

Intermediate Microeconomics and Macroeconomics

Teaching

The number of credit points for the modules ranged from 6 to 30. For almost all modules, the number of class contact hours was double the number of credit points for the module: 15 credit point modules in almost all cases were associated with 30 hours of classes per student whereas 20 credit and 30 credit modules were associated with 40 and 60 hours, respectively. There were a few modules where the hours of class contact exceeded the ratio of two hours of class contact for each credit point in the module.

Most of the modules had two hours of lectures per week, although there were about 20 per cent that provided three hours of lectures. In one case, a one-hour lecture in one week alternated with a two hour lecture the following week, giving an average of 1.5 hours of lectures each week in this module (Table 1). Seminars/tutorials were one hour long.

Table 1 Hours of lectures each week in intermediate economics modules

Hours	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1	4	3.0	3	3.0	4	36.4
1.5	1	18.2	1	18.2	0	0.0
2	19	57.6	19	57.6	4	36.4
2.5	0	0.0	0	3.0	0	0.0
3	8	21.2	6	18.2	2	18.1
4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	9.1
Total	33	100.0	33	100.0	11	100.0

Lectures remain the most used mode of teaching in intermediate microeconomics and macroeconomics. Table 2 contains information on the percentage of class contact hours that came from lectures in each of the microeconomics, macroeconomics and combined microeconomics and macroeconomics modules for which data could be obtained.

Table 2 Non-lecture contact hours as a percentage of class contact hours in intermediate economics modules

% of class contact hours	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
0 < 10	1	3.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
10 < 20	8	30.8	6	22.3	2	22.3
20 < 30	9	34.6	7	25.9	3	33.3
30 < 40	8	30.8	12	44.4	3	33.3
40 < 50	0	0.0	1	3.7	0	0.0
50+	0	0.0	1	3.7	1	11.1
Total	26	100.0	27	100.0	9	100.0

About 10 per cent of the microeconomics and macroeconomics modules provide no other teaching than through lectures while in only one macroeconomics module and one combined module did tutorials, seminars and workshops represent as much as 50 per cent of the hours of class contact.

Few specific details were available on websites as to how the seminars/tutorials were organised. In one module, the tutorial provided 'diverse experiences to students' since there were tutorials designed to improve students' essay-writing skills, their communication skills through participating in debates on economic policy issues as well as problem-solving skill. It appears that most seminars/tutorials involve working through pre-set problems. The need for students to prepare for these classes through working through the problems was stressed.

The texts used in the modules were recorded. Where there was more than one text listed, the first listed one was the one recorded. Table 3 shows the texts that were used with the number of modules where the text was used. Varian was the most widely used text in microeconomics while Mankiw and Blanchard were the most widely used macroeconomics texts.

Table 3 Texts used in intermediate microeconomics and macroeconomics

Microeconomics		Macroeconomics	
Author	No. of modules	Author	no. of modules
Besanko & Braeutigam	2	Barro	1
Cowell	3	Blanchard	9
Estrin and Laidler	1	Burda & Wyplosz	3
Frank	1	Cobham	1
Gravelle & Rees	1	Copeland	1
Griffith & Wall	4	De Long	1
Katz & Rosen	3	Dornbusch, Fisher & Statz	1
Lipsey & Chrystal	1	Farmer	1
Morgan, Katz & Rosen	2	Froyen	2
Nicholson	1	Gartner	5
Perfoff	2	Gordon	2
Varian	16	Griffith & Wall	1
		Lipsey & Chrystal	1
		Mankiw	10
		Williamson	1

Assessment

Over 65 per cent of the microeconomic and macroeconomic modules made use of continuous assessment in the awarding of grades. In about one quarter of modules, there was no continuous assessment while in another 9 per cent of microeconomic modules and 14 per cent of macroeconomic modules there was continuous assessment, but not for credit (see Table 4).

Table 4 The use of continuous assessment in intermediate economics modules

	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Continuous assessment	46	73.0	46	75.4	8	100.0
No continuous assessment	11	17.5	8	13.1	0	0.0
Continuous assessment but not for final grade	6	9.5	7	11.5	0	0.0
Total	63	100.0	61	100.0	8	100.0

While the data in Table 4 indicate that continuous assessment is widely used, in many cases the continuous assessment was continuous in name only. It was often the case that the sole piece of assessment additional to the end-of-module exam was a test given in class time or during the tutorials. Use was made of essays in some modules, while in others a combination of an essay and a test was the continuous assessment.

