorina** ([inna.pomorina@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:inna.pomorina@bristol.ac.uk))

## The knowledge and skills required by economists in the GES

Andy Ross, Deputy Director and Head of Professional Development, Government Economic Service

**As a major user of the outputs of universities the Government Economic Service (GES) celebrates advances in scientific economics but observes that academic research is typically different in nature from the work of the 'professional practitioner' economist in government.**

The GES recognises the strength of economics as an academic discipline but observes that the knowledge and skills needed by academic researchers and government economists are not identical, and are often quite different. Some economists are academic researchers, professional practitioners and policy makers, but this is not a realistic aspiration for the majority of economists. Most GES economists do not develop the level of technical expertise currently required for articles published in the most prestigious academic journals, but they do make important contributions towards better government.

The competencies needed by academic researchers and professional practitioners are not mutually exclusive, they overlap greatly, but the GES seeks to clarify the distinctions. One important aspect is that the professional practitioner must make judgements that attempt to balance a wide range of considerations, including

unknowns, using incomplete information today to prepare for an uncertain tomorrow. The academic researcher seeking publication in academic journals is attempting to add to the stock of scientific knowledge. The approach of the academic and the practitioner therefore often differs. Policy requires going beyond what can be demonstrated with formal rigour: it is about dilemmas rather than lemmas.

Professional practitioners must be well rounded for a critical and discerning use of economic analysis and evidence; they do not always need to be equipped for the scientific pursuit of formalised new knowledge, though such skills are valued as part of the overall GES mix. There are many important jobs in the GES, such as forecasting, that do require sophisticated techniques, but, compared to academic researchers, the level of technical skills required by professional practitioners is typically lower.

However, their need for effective

communication, good judgement in drawing eclectically from a plurality of influences, quantitative awareness and a deep rounded grasp of the fundamentals, is higher. It is about different skill sets, not about 'dumbing down'.

Entry to the GES requires only the meeting of pre-set competencies. As the GES has not met its demand for entry-level economists for many years there has effectively been no cap on recruitment numbers; we would have recruited more if had they met our standard. Although applicants must have a 2.1 or better, e.g. a Masters, in degrees with at least 50 per cent economics, the salient statistic is that half of these seemingly well-qualified candidates fail our entry assessment on economic knowledge and skills alone. An assessment that involves little more than applying the contents of a good introductory textbook such as Sloman.

Success is correlated with candidate's university, but our provisional analysis of evidence suggests that university per se is far from being a complete explanation. There are of course many complex reasons why candidates fail, but GES assessors (each candidate is assessed by a panel consisting of one academic and one GES member) most commonly report that the major reason is a lack of a deep understanding of fundamental threshold economic concepts. This understanding is even more important than good communication skills, as a lack of understanding makes it difficult to remember, select and apply economic principles, particularly to unfamiliar contexts as is often required in government.

The Economics Network conducts an annual and broader survey of employers' perception of economics, and our conclusion here relates only to that part of the GES recruitment process that assesses



*Andy Ross delivering a keynote at the previous DEE Conference (2007), in Cambridge, with John Sloman, Economics Network*

knowledge, application and communication in economics. The broader 'graduateness' skills of candidates are tested separately, and only after the candidate has passed the economic assessment and successfully completed a detailed pre-interview questionnaire.

Also, for balance, it is important to report that candidates who do pass the GES recruitment process can do what is 'promised' by the QAA subject benchmarks:

*"First there is the ability to abstract and simplify in order to identify and model the essence of a problem. Second is the ability to analyse and reason – both deductively and inductively. Third is the ability to marshal evidence and to assimilate, structure, analyse and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data. Fourth is the ability to communicate results concisely to a wide audience, including those with no training in economics. Fifth is the ability to think critically about the limits of one's analysis in a broader socio-economic context. Sixth is the ability to draw economic policy inferences, to recognise the potential constraints in their implementation and to evaluate the efficacy of policy outcomes in the light of stated policy objectives."*

The GES values this paragraph as a concise summary of what makes a good economist in government. That said, we would like to see more emphasis in the benchmarks on: 'threshold concepts' and their transferable application; decision metrics for resource allocation, i.e. appraisal, CBA and net welfare analysis; markets and non-market allocation mechanisms; money and finance, banking and monetary transmission mechanisms; economic policy history and the underlying paradigms; risk and uncertainty; complementary disciplines; quantitative awareness, including sources of economic data, descriptive statistics and the use of spreadsheets; moral issues and ethical frameworks; and even more emphasis on communicating to non-economists.

