

A YEAR IN THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS



**SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
NEWSLETTER 2025/26**

2025 - 26 ✨

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LEADING THE WAY

What a year to be an economist and study economics 2024/25 has been: from the political economy of the UK Budget setting to the real-world taste of international tariff wars and having front row seats to the technological changes that affect all economic structures: manufacturing, labour markets, services, and knowledge production. There is no surprise therefore that one of our modules was nominated and won the Transforming Education Awards for the relevance of its content in addressing the challenges of a changing world.

If you have visited the School at Open Days or have been at one of my outreach talks, you may have heard me saying that economics graduates have strong career prospects because they are both “literate” and “numerate”. In the age of AI, the importance of this statement is critical for those joining the labour market as recruiters are noticing a pointed deterioration in graduates’ reading and data comprehension, face-to-face communication, and independent critical analysis.

In our economic models we take effort as costly. So, if AI can save us from making effort, it is only rational to lean on it. The conclusion beckons a question: why do we do economics at University? Each and every one of us will have a different answer; not because we have unique drivers but

because we have unique ways of expressing ideas. Education is empowerment and data shows this: it does not only open career opportunities, but also correlates with health, life expectancy, and a sense of fulfilment. AI is a powerful tool; that is what it is: a tool.

That point was brought to me when, in preparing for the NEP (Norwich Economic Publications) Prize Giving ceremony, I used an AI bot to answer the question: “What does NEP mean for ECO at UEA?”. I got a great answer on what it is and how it boosts your CV. What the answer did not capture is the **empowerment** of young people to focus the discussion on what matters to them; the **team work** that it relies on, the **time management** that is essential and our **pride**. NEP is a true testimony of the curiosity, creativity and ambition of the economics students at UEA.

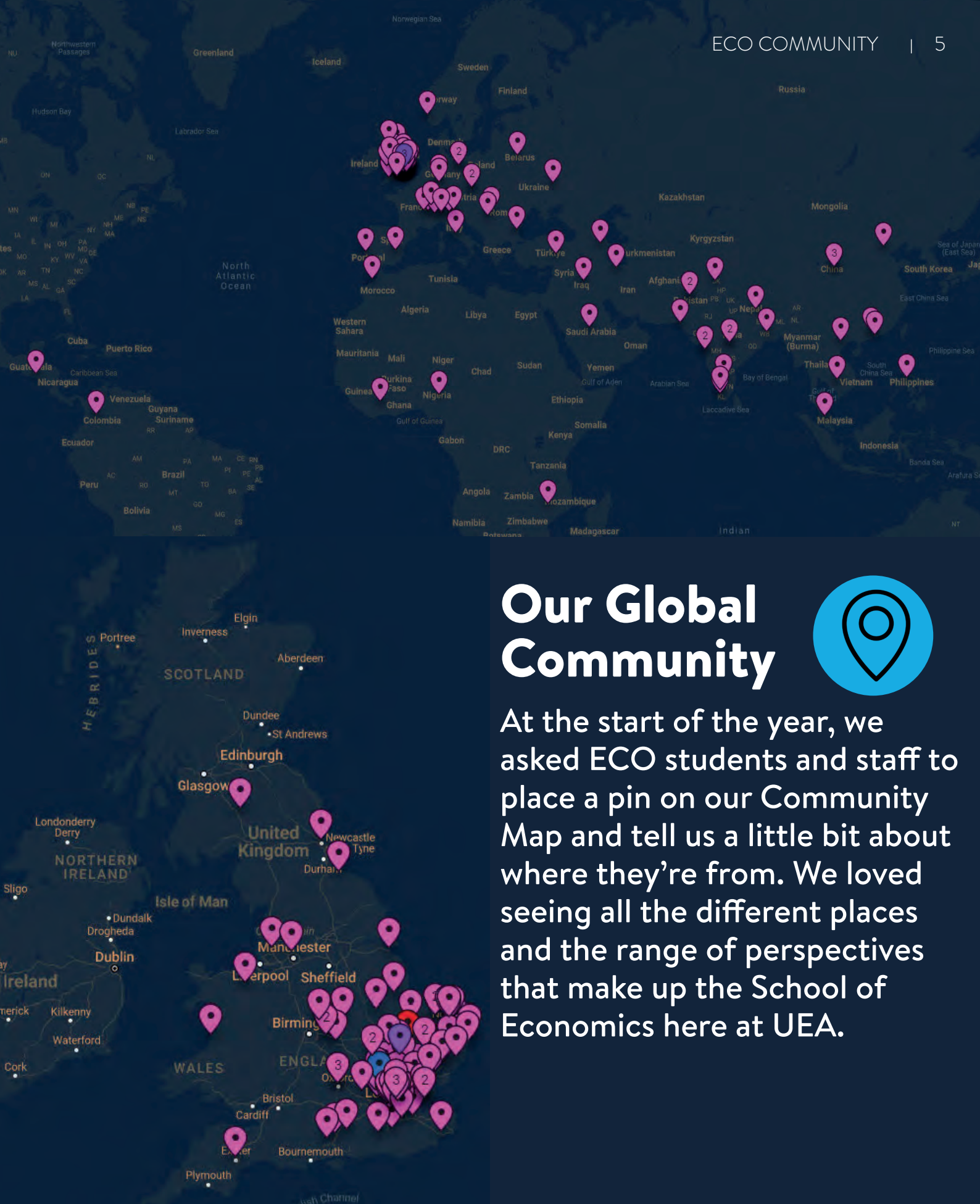
The past year was exciting not only because of what is happening around us, but also because of the changes we introduced in our School. We adopted a new framework of student-staff partnership to strengthen the student voice and improve governance. We expanded our facilities and launched FEDS: our Finance, Economics and Data Science Lab next to LEDR (Laboratory for the Economic and Decision Research) where our MSc students are already busy working on their dissertations over the summer. We expanded experiential learning provision to keep us abreast with the technological changes and labour market expectations.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the rolling out of results of the comprehensive assessment review and expanding the consultancy projects provision. We will continue to address the challenges of a changing world through our research and outreach. I hope you will join our busy conversations.

Prof. Emiliya Lazarova, Head of School



ECO Community



Our Global Community



At the start of the year, we asked ECO students and staff to place a pin on our Community Map and tell us a little bit about where they're from. We loved seeing all the different places and the range of perspectives that make up the School of Economics here at UEA.



TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

We were thrilled to achieve outstanding success once again at this year's Transforming Education Awards, hosted by UEA and the Students' Union.

With over 350 nominations across the university, ECO's 12 shortlisted awards showcase the incredible impact of our students and staff. These recognitions reflect not only individual excellence but the strength of our vibrant, supportive community and our shared commitment to inclusivity, innovation, and student success. Building on this momentum, we look forward to continuing to push boundaries and inspire positive change across education and beyond.

A huge congratulations to all our incredible shortlisted nominees—and a special shoutout to the outstanding winners, who shone this year:

Blended Learning

Winner: Prof. Duncan Watson

Duncan was recognised for his transformative work in digital learning—developing creative, student-focused tools, championing ethical AI use, and leading the conversation on improving quantitative skills at UEA and beyond.

Student Partnership Officer of the Year

Winner: Prof. Duncan Watson

As Staff Co-Chair, Duncan went above and beyond to champion student voice—revamping feedback processes, creating new subcommittees, and making sure students could shape meaningful change.

Inclusivity Champion

Winner: Dr. Oana Borcan

Oana's tireless work to create a more inclusive, welcoming School was celebrated. From relaunching Coffee & Cookie Chats to curating standout cultural events, she helped every student feel valued and seen.

Inspiring Teaching

Winner: Dr. Jibonayan Raychaudhuri

Jibonayan's teaching combines intellectual challenge with care and creativity. His approach cultivates curiosity, confidence, and a passion for learning that students carry with them long after class ends.

Academic Community Contribution

Winner: Chinemerem Ugwu

Chinemerem was celebrated for her dedication to academic outreach, equality, and engagement—from leading on EDI and public-facing projects to her editorial work and ambassadorship.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS

The Vice Chancellor's Award

Winner: Prof. Duncan Watson

This prestigious award is given to individuals who have made an exceptional impact across the university— and this year, Duncan Watson stood out as a true changemaker. From pioneering innovative teaching methods to championing blended learning, leading School-level change, and empowering students as Staff Co-Chair, Duncan's influence is felt at every level. His work exemplifies the values of excellence, inclusivity, and collaboration, and this award recognises not just a year of success, but a lasting legacy of dedication and transformation.

Other shortlisted nominees

Best Support Service Individual

Gina Neff

Employability and Experiential Learning

Dr. Peter Dawson

Inspiring Teaching

Dr. Ariel Gu

Module of the Year

International Trade + Business Sport Economics

Academic Community Contribution

Dhruv Ghandi

Convenor of the Year

Claudio Barchiesi



And last but not least, ECO were named School of the Year!

The School of Economics has set an outstanding example of what an academic department should be— innovative, supportive, and deeply committed to student success.

