

# Economics at university

May 2025



# What is university economics?

**Economics:** Science of human behaviour relating scarce resource and unlimited wants

- Emphasis on **models**
- Mathematical – problem sets
- Qualitative: essay components / coursework

Bristol	Mathematics for economics	Statistical methods	Economic data	Economics (micro/macro)
St Andrews	Macro- economics	Micro- economics	Mathematics for economics	+optional modules



# BA vs BSc

- 45% of departments offer **BA** – less mathematical
- 75% offer **BSc** – more technical
- Check course guides

**~40% have no maths requirements**

All courses include maths

*"I did not anticipate the level of mathematics that took place during an economics degree."*

*"Much more maths and statistics than previously told or was aware of."*

*"It has far more maths than I thought."*

*"I didn't expect as much maths. The lecturers assume that you just automatically understand it."*

Most top-level courses BSc



# Joint honours

e.g. Economics and History, Economics and Politics

## Two dangers

1. Core content of economics is the most technical – *check courses carefully*
2. Essential to demonstrate genuine interest in 2<sup>nd</sup> subject



# Graduate prospects

- Highly employable
- Finance, investment, accountancy, consulting etc.

**Wide range of skills:** quantitative + analytical

**Networking** opportunities

- 89% employment rate
- £30-£40,000 starter salaries

Not necessary for a career in finance/business





# Choosing a course

- Complete University Guide Economics rankings
- *REPEC rankings – top UK universities*

Check course information



# Applications

## Seeking to demonstrate:

1. Aptitude – particularly mathematical
2. Genuine interest

Top courses use tests (Cambridge, Oxford, LSE) + interviews  
Maths grade key across the board

Personal statement  
Teacher reference



# Preparing to apply

## **Aptitude:**

- Top grades in A-Level/IB
- *Prep for assessments (TSA, TMUA, UGAA)*

**Interest:** Develop and prove

## **Develop:**

- Read books + blogs
- Free talks and lectures (LSE, Oxford)
- Economics Society
- University prep with Oxford Fellow

## **Prove:**

- Essay competitions
- Independent writing
- Presentations to Society
- Demonstrate **next steps**





# Reading recommendations

Use general books to start – become more specific  
Chapters and papers often better than books

**Can't We Just Print More Money?** Patel and Meaning

**Economics: The User's Guide** Chang

**Talking To My Daughter** Varoufakis

**The Big Short** Lewis

**Freakonomics** Levitt And Dubner

**The Undercover Economist** Harford

**The Worldly Philosophers** Heilbroner

**50 Economics Classics** Butler-Bowdon



# Essay competitions

**Institute of Economic Affairs Monetary Policy** (Jan 2025)

**Institute of Economics Affairs Dorian Fisher** (Jan 2025)

**John Locke** (31<sup>st</sup> May 2024)

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office** (June 2024)

**LSE SU** (summer 2024)

**Royal Economics Society Young Economist of the Year** (July 2024)

**Marshall Society** (summer 2024)



# Economics at university

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