Academics and professional practitioners in government should keep in closer sight of each other

## National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

**The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) is applicable to those working in England and Northern Ireland. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DEL NI) and administered by the Higher Education Academy on their behalf.**

The NTFS Individual Awards 2010 call for nominations is now open. Up to 50 awards of £10,000 are made to recognise individual excellence. The award is intended for National Teaching Fellows' professional development in teaching and learning or aspects of pedagogy. Nominations are invited from eligible institutions in England and Northern Ireland.

Previous economics winners in the Individual Award category include Dr Guglielmo Volpe, Queen Mary University and Prof. Alison Wride, University of Exeter.

Further details about the scheme, nomination requirements and a full application pack can be downloaded from the Higher Education Academy website:

[www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/professional/ntfs/individual](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/professional/ntfs/individual)



**Professor Alison Wride**  
Deputy Director, University of Exeter Business School

Please note that the deadline for the submission of electronic nomination documents is 12 noon on Wednesday 3 February 2010.

If you have any queries regarding the Individual strand please email [ntfsindividual@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:ntfsindividual@heacademy.ac.uk)

than has been the case in recent years, as ultimately they are complements not substitutes. The GES has an important role in this respect as a bridge between academics and government policy makers. To perform this role the GES needs to be an intelligent consumer of academic economics but not necessarily a producer of new knowledge, other than as an incubator for new policy applications. It follows that the GES believes many more people could benefit from a degree in economics. So while welcoming the recent increase in economics applications to universities, the GES believes that the world would also benefit from a broader range of economists with

better links to complementary disciplines.

In short, the GES, as the public sector professional body for economics, is not arguing against highly formalised economics. Rounded economists trained as scientists are welcomed as members of the GES, but there is more to economics than science and there are other ways to serve. The GES also wishes to encourage more educational provision for potential professional practitioners.

The new GES Board of Professional Development, comprising academics and practitioners, would be pleased to receive your views on this at: [andrew.ross@hm-treasury.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.ross@hm-treasury.gov.uk)

## Fifth International Conference

# Developments in Economics Education

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, UK 9-10 September 2009

The fifth Developments in Economics Education (DEE) conference took place in Cardiff and showcased activities and resources specifically developed to support economics teaching and highlighted some of the latest research into pedagogy in economics. It also provided practical advice for lecturers and teaching assistants on to how balance competing work interests and engage students more fully in the subject.

Paul Ayres was a presenter at the conference and shares his thoughts about the main keynote presenters:



**Robert Chote** is Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and despite his self effacing introduction that he is a journalist who has seen the economic

light, he delivered an analysis of Fiscal Policy and the Crisis that any economist would have been proud of.

Chote began by suggesting that the crisis we are currently in would have been regarded as a bizarre happening from a parallel universe that might have been a theoretical sidebar in textbook a few years ago.

He went on to outline the role counterfactuals are going to play in the analysis of the crisis – what would have happened without various policy interventions – we won't know for sure, but he suggested that the temporary VAT cut may produce 20 years of PhDs!

Turning to the specifics of the crisis, he characterised the British stimulus package as short and small by international standards, showed

that there will be more borrowing and more structural debt, with long term debt not returning to pre-crisis levels until 2030.

With the economy set to be 5% less productive, falls in share and house prices locked in, plus a less productive financial sector the IFS view seems to be that we are in for two terms of pain, seemingly regardless of who wins the next election.

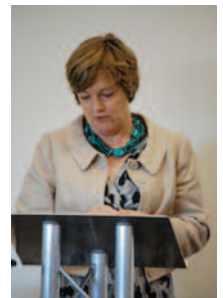
The return to balance is focussed around spending cuts with 80% of the burden falling there and just 20% coming through tax rises.

The various tinkering with tax rates makes the schedule for 2011-2012 look like the side of a train or Battersea power station ie not something you would find in any economic model.

He reflected on his experience as an employer of economics graduates and noted a wide variation in their writing skills / ability to explain economics to a wider audience. He exhorted academics to do more to get students engaged with areas of economics where there is no consensus.

The other keynotes featured **Rachel Lomax** former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England who told delegates that looking

at price stability and individual institutions will not be enough to prevent another crisis – but that with no unanimity about new tools to combat future crises, economics needs creative thinkers now more than ever.



*John Sloman of the Economics Network in conversation with Robert Chote of the Institute for Fiscal Studies*



# dee<sup>09</sup> conference



*DEE delegates enjoying the conference sessions, drinks reception and dinner*

Vicky Pryce of the Government Economic Service emphasised the importance of not separating micro and macroeconomics completely – policy interventions may depend on the spending decisions of individual consumers – so the economics graduates of tomorrow need to

make swift judgements from incomplete information if they are to make an impact on policy.