This year, the School has gone above and beyond to create an environment where students don't just learn, but thrive. Whether through academic excellence, career development opportunities, or fostering a real sense of community, the School of Economics has proven itself to be a true leader within the university. At the heart of its success is an unwavering commitment to student engagement.

The School has actively worked with student representatives and societies to ensure that student voices are not just heard, but acted upon. It has supported a range of initiatives—both financially and through visibility—allowing students to launch ambitious projects that enhance their learning experience. This collaborative spirit has strengthened the relationship between staff and students, creating a partnership that is rare to find.



Pictured above - Vice Chancellor Prof. David Maguire (L) presenting Prof. Duncan Watson with the VC Award.

COOKIES, COFFEES AND CHATS CELEBRATING LUNAR NEW YEAR



Nothing gives our School halls a buzz like open days and assessment periods. But wouldn't it be a shame if student-faculty interaction were reduced to checkpoints in the academic journey. That's why in ECO we bring students and academics together three times a year during term time in our relaxed Coffee, Cookies-Chat events.

The Equality and Diversity Committee has been running these for years, but in 24/25 we ramped up collaboration with students through close engagement with SEEP. From student-designed posters to social media whispers, students have been central in bringing our community together — checking in with each other, sharing “aha!” moments around academic work and research, and making everyone feel welcome.

Stepping back to take in the atmosphere, I couldn't help but feel a wave of pride for our big, inclusive ECO family. Must've been the coffee? Maybe. But mostly it's the people.

Dr. Oana Borcan



We were delighted to mark Lunar New Year with a vibrant celebration attended by around 40 students. The event created a warm and lively atmosphere, bringing members of our community together to share in this important cultural occasion. Guests enjoyed a wide selection of traditional Chinese snacks and drinks, carefully chosen to reflect the spirit of the festival. The refreshments were especially well received and added to the festive mood in the room.

Our sincere thanks go to all those who attended and contributed to the success of the event. In particular, we would like to recognise Dr. Bahar Ghezelayagh for her outstanding commitment. Bahar not only led the organisation of the celebration but also accompanied students to source authentic snacks and drinks, ensuring the occasion was both meaningful and enjoyable.

We wish everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous Lunar New Year.

COLLABORATIVE INFLUENCE

“It reminded me that students aren’t just participants in their education – we can help shape its direction too”

Serving as the School Convenor for Economics this year has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my time at university. The role allowed me to represent student voices in a range of settings and gave me a much deeper understanding of how academic decisions are made – and how students can help shape them.

One of the highlights for me was sitting on the Economics Advisory Board. It was a unique opportunity to contribute to strategic conversations about the future of the School – from curriculum development to employability priorities. Being able to bring the student perspective into those higher-level discussions felt both meaningful and impactful. It reminded me that students aren’t just participants in their education – we can help shape its direction too.

As Convener I also get to have a seat in the Economics Teaching Committees, where more focused discussions took place around module content, assessment design, and teaching delivery. These meetings were a chance to relay feedback from course reps and ensure it was addressed by staff in a timely and constructive way. I’m proud that we were able to flag specific concerns and see practical changes come out of them – whether that meant improved clarity on assessments or better coordination around feedback.

But what I am most proud of are the smaller, day-to-day wins that came from listening to student concerns and helping to act on them. Through the Student Experience and Engagement Partnership (SEEP) meetings, a dedicated forum to discuss wider aspects of student life in the School, I worked closely with members from the SEEP committee and many more students and staff to make sure these issues were raised. Sometimes change was immediate; other times it took persistence – but throughout, I saw how effective student voice can be when it’s well-organised and solutions-focused.

Throughout, I felt supported by a team of staff who genuinely listened and responded to student feedback. I want to thank Duncan, our Student Partnership Officer, who has been fantastic to work with. His openness, encouragement, and commitment to collaborative working made a real difference this year, and I’m really grateful for his support.

If you’re considering getting involved in student representation, I can’t recommend it enough. It’s a chance to make a tangible difference – and to be part of shaping the university experience for you and those who come after.

**Claudio Barchiesi, School Convenor for ECO
3rd Year BSc Economics and Finance**





GRADUATION 2025



The ECO Graduation ceremony on Thursday 17 July was a joyful and unforgettable occasion.

We were thrilled to witness our graduates mark this important milestone, surrounded by their families and loved ones. Ahead of the main ceremony, we hosted a special gathering to give graduates a chance to celebrate with School staff, friends, and peers. It was a full-circle moment—many families hadn't seen the academic team since the Open Day—making the atmosphere in the EFRY foyer buzz with energy, excitement, and pride.

During the ceremony, we were honoured to have our Vice-Chancellor highlight the success of the past year—including the School of the Year Award at the Transforming Education Awards, and the far-reaching impact of our research both globally and within our local community.



A special congratulations to students Ivan Hung, Max-Anatoliy Guskov-Harrison and Alison Claire Champernowne for receiving the School of Economics Prize for Distinguished Performance in the Final Assessment. Your exceptional dedication and hard work have truly paid off. We're incredibly proud to celebrate your achievements as valued members of the ECO community.

As we reflect on our graduates' journeys, we are filled with admiration for the challenges they have faced and overcome. From learning to live independently—sharing late nights, cooking meals and studying together—to balancing work, family, and academic demands, these students have shown extraordinary resilience and determination. Their strength, support for one another, and shared moments of growth make their achievements all the more inspiring and meaningful.

To all our graduates, this degree is not merely a piece of paper, but a beacon—illuminating the path carved by your unwavering spirit and relentless dedication. It tells the story of countless hours, quiet sacrifices, and dreams pursued against all odds. Like a lighthouse guiding ships through stormy seas, your resilience has turned challenges into stepping stones.

Congratulations—may this milestone be just the dawn of a journey filled with promise and purpose.





BROAD HORIZONS FOR THE NORWICH ECONOMIC PUBLICATIONS

It has been an eventful academic year for the NEP. We not only introduced the pillars of the NEP: employability, diversity, and inclusion, which we believe are the foundation of the publications, but we also continued to focus on three themes this year: sustainability, international collaboration, and wellbeing. We chose these topics because we think it is important to consider both the macro concerns of students, such as the health of the planet we live on and the communities we live in, as well as the micro-challenges we all face as individuals.

This year, we continued the long-standing tradition of running the 15th essay competition with the questions focused on our themes. We were thrilled by the quality of the responses this year, and the decision was not an easy one. Each entry brought a unique perspective on their chosen question and clearly showed that they had spent a lot of effort polishing their essays, which made the job of marking them a truly fulfilling one. Whilst I would like to thank everyone for their participation, I would also like to personally congratulate the winners of the competition: Undergraduates Claudio Barchiesi (1st place), Cheuk Tang (2nd place), Finley Browne (3rd place), and postgraduates Ngoc Nguyen (1st place). You can find all the winning entries in our 29th volume,

alongside exceptional coursework from students and essays written by the paper's editors on topics related to our themes and pillars.

It would be remiss of me to talk about the NEP without mentioning the Podcast wing of the publication. This year, we have managed to release seven podcasts focusing on current political events, exceptional coursework, and more podcasts to come on employability and wellbeing, so keep your eyes out for when they are released.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported the publication, from the team of associate editors whose work is the backbone of the publication, Valentin and Grace, the podcast and paper editors whose oversight and leadership have been crucial to our success, Dr Liliana Harding who's has been supported the publication as a member of staff by providing both wisdom and guidance, finally the co-ordinators of the School Taylor and Gina for handling the administrative and many other challenges.

David Bunzl, Chief Editor of the NEP 3rd Year BSc Economics with a Placement Year



READ AND LISTEN TO THE NEP

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/school-of-economics/norwich-economic-publications>





The Ziggurat Challenge has long been a vibrant part of life at UEA – an inclusive, recreational-level sporting programme open to students, alumni, staff, and faculty across the University and Norwich Research Park. Designed to promote low-stakes competition and build community spirit between Schools, it offers a unique space where sporting ability takes a back seat to camaraderie, enthusiasm, and participation.

Yet in recent years, the leaderboard has started to look familiar. The School of Biological Sciences (BIO) has dominated the competition for over a decade, claiming the title for 11 consecutive seasons. Their remarkable consistency is a credit to their culture of participation – but it has also created a competitive imbalance that’s hard to ignore.

Those familiar with the wider sporting world will recognise the pattern. Think Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga, Wigan’s golden era in rugby league, Serena Williams during her peak years, or Michael Schumacher’s reign in Formula 1. These dynasties, while undeniably impressive, often bring an unintended consequence: a drop in broader engagement. Over time, we’ve seen fewer Schools entering, with some merging (like HUM competing as a single faculty team) and others stepping back altogether. As a result, participation has dipped and the unpredictability that once defined the competition has faded.

Perhaps it’s no surprise that economists, more than most, understand the importance of competitive balance – a core concept in the economics of sport. As Walter Neale famously wrote in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (1964), “God made the Yankees good, but not that good,” arguing that sport depends on uncertainty. When outcomes become too predictable, interest and participation suffer. Restoring a level playing field in the Ziggurat Challenge isn’t just about fairness – it’s about



keeping the league healthy, engaging, and worth turning up for.