As can be seen from Table 5, in both microeconomics and macroeconomics modules, about two thirds of modules made use of one or two pieces of continuous assessment. There were six modules in each of microeconomics and macroeconomics where there were six or more items that were part of the assessment for the modules. These items were the tutorial exercise, essays or tests. There was little or no use made in the continuous assessment of student debates, the preparation of 200 to 300 word briefing notes or reflective diaries.

Table 5 The number of items of continuous assessment in intermediate economics modules

No. of assessment items	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1	15	40.5	11	29.7	2	18.2
2	12	32.5	14	37.9	6	54.5
3	1	2.7	4	10.8	3	27.3
4	2	5.4	2	5.4	0	0.0
5	2	5.4	1	2.7	0	0.0
6 or more	5	13.5	5	13.5	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0	37	100.0	11	100.0

Table 6 provides examples of the continuous assessment used in the intermediate economic modules.

Table 6 Examples of the continuous assessment used in intermediate economics modules

Form of assessment	Share of assessment
Two in tutorial tests (13% each) and 10 tutorial exercises (14%)	40%
45 minute multiple choice quiz (10%), 1500 word essay (20%)	30%
Two class tests, two 1500 word essays	20%
In-class test	40%
2000 word essay	30%
Two in-class tests	30%
In-class test	20%
Two optional essays, two compulsory multiple choice tests	20%
Multiple-choice test (30%), two essays (20%)	50%
Two 1250 essays	40%
Essay and statistical analysis	30%
One hour multiple choice quiz (25%), 1500 word essay (25%)	50%
Two class tests and a 1500 word essay	20%
Test worth 20% and an essay and a test that are not assessed	20%
Weekly assignment and 2000 word essay	0%

It was not surprising in light of the limited use made of continuous assessment that heavy reliance was placed upon the end-of-module exam in grading students. As Table 7 shows, at least 70 per cent of the assessment was based upon student performance on the final test in over 80 per cent of the microeconomics and macroeconomics modules. Assessment was based completely on the end of semester test in 35.7 per cent of the microeconomic modules and 34.0 per cent of the macroeconomic modules. Greater use was made of continuous assessment in the combined micro and macro courses since typically these involved a test in the first part of the course (on microeconomics, for example), which was worth 30 to 40 per cent of the assessment.

Table 7 Weighting of the end-of-module exam in assessment for intermediate economics

Weighting	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
50	5	11.9	3	6.4	2	15.5
60	4	9.5	4	8.6	4	30.8
70	9	21.4	13	27.6	3	23.0
75	2	4.8	3	6.4	3	23.0
80	6	14.3	8	17.0	0	0
90	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0
100	15	35.7	16	34.0	1	7.7
Total	42	100.0	47	100.0	13	100

Very little information was available on the structure of the end-of-module exams, with only a handful of module outlines providing any guidance at all. This was of the form:

- three questions
- one short answer, one essay
- eight out of 10 short answers
- three questions from 10

Two hours was the most usual length of the exam (see Table 8).

Table 8 Length of end-of-module exams in intermediate economic modules

Length hours	Microeconomics		Macroeconomics		Combined Micro & Macro	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1	1	2.6	1	2.2	0	0.0
1.5	6	14.6	4	8.9	0	0.0
2	21	50	23	51.1	5	55.5
2.5	1	2.6	1	2.2	0	0.0
3	13	30.2	16	35.6	4	44.5
Total	42	100.0	45	100.0	9	100.0

There did not appear to be a relationship between the length of the exam and the number of credit points in the module. Table 9 shows that in 10 of the microeconomics and macroeconomics modules, the exam was three hours long, while in 34 modules it was 2 hours long. Three of the 15 modules that were 15 credit modules had three-hour exams, a higher proportion than the number of 20 credit modules with three-hour exams (two out of 17).

Table 9 The length of end-of-module exam and the number of credit points for the microeconomic and macroeconomic modules

Credit points	Final exam length (hours)			
	1	1.5	2	3
10	2	6	5	
15			14	3
20			17	3
30			4	5
40				1
Total	2	6	40	10

Not too much should be read into the lack of any relationship between the number of credit points and the hours of assessment shown in Table 9 since no account has been taken of continuous assessment.