All three keynote speakers noted the rise in interest in economics the crisis has sparked. Applications to universities are up 20% and the IFS have gone electronic to cope with

the number of applications they receive.

It seems as though academia may see an upside to the crisis after all.

**Paul Ayres**  
Research Officer, Intute: Social Sciences  
[www.intute.ac.uk/economics/](http://www.intute.ac.uk/economics/)

# Economics Network Departmental Workshop Programme

**The Economics Network is pleased to announce its Departmental Workshop Programme, covering the period February to July 2010. There is no charge for these workshops.**

Workshop topics can be focused on any teaching and assessment aspect appropriate to your department. A workshop could, for example, be linked to NSS results or Economics Network student survey results. Previous workshops subjects have ranged from assessment, course design, recruitment and retention to problem-based learning and using games and experiments in teaching. The deadline for requests is 29th January 2010.

Over the past 10 years the Economics Network has run a comprehensive range of workshops to support departments and academics in exploring and implementing new methods of teaching and assessment.

*workshop highlighting the benefits of using VLEs in teaching economics, accompanied by a follow-on session where my staff were given hands-on training in designing WebCT modules, uploading materials, and other 'basics'. This was enormously successful - from a cold start in May 2005 (no use of WebCT at all) in the 2005/6 academic year three of our MScs used WebCT throughout their programmes, all of our UG modules made a least some use of it, and over half made very effective use of the technology. Student feedback has been uniformly positive - with the result that the department is now committed to rolling out WebCT across all our taught modules in 2006/7. This sort of 'buy in' from academics is, in my view, only possible when training is delivered by respected, known experts in the discipline."*

Professor Nancy Devlin,  
City University, July 2006

*Many thanks for the effort of all the participants. Thoroughly enjoyable and I hope to be able to contribute and attend any follow-up event.*

Motivating international students 2008

To date, we have co-ordinated and funded a number of workshops in economics departments on subjects such as assessment, key skills, work-based learning, linking teaching and research and e-learning.

The Economics Subject Centre is now pleased to announce a continuation of our extended series of workshops for 2010. This programme has been designed to support the economics communities' learning, teaching and assessment needs.

## How does it work?

In discussion with you and your colleagues, we will organise the logistics and particular emphasis of your workshop and select an appropriate member of the Economics Network facilitator team to deliver it. This will ensure an approach that is both professional and tailored to your department's needs and circumstances.

In total, we are able to provide 10 FREE departmental workshops across all economics departments during 2010 (January to July).

To request a workshop, please complete the Economics Subject Centre Departmental Workshop Request Form.

**Deadline for requests is  
29 January 2010**

Further details about the scheme and an online request form are available at:

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

If you need any additional information please contact **Jessica Thomson**, Project Officer ([jessica.thomson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jessica.thomson@bristol.ac.uk))



## Background

These are typical comments on the Economics Subject Centre's programme of departmental workshops which we have delivered over the past eight years to our economics academic community.

*"Although there had been ample opportunities to receive generic training in this [virtual learning environments] from a range of sources, uptake had been very poor. In 2005 I invited the Director of the Economics Network to deliver a*

*We have had two actual workshops run by the Network at Brookes – one on assessment and one on games for Economics. Both proved very useful in providing information but also as a spur to start discussions on assessment methods (and teaching methods) within the Department.*  
2006

*Well done, professional as always*  
ELearning workshop sept 2008

*Thank you for a really useful and stimulating session.*  
PBL 2008



## New Workshop

# Using Threshold Concepts in Economics

Wednesday 27 January 2010, Manchester Metropolitan University

This workshop will provide an introduction to threshold concepts in economics and the way in which they can be used to understand the problems that students encounter in trying to learn economics.

This workshop should prove very valuable to first-year course leaders and those involved in programme design. Evidence from a recent survey of employers suggests that the skills and knowledge identified in the Economics Benchmark statement are wholly appropriate for the employers interviewed, and that the main weakness of many graduates is the ability to apply fundamental economic concepts to a range of different issues.