Not all Schools have stepped aside quietly. Team ECO has developed a proud role as the Ziggurat Challenge’s perennial challengers, finishing runner-up on multiple occasions – including the past three seasons. This year alone, we celebrated victories in walking football, badminton, ten-pin bowling, the Christmas Quiz, and netball. Individual achievements were just as impressive: Emiliya secured second in the Head of School category, while I finished first in the Most Sporting Staff Champion category. Our consistent success reflects the same qualities that underpin our teaching, research, and community: determination, collaboration, and strategy.

Dominance makes headlines – but balanced rivalries build lasting traditions. Let’s keep Ziggurat a celebration of UEA’s spirited community.

Dr. Peter Dawson, ECO Ziggurat Staff Champion



This year's flagship Alumni Employability Event brought together a diverse panel of former students who generously volunteered to share their career journeys and insights with the current students, alumni, and staff in attendance. With speakers working in roles spanning consultancy, public policy, finance, and data science, the panel offered practical advice and candid reflections on how to navigate the early stages of a career after studying Economics.

The evening featured responses from the panel, answering a range of questions on early-career challenges. This was followed by a lively Q&A with the audience, and informal networking over refreshments. Students particularly valued the honest accounts of career uncertainty, job applications, and the importance of transferable skills – and many commented on how encouraging it was to see alumni just a few years ahead making their mark.

A huge thank you to our speakers for their time and advice – and to all students, staff, alumni, and advisory board members who attended. And a special thank you to all my colleagues who helped organise the event and make it such a success. We look forward to hosting more events like this in the future.





SMARTER ECONOMICS NEEDS DIVERSE VOICES

“Economics becomes more powerful when more people are included - anyone can be an economist, and everyone should feel welcome in Economics.”

At its heart, economics is more than just supply and demand—it’s about understanding how the world works, how decisions are made, and how we can build a more just and prosperous society for everyone.

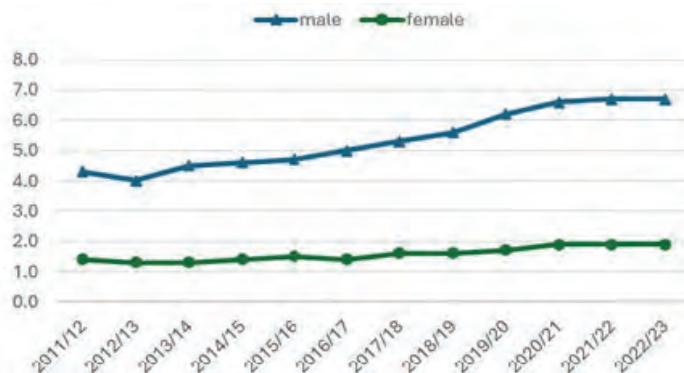
Economics has the potential to be one of the most diverse and inclusive subjects—because it touches everyone’s lives. But traditionally, the field has not reflected the diversity of the people it affects. For many years, the dominant voices in economic theory and policymaking have come from a narrow demographic—often white, male, and from similar, privileged educational or social backgrounds.

Two recent reports by the Royal Economic Society and the Bank of England highlight a persistent lack of diversity in economics—not

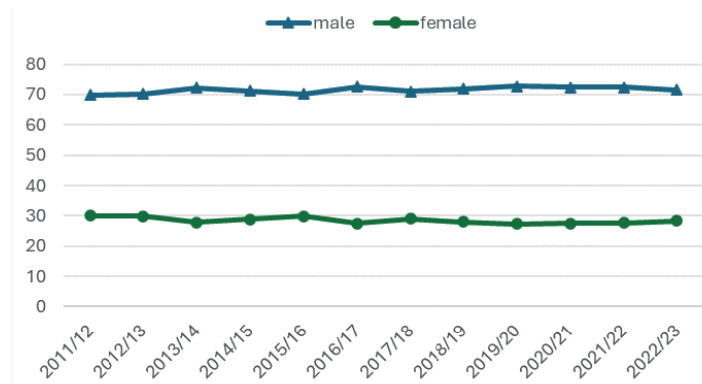
just at university level, but also among students taking economics at A-level and GCSE.

Female students, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and students from the North East are still significantly less likely to study economics at university. Interestingly, while no UK university requires economics at A-level or GCSE for admission, most students who pursue the subject at university have already studied it at A-level.

The data below show trends we are keenly aware of: male students are still more likely to study economics than female students, resulting in university cohorts that are typically around 70% male and 30% female.



% of all students completing degrees in economics by gender and year. Source: Bank of England – 2025



% of completed economics degrees by gender and year. Source: Bank of England – 2025

But why does this lack of diversity matter?

Because when the field lacks diverse perspectives, key insights—especially those from women, people of colour, and underrepresented communities—can be overlooked in shaping economic thinking and solutions. Economics becomes more powerful when it reflects a wider range of lived experiences. Diversity leads to richer ideas, more inclusive models, and better outcomes.

So what are we doing about it?

This year, six outstanding academics from the School of Economics—Dr Oana Borcan, Dr Sara Ben Yahmed, Dr Bahar Ghezelayagh, Dr Liliana

Harding, Professor Emiliya Lazarova, and Dr Stefania Sitzia—have taken action. They’ve visited schools and colleges across the region to challenge stereotypes and inspire the next generation of economists. Their talks explored questions such as:

- Why does society still discriminate?
- Is AI and remote work helping or hindering gender equality?
- Why isn’t housework seen as ‘real work’?
- How do emotions and gender influence saving and investment?
- Who gets to be an economist?

Their mission is clear: to show that anyone can be an economist, and everyone should feel welcome in economics.

The School of Economics at UEA was the first economics department in England to be awarded a Bronze Athena SWAN award, recognising our commitment to gender equality. And our work doesn’t stop there.

Together, we’re striving to build a more inclusive future for economics—one that truly reflects and serves the diverse world we live in.

Dr Janithe Siriwardana

1986 - 2025

The academic family of UEA's School of Economics has lost a cherished member when our former PGR student Janithe Siriwardana passed away on 3 May 2025. Jan joined us in September 2020 – in the midst of the Covid pandemic – and embarked on an ambitious mission to bring experimental methods to the field of Empirical Industrial Organisation (IO). During his time in ECO, Jan stood out as a kind and friendly colleague and as an excellent researcher.

While Jan's academic curiosity and ability should have been clear to us by simply viewing his CV with an MBA from UCLA and an MSc in Economics from Durham University, they quickly became apparent to his supervisors Stefan Penczynski and Farasat Bokhari when he effortlessly became expert in both experimental methods and in the latest techniques of empirical IO. So, in his first thesis chapter, Jan combined experimental and field data to estimate demand and proposed a more rapid and still rigorous way to analyse merger effects. Jan was comfortably moving in both fields, became a member of both CBESS and CCP and now looked to apply his technical skills to a behavioural intervention. In chapters two and three, he analysed changes in purchasing behaviour and welfare due to the 2022 policy that restricts high-sugar drinks to be less conveniently located in English supermarkets. In his January 2025 dissertation defence, Jan impressed his examiners, David Cooper and Pierre Regibeau, with detailed knowledge about all aspects of his chapters. He proudly and more than deservedly received his official PhD certificate during his last days in April 2025.

Beyond the scholarly achievements, Jan was known for his warmth, generosity and positive attitude. He liked to socialise and expressed from the start his desire to mingle with fellow students and to meet in person for supervisory meetings. He happily and patiently passed on his knowledge about datasets, econometric methods or experimental platforms to other students and research assistants. You will not have seen him other than smiling and positive, despite the occasional constraints that his medical condition imposed on him through hospital stays or regular dialysis sessions at NNUH.

Jan's path of life ended much too soon. His personal legacy lives on in the many ways he will be remembered by those around him: his parents, his brother, his family, friends and colleagues. Jan's scholarly legacy lives on in the knowledge and methods he helped create and which will make their way into academic and practical use. We, the School of Economics and his supervisors, were fortunate to have had Jan among us; he enriched our community in many ways. We will remember him with deep respect and gratitude.



Research





“We have made solid progress, but reaching our full potential will require continued focus, collaboration, and investment of time and resources.”

As we prepare for REF 2029, we recently undertook an interim review of our performance across three areas: research outputs, grant activity, and the development of an internal journal scoring system. Encouraging progress has been made.

Let's begin with research outputs, which form 50% of the REF score. By early 2025, 99 outputs had been reviewed by the Research Director and Research Group Leads, with 36 selected for submission. These include 23 outputs judged as 4* and 12 as 3*, with a projected GPA of 3.66. While many of the 4* outputs are rated on the lower end of that band, this is still promising. With 24 research FTE and a 2.5 output requirement per staff member, we estimate a need for approximately 24 additional high-quality outputs. This highlights the need to support and prioritise top-tier research over the coming years.

It is also notable that most REFable outputs are concentrated among a small group of staff. To strengthen our submission, we must broaden engagement in REFquality research across the School.

