



Economics Network

Economics students' changing expectations

Collaborative Research Project 2013/14

Project summary

The Economics Network is leading a collaborative research project during 2013/2014 which will explore how economics students' expectations, attitudes and behaviour may have changed (as a result of the changes to funding in higher education and the rise in tuition fees) and consider how economics teaching and learning practice and curricula might be adjusted to meet emerging needs.

The project aims to provide new data on expectations, behaviour and attitudes which will be useful for departments to inform internal reviews of their own practices or for further research. It also aims to compile a national dataset and undertake analysis on the dataset to better understand the impact on economics departments of recent funding changes. UK economics departments are encouraged to become engaged with this major project with either part (Type A) or full (Type B) engagement.

- Type A Engagement: The collection of data across UK economics departments in March 2013 and again in Spring 2014, including student survey data, and student attendance and study data. The Economics Network will enter the survey data into an electronic dataset on behalf of departments. Each department will receive its own compiled dataset to inform any internal review of its own practices and/or curricula to provide the basis for its own research. Departments will also receive a report on the aggregate data for comparative purposes.
- Type B Engagement: This includes everything under Type A Engagement. It also includes working with the Economics Network in the analysis of the aggregate dataset. It may also involve further focus group study which the Economics Network will facilitate if necessary. Departments involved as Type B participants will attend project meetings in Bristol.

The Economics Network's role

The Economics Network will lead the project and provide the following:

- Support to departments throughout each stage of the project, including hosting project meetings and general project communication
- Student survey questionnaire
- Student focus group questions and guidance (for Type B participants)
- Collation and synthesis of data
- Analysis and reports at the aggregate level
- Individual department datasets for internal analysis and reports on the aggregate data for comparison
- Ethical approval for the project in accordance with the University of Bristol's Ethics and Policy procedures
- Supplementary data (e.g. from HESA) if required.

Participating departments' role

Departments that participate as Type A participants will:

- Administer student surveys in their department in March 2013 and March 2014
- Collect and provide data to the Economics Network, such as student attendance and assessment.

Departments that participate as Type B will additionally:

- Run, if necessary, student focus groups in October/November 2014 (with the help of the Economics Network)
- Attend project meetings and provide input (including analysis) into the wider project using the aggregate data collected nationally.

The project

The project's main aim is to provide evidence to support UK economics departments in their planning of teaching practice and curricula. The project has been planned as follows:

- Stage 1 (March 2013 – July 2013)
 - Department student surveys (first and second years)
 - Collection of departmental data (first and second years)
 - Compiled datasets for 2013 returned to individual institutions
 - First report based on aggregate data
- Stage 2 (July 2013 – January 2014)
 - Department student focus groups (all years)
 - Second report
- Stage 3 (February 2014 – September 2014)
 - Departmental student surveys (all years)
 - Collection of departmental data (all years)
 - Compiled datasets for 2014 returned to individual institutions
 - Final report

Project outcomes include:

- Phased reports made available to the community online
- An article for the Economics Network's journal, [International Review of Economics Education](#)
- Department case studies as appropriate
- Department datasets provided to participating departments for the purpose of internal analysis

Participation in the project

Any UK economics department can be involved in the project as Type A or Type B participants.

For those departments who support the Economics Network through a financial contribution (see <http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/about/supporters>) participation is free.

For other departments we ask for a contribution of £250 (for Type A involvement) or £500 (for Type B involvement) towards the cost of the project.

Key dates

Participation application deadline	Friday 15 February 2013
Project briefing as part of the Economics Network's one day symposium: 'Changing expectations: implications of the new funding era for the teaching of economics', HM Treasury, London.	1 March 2013
Phase 1	
Department student surveys	Early March 2013
First project meeting (Type B participants)	April 2013
Submission of departmental data to EN	May 2013
First analysis and report	July 2013
Compiled datasets for 2013 supplied to departments	July 2013
Phase 2	
Second project meeting (Type B participants)	July 2013
Initial analysis presented at Developments in Economics Education conference, University of Exeter	5-6th September 2013
Department student focus groups	October-November 2013
Second analysis and report	January 2014
Phase 3	
Third project meeting	February 2014
Department student surveys	March 2014
Submission of departmental data to EN	May 2014
Final analysis and report	July 2014
Compiled datasets for 2014 supplied to departments	July 2014
Final project event	September 2014

Research ethics

All data collected about individuals will be anonymous and will not be used to identify individuals. Economics Network reports and other outputs produced as part of the project will not identify individual departments unless given express permission to do so. The Economics Network will ensure that all data collected and used within this project is treated ethically and in accordance with the [University of Bristol's Ethics and Policy procedure](#).

Applying to participate

Who can participate?

Any economics department or economics group involved in teaching economics at undergraduate level in the UK may be part of the data collection exercise and will receive its own dataset for internal purposes (Type A engagement). Some departments may wish to work on the aggregate dataset with the Economics Network as part of the larger project (Type B engagement).

Essential criteria for involvement as a Type A participant

Applications for Type A participation will be successful if they:

- Include a commitment to survey a representative sample of students (preferably in core modules) in years 1 and 2 (in 2013) and across all years (in 2014).

Essential criteria for successful applications for involvement as a Type B participant

Applications for Type B participation will be assessed on the extent that they satisfy the criteria above for Type A involvement and additionally:

- Demonstrate the departments' ability (and that of the individuals involved) to participate and commit to the analysis of the national dataset
- Describe plans for dissemination of the project within their own institution.

Additional Information

- Project participants will be expected to liaise regularly with the Economics Network
- All Type B project participants will be required to send at least one representative to each project meeting.

Applications

All applications should be received no later than **Friday 12 February 2013**. They should include a completed proforma (below).

All applicants will be informed of the outcome by the **end of February 2013**.

To discuss the project or for more information please contact:

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Bristol, BS8 1HH
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**Economics Network
Collaborative Research Project Application**

1. Type A or Type B participation:

(Type A participation includes student surveys and department data collection; Type B additionally includes input into the project and analysis of aggregate data, and student focus groups)

2. Project members

Project Leader Name

Department

Institution

Address for Correspondence

Tel:

Email:

Name (2)

Address for Correspondence

Tel:

Email:

Name (3)

Address for Correspondence

Tel:

Email:

Name (4)

Address for Correspondence

Tel:

Email:

3. Departmental statement

Please describe:

- your department's ability to participate in the project
- why your department would like to be involved with this project
- how you plan to disseminate the results of the project within your Institution (Type B applicants only)

4. Key questions you would like this research project to consider

Please list and give details about any key questions you would like this research project to consider.

5. Signature of Project Leader

Date

**Signature of Head of
Department**

[if submitting online, please type
your name on the signature lines]

Date

Institutional ethical consent:

***I have read the information provided about the
Economics Network's collaborative project and
am willing for my Institution to take part.***

Signed

[if submitting by email, please type
your name on the signature lines]

Role

Date

Please submit your application by **Friday 12th February 2013** on paper or via email to:
Dr. Inna Pomorina, Economics Network Research Officer, Economics Network, University of
Bristol, 8-10 Berkeley Square, Bristol, BS8 1HH
E-mail: inna.pomorina@bristol.ac.uk