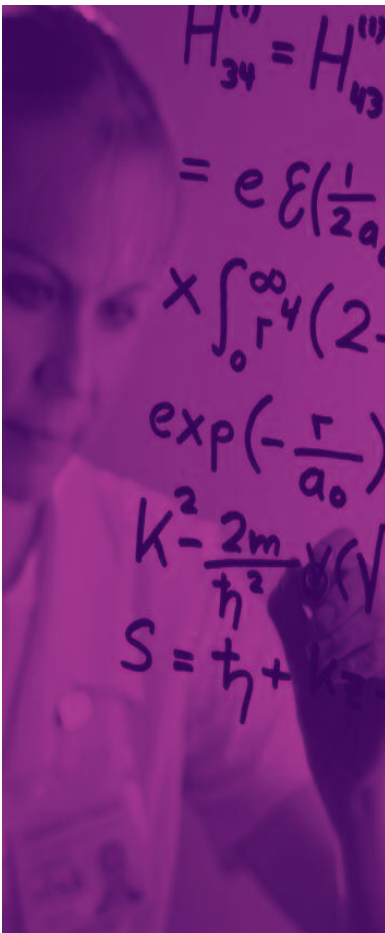
Representatives of the four universities involved in the HEFCE-funded FDTL5 project, Embedding Threshold Concepts in Economics, have identified how such concepts can be integrated into the curriculum and have devised a range of classroom exercises for this purpose.

The workshop will use evidence from students' work (from teaching sessions and assessments) and interviews to exemplify threshold concepts in practice.

The event will be run by Professor Peter Davies of Staffordshire University. There is no charge for attending this workshop if you are from a UK Higher Education Institution. Further details and an booking form are available on the Economics Network website.

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/threshold0110](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/threshold0110)

If you require any further information, please contact Jessica Thomson ([jessica.thomson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jessica.thomson@bristol.ac.uk))



## Mathematical skills and level of preparation on entry into higher education in the UK

Our latest Lecturer Survey has highlighted that many students now embark on degree programmes in economics without the necessary maths skills and teaching mathematics to economics students has become increasingly challenging for universities across the sector, regardless of entry qualifications.

In light of these developments we have a dedicated maths support section on our web site that provides, and links to, wide range of resources that might help lecturers tackle some of these issues:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/themes/maths](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/themes/maths)

We have also produced an A4-folded Maths for Economics formula sheet to help economics students with their revision of arithmetic, algebra, calculus and common functions. A PDF version can be downloaded from:

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/themes/maths\\_formula\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/themes/maths_formula_sheet.pdf)

An updated version of the formulae sheet will be available in the new year. We can supply multiple copies. There will be no charge to departments other than standard postage and packing.

Please submit your requests to **Bhagesh Sachania** ([b.m.sachania@bris.ac.uk](mailto:b.m.sachania@bris.ac.uk)) by 26th February 2010. Orders will be despatched by March 2010.

# Economics Network launches two new websites with RES support

The Economics Network has recently launched two new websites in a project that is supported by the Royal Economic Society. **StudyingEconomics** provides support for existing students, while **WhyStudyEconomics** helps potential students to decide whether economics is for them.

Both sites are extremely well-designed, imaginative and attractive in layout and contain a wealth of useful information for anyone teaching undergraduate economic.

Ryan Hoare, the newest member of the Economics Network team, is responsible for developing the websites.



*Hi there!* My name's Ryan and I'm the Student Placement Officer at the Economics Network. I am currently two-thirds of the way through an undergraduate degree in Economics and International Relations at Bristol Business School.

I am responsible for maintaining and developing two student-focused websites. The transition

from school to university can be daunting and overwhelming for many students. It involves many changes: probably a new place to live, new friends, new-found freedom and, of course, a new way of learning. The 'Facebook' generation, used to instant searches, often demand instant results and often place unrealistic expectations on their lecturers' already busy schedules.

## Studying Economics

That's where **Studying Economics** comes in. Launched at the Economics Network's *DEE 09* conference, it provides a wealth of information for economics undergraduates. The site advises students on study skills, careers and post-degree options. Lecturers from around the country have contributed articles promoting their respective specialist options. It's our hope that the instruction to 'Studying Economics it' will become as routine in the near future as the more familiar 'Google it' is now, and that economics students will find that it provides

them with useful and timely advice on all aspects of being an economics student, taking some of the pressure off economics lecturers.

We think the site will benefit students in all institutions, at any stage of their course. What we'd like teachers to do is:

- highlight **StudyingEconomics.ac.uk** during induction activities
- hand out some flyers (downloadable from the site)
- link the site to their own module website / module handbook

I will continue to work on the site over the coming year, and greatly appreciate any feedback!