On grant activity, our performance this academic year is modest but encouraging. We submitted 12 applications, 4 of which have been successful, with others pending. These generated £0.7 million in departmental income and £4.0 million in total UEA income—a significant contribution

from our unit. Applications to Horizon Europe, the ESRC, and the British Academy show we are targeting major funders. With more support and planning, there is scope to grow both the number and success rate of applications. Over the past five years, the number of grant submissions has remained steady, although total income has fluctuated, suggesting stable activity with room for further ambition.

A key innovation is our new internal journal scoring system. By matching submitted outputs to REF scores from previous submissions, the Research Director developed a metric for journal quality. A regression analysis showed a strong correlation ($R^2 = 93\%$) between this score and universities' REF output GPA, indicating the system's robustness. While not a ranking tool, it offers a helpful heuristic—particularly for early-career researchers and in tie-break decisions.

To further support our research culture, the School held the annual ECO Research and Scholarship Retreat on 25 June 2025. Around 30 staff members presented recent work and plans for the coming year. The retreat encourages collaboration, mentorship, and exposure to cross-disciplinary ideas, with invited speakers from HealthUEA and the School of Computing Sciences to spark new perspectives and partnerships.

In conclusion, while our projected GPA is strong and new tools are aiding strategic planning, we must expand the pool of REFable outputs, support wider staff engagement, and sustain momentum in research funding. The journal scoring system is one step toward this. Continued collaboration, focus, and investment will be key to reaching our full potential.

Dr. Franco Mariuzzo, Research Director



THE CANARY EFFECT

ASSESSING NORWICH CITY FC'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Last summer, I had the opportunity to contribute to a unique consultancy project with Norwich City Football Club, supporting the development of the club's first Socio-Economic Impact Report. The report, based on the 2022-23 season, provides a detailed picture of Norwich City's contribution to the local and regional economy, as well as the wider social value it generates through its community programmes.

My involvement in the project centred on developing and applying the analytical framework used to assess the club's economic and social impact. This included quantifying the club's direct and indirect contributions to the local economy - examining factors such as employment generated by the club and its operations, the economic ripple effects of tourism and matchday attendance, and the spending patterns associated with fans, staff, and visiting teams. Particular attention was given to the matchday economy, where local hospitality, retail, and transport services see a marked boost.

In addition to the financial metrics, we also evaluated the club's broader social value, looking at its efforts to promote wellbeing, education, and inclusion through programmes run by the Canaries Trust and other outreach initiatives. These activities range from mental health support and fitness for older adults to youth engagement and skills development - areas where the club plays a crucial community leadership role.

Despite operating outside the Premier League, Norwich

City FC delivers a significant economic contribution to the region, with an estimated £89 million in Gross Value Added (GVA). Notably, the club's close ties to local business are reflected in its use of 265 regional suppliers, generating over £11.4 million in revenue for Norfolk-based firms. These findings illustrate that football clubs are not merely sources of entertainment; they are civic anchors, supporting jobs, community cohesion, and local pride. In many ways, the club's presence in Norwich acts as a catalyst for economic and social development, underscoring its role as a deeply embedded and influential local institution.

Beyond the technical work, this project also underscored the increasingly important role that universities can and should play in local partnerships. Our School, and UEA more generally, is well-equipped to contribute research expertise, critical insight, and evaluation capacity to help organisations make better decisions and tell more compelling stories about their impact.

At their best, these collaborations are two-way streets: the university offers academic rigour and independent analysis, while also gaining valuable real-world experience, applied case studies, and new opportunities for student engagement. For students and staff alike, projects like this are a chance to see how academic tools can have direct relevance to policy, community wellbeing, and regional development.

Dr. Peter Dawson

A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a white puffer jacket with a yellow strap, is giving a thumbs up. She is standing in front of a scenic view of a town with red-roofed buildings and snow-capped mountains under a cloudy sky.

**BRIDGING BORDERS,
SHARING KNOWLEDGE**

MY UEA RESEARCH JOURNEY IN ENERGY ECONOMICS

“I was deeply impressed by the School of Economics’ vibrant academic atmosphere and its culture of support and inclusivity.”

I am an Assistant Research Fellow at the School of Economics, Yunnan University, China, focusing on energy economics—particularly the spatial efficiency of energy allocation. In September 2024, I began my first international research visit at the School of Economics, University of East Anglia, following an invitation from Professor Corrado Di Maria. This visit has been a valuable experience for both academic development and personal growth.

During my time at UEA, I was deeply impressed by the School of Economics’ vibrant academic atmosphere and its culture of support and inclusivity. Professor Emiliya Lazarova, the Head of School, along with many faculty and staff members, provided tremendous support and kindness, helping me settle in quickly both professionally and personally. The rich schedule of seminars and informal discussions greatly broadened my academic horizons and provided invaluable feedback on my work.

I am especially grateful to Professor Corrado. His rigorous and thoughtful approach to research, combined with a warm sense of humour, made this collaboration both productive and enjoyable. Together, we explored key questions around energy efficiency and climate policy, with the hope that our work will offer useful insights for real-world challenges.

This visit has not only enriched my academic journey, but also helped build a bridge of cooperation between Yunnan University and UEA — and more broadly, between China and the UK. Although my visit is coming to an end, our collaboration is only just beginning. I look forward to future opportunities to work together and to contributing to global energy transitions with insights drawn from both Chinese and international perspectives.

Yongxiao Tian

RESEARCH IN FOCUS



Kant v. Nash 2.0

Surprisingly, John Roemer’s Kantian equilibrium - not the famous Nash equilibrium - is the game theory concept that is actually described in the well-known bar scene of the John Nash bio-pic “A beautiful mind”. Those equilibria are always Pareto-efficient: nobody’s evening can be improved without worsening somebody else’s. 1:0 Kant.

We tested which concept describes childhood vaccination behaviour better. In the face of high vaccination rates, the Nash protocol predicts that individuals free ride on the herd immunity by not vaccinating. In the bar, this is “going for the blonde”. In contrast, the Kant protocol predicts vaccination because a change to “not vaccinating” would be contemplated for all other players at the same time, reminiscent of Kant’s Categorical Imperative.

Based on observed vaccination behaviour and survey data from six countries, we find that Kantian equilibrium better describes actual behaviour and attitudes. It does so by capturing cooperative behaviour and social norms. 2:0 Kant.

Dr. Stefan Penczynski



Best Paper Award

The Effect of Liquidity on the Spoofability of Financial Markets (Gu, Wang, Mascioli, Chakraborty, Savani, Turocy, and Wellman) won Best Paper at ICAIF’24, the ACM International Conference on AI in Finance, in November 2024.

Spoofing is a manipulative trading practice where large buy or sell orders are placed with no intention of executing them, misleading other traders about market conditions. By distorting the apparent supply and demand, spoofers provoke price movements they can exploit—often at the expense of genuine participants.

This paper uses reinforcement learning to train AI agents that simulate spoofing behaviour in markets with varying levels of liquidity—the volume of units others are willing to trade. The results reveal that effective spoofing strategies vary significantly across markets, meaning there’s no simple, universal pattern for identifying spoofers. This complicates enforcement in jurisdictions where spoofing is illegal.

However, the research also finds that “thick” markets—with high liquidity and many willing traders—are naturally more resistant to spoofing, even from sophisticated agents. These findings offer not only insight into the complexity of detecting spoofing, but also a positive outlook: well-structured, liquid markets can act as a strong deterrent to manipulative behaviour.

Prof. Theodore Turocy

READ THE FULL PAPERS



WORKSHOPS



TIME SERIES WORKSHOP

The third edition of School of Economics' Time Series Workshop on 22nd & 23rd May 2025.

The keynote speakers were Christiane Baumeister (University of Notre Dame) and Ambrogio Cesa-Bianchi (Bank of England).

The workshop is designed as a forum for academics and central bankers to discuss recent advances in time series econometrics. Both theoretical and empirical submissions are encouraged in an open call for papers.

A best paper award for excellent work by a junior researcher (defined as having obtained their PhD within the last 6 years) is included.

Senior experts from academia, from the ECB, and from the Bank of England ensured high-quality comments and a lively discussion. During the workshop, research dissemination was facilitated by a Twitter/ X feed showing presenters, presentation titles and example slides.



BINOMA WORKSHOP

Our colleague Arnold Polanski coorganises the Bilbao-Norwich-Málaga (BiNoMa) workshops on economics of networks.

These workshops are intended to be a forum for discussion on topics related to Economics of Networks in a stimulating environment. It attracts year after year approximately 25 experts in the field.

The venue of the workshops used to alternate between the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK), Universidad del País Vasco (Bilbao, Spain), and Universidad de Málaga (Málaga, Spain). However, BiNoMa workshops have also taken place in other European cities in recent years.

BiNoMa 2025 (8th edition) took place at the University of Granada (Spain) and was organised by the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences (Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales).

A woman with dark hair, wearing a green and black patterned shirt, is pointing her right index finger towards a laptop screen. She is looking intently at the screen. In the foreground, the back of a person's head with long dark hair is visible, looking towards the same direction. The setting appears to be a meeting room with large windows in the background. A dark rectangular box with the word "Teaching" in pink text is overlaid on the image.

Teaching



“We are proud to lead the way at UEA in Student Voice innovation, but we couldn’t achieve this without our students.”

Looking back at last year’s newsletter, I noticed that we set three goals for 2025, one of which was to “Elevate” the way we listen to our students, often referred to in the Higher Education sector as **Student Voice**.

I’m pleased to report that we have made significant strides in this area. Under the guidance of Professor Duncan Watson, we have completely revamped our staff-student liaison process through the new **Student Experience in Economics Partnership (SEEP)**. This structure includes subgroups focused on engagement, innovation, and academic review. We are proud to lead at UEA in **Student Voice** innovation, but we couldn’t achieve this without our students. Special thanks to students Claudio, Jay, Ivan, and Marc for their continued efforts!

We measure our success through tangible targets. For example, at our students’ suggestion, we rolled out a **Student Voice** item across all our module Blackboard sites. This initiative informs newly enrolled students about innovations driven by previous feedback and allows us to respond consistently and in real-time to module evaluations and other sources of feedback. This is just one example of how student suggestions quickly become part of our offering.

As ever, we continue to enhance and refresh our course content. This year, we introduced a new final-year module in **Behavioural Finance**, welcoming over 80 students.

Taught by Dr Ariel Gu and underpinned by her research, this module is already proving popular with our final-year students.

In 2024/25, we also introduced the module **Topics in Applied Econometrics**, taught by Dr Peter Dawson to our second-year students. This module is part of a multiyear plan to improve how we teach econometrics across our courses. The new module sets the stage for further enhancements to Dr Dawson’s final-year module, **Further Econometrics and Data Analysis**, in 2025/26, including bringing on board the expertise of Dr Martin Bruns.

This year, we welcomed our first cohort of first-year students in the new **BSc Economics, Behaviour, and Data Science** course. This exciting degree combines ECO’s research expertise with efforts to equip students with skills relevant for the late 2020s job market and beyond. Notably, next year, second-year students from our various courses will take the new module **Introduction to Programming and Data Science**, taught by Dr Fuyu Yang. This module, running for the first time in spring 2026, will help students develop programming skills using Python.

But we won’t resting on our laurels. Guided by our Advisory Board’s invaluable experience and expertise, our ECO Teaching Committee (comprising students and academics) is currently planning a thorough review of learning objectives and assessments. This task aims to rationalise and balance the way our students are assessed, includes making more assessment ‘authentic’ (and therefore relevant to the workplace), integrating AI into our courses and assessment, and ensuring students develop AI-related skills. I look forward to reporting on these developments next year!

Dr. James Watson, Teaching Director



POLICY IN PRACTICE

“From net zero to tax policy, students tackled the big issues—and brought the public with them.”

In May 2025, third-year undergraduate students on the Government, Welfare and Policy module once again brought economics into the heart of the community—presenting their policy analysis posters to the public at The Forum in central Norwich.

Led by module organiser Dr Luca Zamboni, students worked in groups to research a public policy topic of their choice—local, national, or international—and analyse it from an economic perspective. The challenge? To communicate clearly and accessibly, cutting out the jargon while keeping the insight. The result was a series of eye-catching posters, engaging conversations, and thoughtful debate.

The event was supported by Risk & Policy Analysts (RPA)—represented by three UEA Economics alumni— who offered detailed feedback to each group. They also sponsored a fantastic prize: a fast-tracked job application for members of the winning team.

The afternoon was a resounding success, thanks to the students’ hard work and infectious enthusiasm. Posters tackled a wide range of pressing policy questions—from the impact of tax changes in the government’s Autumn Budget and Spring Statement to international strategies



for achieving net-zero emissions in the wake of the Paris Agreement.

Once again, our students demonstrated that economics is not just about theory—it’s about people, policy, and real-world change. Events like this show the power of economics when it’s made public, made relevant, and made accessible. We hope it inspired not just our students, but the wider community too—especially young people—by showing how smart public policy, grounded in economic thinking, can help shape a better future.

Dr. Luca Zamboni



CHALLENGING INEQUALITY

“Students used behavioural economics to tackle real-world inequality—turning theory into impact.”

Did you know that in many countries, including the UK, Black men are disproportionately stopped by police (Carvalho, 2022)? Or that women and Black patients often receive less pain medication than white men for the same conditions (Hoffman et al., 2016)? In academic settings, women are interrupted more frequently, receive more condescending questions (Holmes et al., 2016), and face more comments on their appearance or personal lives than their male peers (Wu, 2017). And in one landmark study, science faculty rated identical CVs lower when they featured a female name instead of a male one (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

These examples of bias and discrimination may go unnoticed in daily life, but they shape decisions across our society—from public policy to medical treatment. As part of the Behavioural Economics of Inequality module, students are challenged to confront these issues directly. Working in teams, they design innovative behavioural interventions to reduce the impact of bias and promote fairer outcomes in real-world contexts.

This year, students ventured boldly into unfamiliar territory, tackling complex and sensitive topics with creativity and rigour. Their projects explored discrimination in the criminal justice system; proposed

interventions to reduce disparities in healthcare access and pain management; encouraged cervical screening uptake among women from ethnic minorities; devised strategies to boost representation of women and minority leaders in organisations; championed girls’ participation in economics; and aimed to reduce teacher turnover in under-resourced schools.

The culmination of their work was the student-led mini conference—an annual highlight and core component of the module’s assessment. Each team presented their ideas to an audience of academics and potential employers, followed by Q&A sessions that tested their ability to defend their methodology and communicate clearly under pressure.

Beyond its academic value, the conference offered an invaluable opportunity for experiential learning. Students honed their public speaking skills, networked with professionals, and gained confidence in presenting research to external audiences—many for the first time. These skills will serve them well in internships, further study, and their future careers.

In short, the Behavioural Economics of Inequality module empowers students to combine theory with practice—using the tools of behavioural economics to tackle some of society’s most pressing and persistent challenges.

Congratulations to all who took part, and thank you to the staff and guests who supported the event.

Dr. Stefania Sitzia



WE BUILT THIS

HOW ECO STUDENTS SPARKED A REVOLUTION

“SEEP shows what’s possible when student voice moves beyond feedback and becomes leadership—grounded in theory, driven by passion. It worked so well - the entire University is now following in it’s footsteps.”

Economists often warn against irrational exuberance—that infamous burst of investor enthusiasm when fundamentals are ignored and hype takes over, a term immortalised by Alan Greenspan. But here in the School of Economics, we’ve coined our own version: rational exuberance. Unlike its risky cousin, this exuberance is grounded—born when people are genuinely excited because they have clear ownership, well-aligned incentives, and a direct stake in outcomes. And at ECO, that’s exactly what our students have built.

This year, Economics students didn’t just

contribute to student voice—they revolutionised it through the creation of SEEP (School of Economics Engagement Partnership). SEEP lifts the theory of aligned incentives and meaningful ownership straight from the pages of economics textbooks and applies it to the real-world challenge of student partnership.

Structured around three vibrant student committees—EPIC (strategy), CARE (quality assurance), and SAGE (student engagement)—SEEP gives students a genuine stake in shaping the direction, integrity, and experience of their education. While still developing, these committees are quickly evolving into dynamic forums, buzzing with ideas and driven by students’ rational excitement to make real change.

At the heart of this student-led revolution is SEEP Forward, an ambitious, student-owned strategy outlining priorities for 2025–2028. This isn’t token consultation; SEEP Forward reflects real student perspectives and strategic clarity. It’s a powerful example of what’s possible when students don’t just comment on change—they lead it.



Within SEEP, the EPIC committee has played a pivotal role. Originally designed to amplify the student voice in strategic discussions, EPIC proved so successful that the University has modelled its new Student Experience Partnerships on EPIC's structure.

This year's entire EPIC team is graduating—clearly, they coordinated their exit strategy as well as they've coordinated everything else. From bold ideas to brilliantly timed Microsoft Forms submissions, and everything in between, they've helped steer the School with wit, wisdom, and the occasional last-minute agenda. Their legacy? A partnership model that now runs so smoothly, we're half-convinced they've installed autopilot.

Replacing their unique contributions won't be easy, but their departure opens the door for fresh voices. Next year's incoming students—full of energy and insight—will step into these roles and bring new momentum to EPIC, CARE, and SAGE, keeping our partnership vibrant and our School evolving.

So, as we say a heartfelt goodbye to our EPIC graduates—thank you for your passion, leadership, and lasting legacy—we also extend a warm welcome to the next generation. Step forward, join SEEP, and keep our rational exuberance alive.

There's an old economist's joke: "It works in theory, but not in practice." At ECO, our students flipped that on its head. They took theory—about incentives, ownership, and partnership—dragged it out of the textbook, gave it a student committee and a strategy document, and made it work better in practice than anyone expected.

Turns out, with student voice leading the way, rational exuberance isn't just possible—it's irresistible.

Prof. Duncan Watson - Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement

A photograph of three people in a professional or social setting. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair and glasses is looking to her right, holding a black coffee cup. She is wearing a light-colored blazer and a dark patterned scarf. In the background, a man with a beard and a woman are partially visible, both looking in the same direction. The word "Employability" is overlaid in a large, bold, orange font on a dark rectangular background.