## Why Study Economics?

I am also working on redesigning and updating **Why Study Economics?** which aims to persuade schoolleavers of the value of an economics degree. One effect of the financial crisis is that there has been a growing interest in economics. Acceptances were 20 per cent up last year on the previous year and applications to study economics have risen 20 per cent this year. At the same time, there has never been so much need to prove that economics is a subject worthy of study. **WhyStudyEconomics.ac.uk** answers basic questions about applying for and studying single or joint honours economics. It uses diaries and films to share the experiences of current students. We think it will complement and support your open days and sites aimed at prospective students and their teachers.

Both websites are sponsored by the RES and we are very grateful for the Society's continuing support.

**Ryan Hoare**  
The Economics Network  
(ryan.hoare@bristol.ac.uk)



# Teaching Resources for Undergraduate Economics



**The Economics Network is seeking UK-based academics who currently lecture to economics undergraduates in a particular specialist area to contribute teaching resources in their field as part of a HEFCE-funded Open Educational Resources programme.**

This is a pilot programme, consisting of three separate strands: HEIs, subjects and individual academics. The projects in this pilot programme run for 12 months from 30 April 2009 to 30 April 2010.

The economics project is one of the subject-strand projects (there are 13 others across the disciplines). The project is titled 'Teaching Resources for Undergraduate Economics (TRUE)'. It is led by Professor Rebecca Taylor, Head of Economics at Nottingham Trent University and Associate Director of the Economics Network. As you probably know, Rebecca was the leader of the highly successful METAL project.

Core micro, macro and quants at all levels are relatively well provided for by textbooks and open content through the web, but there is much less open availability of resources in specialist areas.

The TRUE project covers 14 such specialist areas, each led by a senior academic in that field (see list, below).

Each specialist leader is gathering and collating materials from colleagues in various universities. Resources can be any of the following:

- Syllabus details
- Reading lists
- Lecture slides
- Seminar/workshop materials
- Problem sets and worksheets
- Student handouts
- Assessment schemes
- Past assessments
- Module/unit handbooks

Resources will be made openly available on this Economics Network site. The resources for each

specialism will be in a separate wiki. If you would like to contribute resources, please contact the specialist leader above.

Intellectual property of contributed material will remain with its present owners. As a condition of deposit, the project will encourage them to relicense the material as Creative Commons.

There is scope for negotiations with individual rights holders, but the licence we will aim for is Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial. This licence is compatible with Wikiversity and related projects. The Economics Network already has an advice sheet for content authors on why and how to license their materials.

[www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/oer](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/oer)



	<b>Development Economics</b> Dr. Peter Smith University of Southampton		<b>Heterodox Economics</b> Dr. Andy Denis City University		<b>Monetary Economics</b> Professor Kent Matthews Cardiff University
	<b>Econometrics</b> Professor Vincent Daly Kingston University		<b>International Economics</b> Professor Derek Braddon University of West of England		<b>Public Sector</b> Professor John Ashworth University of Durham
	<b>Environmental Economics</b> Professor Alan Collins University of Portsmouth		<b>Industrial Economics</b> Professor David Paton University of Nottingham		<b>Regional and Local Economics</b> CLREA group University of Portsmouth (Jeff Grainger and Dave Clark)
	<b>European Economics</b> Professor Cillian Ryan University of Birmingham		<b>Labour Economics</b> Professor Monojit Chatterji University of Dundee		<b>Risk and Uncertainty</b> Professor Paul Fenn University of Nottingham
	<b>Experimental Economics</b> Professor Dieter Balkenborg University of Exeter		<b>Law and Economics</b> Professor Antony Dnes University of Hull		

## Learning and Teaching Awards Results

The winners of the Learning and Teaching in Economics Awards were also announced at the DEE 09 conference. The scheme, run since 2001, seeks to recognise and reward exemplary practice from within the academic economics community.



Melanie Jones

### Outstanding Teaching Award

**Swee-Hoon Chuah**  
University of Nottingham

Commendations were given to **Ian Jeffries**, Swansea University and **Melanie Jones**, Swansea University.



Andy Dickerson

### Student-nominated Award

**Andy Dickerson**  
University of Sheffield

Commendations went to **Paul Allanson**, University of Dundee and **Matteo Iannizzotto**, University of Durham.



John Maloney

### Special Award

**John Maloney**  
University of Exeter

**Prof. Maloney** was nominated both by his students and his Head of Department, receiving a special combined award for **Outstanding Teaching** and **Student Nominated**.



### eLearning Award

David Sadler (centre left) from the Higher Education Academy presenting the award to **Dieter Balkenborg** and **Todd Kaplan**, University of Exeter.

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

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