Employability



EMPOWERING EMPLOYABILITY

“We’ve sought to offer something valuable to every student – from internships and industry qualifications to mentoring and skills training – supporting different needs, interests, and stages of career thinking.”

With the academic year drawing to a close, it’s a good moment to reflect on everything the School of Economics has achieved in support of our students’ employability. It’s been a busy year, with increased momentum around career-related activity – both behind the scenes and in student-facing events. Whether through our School programmes, panel discussions, employer talks, or our growing bank of skills training, the employability team has worked hard to offer something valuable to every student.

One of the most exciting aspects has been the breadth of activity – not just the quantity, but the diversity. From internships to industry-recognised qualifications, and from mentoring to skills sessions, we’ve sought to cater for different needs, interests, and stages of career thinking. And we haven’t done this alone: our colleagues across the School have played a key role in encouraging student participation and embedding employability into the curriculum.

We’ve also been fortunate to draw on our brilliant alumni and employer partners, whose insights and generosity of time have been invaluable.

Highlights have included the Sustainability in Practice Employability Panel, featuring professionals working on climate, social impact, and sustainable finance – an inspiring afternoon that brought to life the idea of careers with purpose. We’ve also seen continued engagement with our mentoring and internship programmes, as well as the introduction of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI) initiative, each of which have their own features in this newsletter with participant reflections.

Of course, we want to broaden our reach further and encourage more students to take advantage of these opportunities. We know that for many students, balancing academic pressures with career development isn’t easy. But we’re learning and adapting – testing new formats, strengthening communication, and deepening our understanding of what works. Most importantly, we’re committed to continuing this work.

Looking ahead, we’re excited to build on this momentum. We’ll continue to explore ways of embedding employability across the student journey, working closely with staff, alumni, and external partners. Whether you’re a first-year student still finding your feet, or a final year thinking about what’s next, we hope you’ll find support and inspiration from the School’s employability offer.

Dr. Ritchie Woodard, Employability Director

ECO INTERNSHIP CASE STUDIES



The School of Economics Internship Programme continues to provide valuable experience to students looking to explore career paths and develop workplace skills. The programme offers short-term, meaningful opportunities to work with academics on their research projects. This year, we had interns working on exciting projects in areas such as financial literacy, status seeking behaviour, and offer-counteroffer dynamics. These internships help students gain confidence and apply their learning beyond the classroom, as well as assisting the research agenda within the School.

INTERN:

George Bakosh Year 2, BSc Economics

PROJECT OUTLINE:

The Economics of Status Seeking Behaviour - this project includes conducting literature reviews, data analysis and short writeups/blogs contributing to a new book relating to status seeking behaviour and build on work surrounding conspicuous consumption.

PROJECT LEAD:

Dr. Sheheryar Banuri

How did you benefit?

My internship with Sheheryar was a fantastic opportunity to challenge myself and acquire new skills. I did many things I would not have imagined I could do. I coded in Python for the first time, assisted with behavioural experiments in the lab, and analysed GPS data using realworld datasets.

My experience with Python is transferrable to any subdiscipline of economics, providing me with a powerful toolkit for automation and deep analysis. My behavioural lab shadowing brought me closer to the origins of pioneering research in behavioural economics, of which the UEA is renowned. Having participated in experiments before, it was exciting to see how the laboratory machinery works from inside. My work with GPS data

proved to be the most challenging but also the most rewarding. Being able to grasp a completely unknown type of data, I feel assured I can face similar challenges in the future.

The most important lesson I took away is that the ability to learn and adapt is more crucial than knowing everything up front. That mindset helped me remain open, ask better questions, and embrace challenges. That being said, the mentorship and support Sheheryar provided me were invaluable. I felt guided and confident throughout our collaboration. He struck a perfect balance between guidance and independence, leaving me a lot of room for creativity.

Project Lead Feedback

Huge thanks to George for his outstanding work during his spring internship! He joined me on a project involving GPS data analysis and made an absolutely fabulous contribution throughout. George was pushed on every front — from data wrangling to interpreting patterns — and consistently delivered with rigour and enthusiasm.

More than just a technical exercise, the project gave George first-hand experience with the research process: asking the right questions, refining hypotheses, and working through challenges as they came. His insights proved invaluable to the analysis and will feed directly into an important scientific contribution.

It was a pleasure to work with such a sharp and committed student. I'm excited to see where he goes next!



INTERNSHIP:

Nhu Minh Ngoc Nguyen (Julie) **MSc Quantitative Financial Economics**

PROJECT OUTLINE:

The 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh, remains one of the worst industrial disasters in history, killing 1,134 people and injuring over 2,500. The tragedy sparked global scrutiny of supply chains, as the factories involved produced garments for major Western brands like Nike, Walmart, Mango, Zara, and Primark. In response to public and media pressure, many of these retailers contributed to victim compensation funds and pledged to improve factory conditions in Bangladesh. However, some also reduced or stopped sourcing from the region. This project explores how far retailers adjusted their sourcing strategies after the disaster, potentially shifting towards higher-cost, lower-risk regions to avoid future reputational harm.

PROJECT LEAD:

Dr. Georgios Papadopoulos

How did you benefit?

Taking part in this internship project was a deeply meaningful experience for me. As a student passionate about global economic issues, I found the topic of supply chain restructuring after the Rana Plaza disaster both timely and thought-provoking. While the technical tasks—such as media scanning, supplier data collection, and statistical analysis—were fairly manageable, what truly stood out was the broader learning about how companies navigate sourcing decisions in the wake of a crisis. In today's uncertain global economy, gaining this insight into the intersection between business strategy, ethics, and supply chain

resilience felt incredibly relevant and valuable. I've strengthened my skills in working with research tools, developed a more structured approach to data handling, and sharpened my eye for identifying patterns in corporate behaviour.

I'm genuinely grateful to have been part of this project. The project lead was not only supportive but also open to discussion and exploration, which made me feel truly included and encouraged. This experience has shaped my thinking and reinforced my interest in responsible and sustainable global business practices.

Project Lead Feedback

Julie was an outstanding intern, and it was a real pleasure to have her on the project. She approached every task with enthusiasm, diligence, and professionalism, even when the work was repetitive or monotonous. Julie consistently delivered high-quality outputs, showing great attention to detail and a strong grasp of the broader research context.

She worked quickly and thoughtfully, often anticipating next steps and asking insightful questions that added value to our discussions. Her ability to manage data, spot patterns, and engage with the wider implications of our research made her a particularly impressive contributor. We especially appreciated her positive attitude and the collaborative spirit she brought to the team.

We're confident she has a bright future ahead, and we hope to work with similarly talented interns in the future.



MENTOR SCHEME

The School's Mentoring Programme connects Economics students with alumni and professionals across diverse sectors. Through regular meetings, mentors provide guidance, career insights, and support as students navigate their academic and career paths. This year, the growing community between mentors and mentees highlights the value of shared experience.

Positive feedback from both sides shows the programme's impact in helping students gain clarity and confidence about their futures. We look forward to welcoming new and returning mentors and mentees next year.

MENTEE

Jess Offler

Year 1 BSc Economics and Finance with a Placement Year

As a first-year student I had so many questions that I wanted answers to from someone that had been through the university and had made the leap into business. I wanted to get some real perspective on what I needed to prioritise especially for a year in industry. My mentor, George Barham, has been amazing. Not only has he given me excellent advice on how I should prepare to secure a

job, for example by differentiating my LinkedIn profile, CV and job applications, he has also pointed me in the right direction to opportunities to develop my CV through non-academic activities at the university. I would definitely recommend George and the mentor scheme.

MENTOR

George Barham

BSc Economics and Finance with a Placement Year - currently a Wealth Administrator at RBC Brewin Dolphin

As an Alumni I'm incredibly grateful that I have opportunities to give back and stay in touch with the community in ECO. And I have to say it's an odd feeling going from being a student mentee to an alumni mentor - but having experience on both sides of the relationship has been fantastic. I've improved my confidence and communication skills to say the least. Dare I say it's been a smooth journey? The mentees I was paired with are engaged, interested and enthusiastic - they've told me exactly what they wanted to cover in our sessions - and as a result we've had some clear and quality sessions. They will no doubt have a very bright career! To those looking to use the scheme, I'd highly encourage it.



**BECOME A MENTOR,
SHAPE LIVES**

Contact eco.reception@uea.ac.uk
to sign up for 2025/26!



BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND CONNECTIONS

“Hearing directly from UEA alumni made the placement process feel manageable and gave me clarity on the skills employers truly value”

As an Economics with Placement Year student, I’ve found the employability events run by the School of Economics incredibly valuable during my placement search this year. As an Associate Editor of the Norwich Economic Publications (NEP), I’ve also had the pleasure of reporting on these events through articles published in the Eco Steps Bulletin and on LinkedIn, helping more people engage with the talks.

The employability sessions often feature UEA Economics alumni, which has been especially helpful. Hearing directly from former students about their career paths gave me insight into how they transitioned into the workplace. Many had completed placements or internships during their studies, showing me the wide range of opportunities available to Economics students across industries such as consultancy, finance, and the public sector.

The advice and suggestions shared by the speakers have been particularly useful. I now have a much clearer understanding of what employers and recruiters look for in placement and graduate scheme applicants. The speakers highlighted how the balance of soft and technical skills varies between industries. For me, with a particular interest in financial services and investment management,

it was helpful to learn that client communication and Excel skills are highly valued. This insight has motivated me to develop these areas further through online courses and work experience.

Guests also gave detailed advice on application processes, including interview and assessment centre preparation. Their guidance made my placement applications feel far more manageable. Hearing from alumni working in investment management provided a clearer picture of the steps I need to take to succeed in the industry, such as building strong commercial awareness.

After each event, there was time to network with the speakers. This gave me the chance to ask specific questions and start building professional connections. I followed up by connecting with speakers on LinkedIn and arranging virtual chats with those in my target industry. These networking sessions have been vital in creating relationships that could lead to future opportunities.

Overall, the employability events have boosted my confidence and readiness for the application process. Hearing from UEA alumni has shown me the flexibility and value of an Economics degree across different sectors. The speakers have outlined what employers are looking for and how to stand out in a competitive job market. Above all, the importance of networking has been a key takeaway. In summary, these events have played a crucial role in my preparation for securing a placement and shaping my future career.

Isaac Williams
2nd Year BSc Economics with a Placement Year



STEPPING INTO THE WORLD OF FINANCE

Our partnership with the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI) has opened up exciting opportunities for students to gain industry-recognised certification and practical insight into financial services. Through university-funded training and exams, students have strengthened their CVs and gained clarity about potential career paths in finance.

This year's pioneering cohort showed real commitment in balancing the CISI qualification alongside their studies. It's been inspiring to see them succeed—some have reaffirmed their interest in finance, while others have discovered new directions. We're delighted to be continuing the initiative next year and encourage all interested students to consider taking part.



As a final-year Economics with Accountancy student, I'm increasingly aware that the transition into the working world is fast approaching. With a long-standing interest in financial services, the opportunity to undertake the CISI Introduction to Securities and Investment qualification—funded by the university—stood out as a valuable way to gain industry-relevant insight and strengthen my employability.

I enrolled on the programme to broaden my understanding of the financial landscape, particularly as I prepare to begin a graduate role at PwC.

While my degree has provided a strong foundation in economic theory and accounting, I was keen to see how these concepts apply in real-world financial markets, investment strategies, and regulation.

The course was well structured and engaging. It covered core topics such as the economic environment, equities, bonds, investment funds, ethics, and regulation—many of which are directly relevant to careers in finance. The CISI materials were clear and accessible, with a textbook that broke down complex topics and practice questions that reinforced learning. The online portal also made it easy to track progress and revisit key areas.

A major strength of the qualification was its flexibility. Being self-paced meant I could fit it around my academic work and sit the exam at a time that suited me—essential during a busy final year.

What stood out most, though, was how well the CISI course complemented my studies. It helped connect lecture content with its application in the financial sector. That insight has already helped in interviews and will continue to support me as I begin my career. It also demonstrates qualities like time management, initiative, and commitment—skills highly valued by employers.

I'm very grateful to the School of Economics for offering this opportunity and would recommend the CISI Introduction to Securities and Investment to any student interested in finance. It's a great way to build confidence, explore the industry, and take a proactive step towards your future career.

Edward Mann
3rd Year BSc Economics with Accountancy



YEAR ON PLACEMENT



Name:
Company:
Job Title:

Anna Grasso
The Civil Service
Non-Domestic
Statistics Data Analyst

Why did you decide to do a placement?

I knew I wanted to study Economics at university, but I wasn't yet sure which career path I wanted to follow. Choosing a course with a placement year gave me the opportunity to explore my options in a real-world environment before making any long-term decisions. With more and more graduates entering the job market each year, I also saw the placement year as a way to gain a competitive edge and stand out to future employers.

Can you tell us a bit more about the organisation, your role and the skills you learned?

I worked for the Civil Service, specifically within the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), which is a department under His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). My main role involved contributing to the production and release of Official Statistics. This required me to develop technical skills in R, Power BI, and R Markdown. After just three months, I led my first publication, which included managing the process end-to-end, presenting findings to stakeholders at different levels, and ensuring the accuracy and quality of the data. I also responded to Freedom of Information Requests, answering statistical queries from the public and media. This involved interpreting data, ensuring clarity and accuracy, and presenting it in an accessible way to avoid misinterpretation. Throughout the placement, I developed a strong mix of technical and soft skills — including R, Python, Power BI, communication, teamwork, time management, and critical thinking.

How did you find the transition back to UEA and your final year generally?

I decided to move to Newcastle for my placement year, which felt like the right decision at the time. However, organising housing came with unexpected challenges. My original accommodation fell through, and I ended up staying in a hotel for a month. Eventually, I found a place

and housemates through SpareRoom, and things settled down. Returning to UEA, I already knew a few people who had also done placements — including someone based in Norwich — which really helped with sorting housing and adjusting back to university life. After working a 9–5 job for a year, I came back with a more structured routine and stronger time management skills, which helped me handle the demands of final year. I chose not to specialise or write a dissertation, as I felt staying with my placement employer full-time wasn't the right fit for my long-term goals. The experience gave me clarity, and I felt much more confident managing my workload.

What are your plans after graduation?

Instead of completing a dissertation, I found a subject that aligned more closely with my interests and decided to continue my education. I'll be studying a master's in Development at LSE.

What advice would you offer to students looking for a placement?

Placements are incredibly worthwhile. They offer valuable insight into the working world, the chance to experience life in a new city, and can ease financial pressures during your final year. If you're unable to commit to a full placement, summer internships are also a great way to gain experience. Whichever route you take, make sure to plan your accommodation early and put effort into connecting with others. Ultimately, a placement is what you make of it, the more you put in, the more you'll get out.

Want to know more about our placement programmes?

Go to www.uea.ac.uk/about/school-of-economics/careers-and-employability

A young man with dark curly hair is running towards the camera on a paved path. He is wearing a white t-shirt with 'uea+sport' and 'WELCOME WEEK COLOUR RUN 2024' printed on it, and black athletic pants. He is smiling and has his arms outstretched. A large cloud of bright orange powder is being thrown at him from the left, partially obscuring his lower body. To his right, a person with long reddish hair, wearing a blue shirt and a high-visibility yellow vest, is also running. In the background, other people are visible on the path, and a modern building is on the right. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Student Life



THE ECONOMICS SOCIETY

WORK HARD, PARTY HARDER

As the President of the Economics Society at the University of East Anglia, I can't help but feel a sense of pride in what's been an incredibly successful year for us. Our traditional Christmas Ball was a total hit, bringing together students, staff, and alumni in a festive celebration that was fantastic! Everyone had a great time, unwinding and celebrating the festive season in style.

More recently, we had our first ever End of Year Ball. Starting a new event is always a bit of a challenge, but the enthusiasm and positive feedback we got was amazing. Organised as a joint event with the Business Society (though, let's be honest, Eco did manage to outnumber them in attendees—no hard feelings, Business!), it was a perfect way to wrap up the academic year and celebrate the hard work and achievements of our ECO community. A big thank you to everyone who helped me in organising it and for both the schools of ECO and NBS for contributing to make the event possible.

These, alongside other successful social events held through the year, showed how much the Economics Society has grown and become more dynamic. They were great ways to strengthen our community spirit and showcase the vibrant social life we have alongside our academic pursuits.

Looking back, these events really capture the successes we've had throughout the year. I can only hope that they continue to thrive and do better in the years to come.

Claudio Barchiesi, BSc Economics, President of the Economics Society

A YEAR DOWN UNDER

“Studying abroad gave me a broader perspective on economics—and on myself. I gained more than anything I could’ve imagined”

Spending a year abroad during my degree always appealed to me, but I never expected how much it would challenge and shape me—both academically and personally. I chose to study at the University of Melbourne to gain a fresh perspective on economics at a highly respected university. I was curious to see how economic theory played out in a country with unique policy debates around housing, migration, and climate—all of which featured prominently in my studies. I was also excited to explore Australia’s beaches, vibrant cities, and outdoor lifestyle. What I’ve gained this year has far exceeded anything I imagined at the start of this journey.

Being so far from home brought challenges—homesickness, making new friends, adapting to different teaching styles and assessment formats, all while balancing study with exploring Melbourne. Navigating these challenges has taught me resilience, adaptability, and how to make the most of unfamiliar situations—skills that will benefit me at UEA and beyond.

One highlight was the chance to take modules outside economics, including marketing, German, and Indigenous studies. This broadened my understanding and enriched my academic experience. The Indigenous Australia module was particularly eye-opening, offering a deeper understanding of Aboriginal peoples’ cultural,



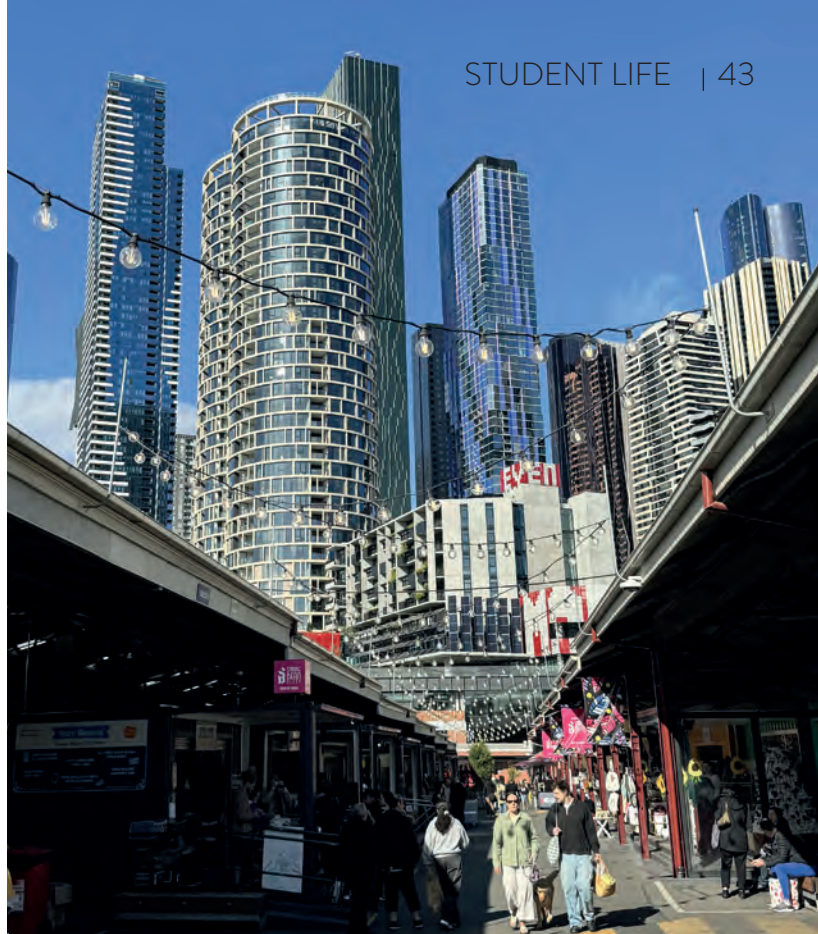
social, and political experiences. I also learned about the sophisticated economic systems of Aboriginal communities that existed long before British colonisation—systems still shaping debates today around land rights, resource management, and economic policy.

Outside the classroom, I travelled widely— from snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef to wandering Sydney’s streets and relaxing on Perth’s beaches. Closer to home, I loved exploring Melbourne’s many suburbs, trying new restaurants, and visiting more cafés than I can count.

Looking back, this year has been about much more than study. It’s given me space to grow, reflect, and become more independent. I’ve learnt to adapt, take risks, and embrace new experiences—both in and out of class. A year ago, I never imagined I’d bungy jump in New Zealand, but that leap (literally) showed me how much you can learn about yourself by stepping outside your comfort zone. I’ll return to UEA with a broader perspective on economics and the confidence to take on my final year—and whatever comes next.

If you ever get the chance to study abroad—take it. It’s not always smooth sailing, but it’s absolutely worth it. Some of the most valuable learning happens far beyond the classroom.

Katie Hale
Final year BSc Economics with a Year Abroad





A TURNING POINT YEAR

“This year at UEA has been far more than a study-abroad experience – it’s been a turning point.”

Coming to UEA for the final year of my undergraduate degree was both exciting and daunting. I arrived from the University of Grenoble in France, where I’d been studying a double degree in economics, management, and languages. I expected some differences, but I didn’t anticipate how meaningful this year would become.

The UEA campus reminded me of home with its green spaces, but the academic structure was quite different. In France, I was used to more classroom hours; at UEA, there’s a greater emphasis on independent learning. Despite fewer contact hours, I felt a stronger sense of connection with my lecturers – they were approachable, supportive, and open to ideas.

One of the most valuable experiences was taking part in a COIL project within the Global

Trade module, collaborating with students from the US, Spain, and the UK. It was challenging to coordinate across time zones and cultures, but it offered a glimpse into the kind of international teamwork increasingly common in global careers.

Another highlight was joining Norwich Economic Publications as Podcast Editor – a role I hadn’t initially aimed for but came to love. I produced episodes exploring economic topics through interviews with students and lecturers. It pushed me creatively and helped me grow in confidence, communication, and independence.

This year has been defined by unexpected opportunities, fresh perspectives, and personal growth. It’s been much more than just a year abroad – it’s been a turning point I’ll carry with me long after graduation.

Valentin Noel
Final-year exchange student from the University of Grenoble

EMPOWERED TO MAKE AN IMPACT

“Studying economics feels like a blessing—it gives me the tools to understand the world and the power to change it.”

Studying economics feels like a blessing. It gives me the tools to understand how decisions are made across the world—or how they should be made—to improve society, reduce inequality, tackle the climate crisis, and make a lasting difference for those who need it most. Economics equips us with a powerful toolkit for meaningful change.

For me, that empowerment starts in the lecture hall, where we’re constantly encouraged to think critically and solve problems—whether it’s deciding how to manage our budgets or exploring how governments should plan theirs. We dive into real-world issues, from income inequality to climate change, and learn to make informed decisions using data and evidence - like detectives or historians piecing together a bigger picture. Along the way, we develop a wide range of transferable skills that go far beyond the classroom.

What makes the experience even more inspiring is seeing where this journey can lead. We’re lucky to meet alumni throughout the year, especially at the big employability event in May, where students, staff, Advisory Board members and graduates come together. Hearing about



alumni’s stories is genuinely motivating. They tell us how studying economics helps with building successful careers, earning strong incomes, and — just as importantly—making better decisions in life and work, with impact that lasts.

Personally, I feel that same sense of empowerment when I’m deep into my studies as I do when I’m training or competing in Powerlifting. It’s about discipline, progress, and the belief that you can push yourself to achieve more—both intellectually and personally.

**Ruby Howard 2nd Year BSc
Economics and Finance**



FROM DELIVERIES TO DATA - OUR TAKE ON THE GIG ECONOMY

In March 2025, we—Chinemerem Ugwu, Violeta Bollano, and Will Lickorish—ditched lecture halls for a stage to discuss something we’ve all encountered: the gig economy. We began with a simple question: What is gig work?

It’s more than musicians at a gig. It’s short-term, on-demand work—found through platforms—like dog walking, coding, deliveries, and photography. In the UK, about 5–6 million people (5% of jobs) do gig work, and 80% of them already have full-time jobs.

The pros? We all admitted the flexibility is addictive. You choose your hours, you decide what work to take, and if you’ve got specialised skills, the pay can be great.

For students, parents, and carers, it’s a lifeline. And plenty of gigs don’t require formal training—you just need the right skill set.

The cons? Instability. No sick pay, pension, or guaranteed income. Burnout is common. Around 20% of gig workers rely on it entirely, often earning near or below minimum wage.

From the business side: It’s cost-efficient and scalable, but high turnover and training costs can hurt quality.

Wider economic impact: Violeta highlighted its role in lowering unemployment and boosting spending. Chinemerem raised concerns about lost tax revenue and rising welfare needs. Will noted new UK regulations aiming to ensure fairness in platform-based gig work.

Our verdict? We didn’t all agree. Some see freedom; others see fragility. But one thing’s clear: the gig economy is reshaping how we work—and it’s not going anywhere.



Bridging Academia and Business Through Innovative Dissertation Projects

We —Hamza, Sisi, and Anna partnered up with Norfolk Network, a Norwich-based organisation connecting companies from diverse sectors, to explore how strategic networking influences business performance.

Hamza Wajid: As an International student, I never imagined I'd be part of something like this. My project took me out of the library and into meeting rooms and events with Norfolk Network members, hearing their stories and learning from their journeys. It's been so much more than research — it's been about adapting to a new culture, building confidence, and bridging different worlds. Immersing myself in the local business community has made Norwich feel like home.

Sisi Xu: My dissertation explores how businesses at different stages adapt their networking strategies to unlock resources, build partnerships, and stay competitive under market pressures. Through literature review, data from the ONS, surveys and conversations with Norfolk Network members, I look at how strategies change across business stages. I now understand how managers make networking decisions in practice and how those choices affect performance.

Anna Jordi: When I was deciding on my dissertation topic, I knew I wanted it to be something one-of-a-kind. I wanted to create something with real-world impact. I surveyed several companies to understand how networking influences growth, innovation, and visibility. Working with a real organisation meant tailoring my methods to their needs and producing findings that could inform genuine business decisions.

This consultancy project has given us practical skills, valuable connections, and lasting memories, while showing us first-hand how theory applies in real business settings and how networking sparks collaboration, mutual support, and long-term relationships. We thank the School of Economics at UEA, and Lucy Marks from Norfolk Network to make this possible.

OUR GOALS FOR 2025/26



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS

PREPARE

**DATA-SAVVY, ADAPTABLE GRADUATES FOR AN
AI-DRIVEN ECONOMY**

EMPOWER

STUDENT VOICE AND COLLABORATION

ADVANCE

**EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND RESEARCH
IMPACT**

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