

A YEAR IN THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

**SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
NEWSLETTER 2024**

2024[★]

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ASPIRATIONS ELEVATED, IMPACT EXPANDED



At the beginning of this academic year, I reviewed the five-year report from our Strategic Advisory Board. The Board has significantly transformed our teaching practices by steering course development and assessment design to better align with industry needs, opening new employment opportunities for our students. The Board members have brought us to the frontier of professional practice, sharing invaluable insights on the rapid spread of AI technology and its impact (or lack thereof) on their businesses. Armed with this knowledge, our goal is to equip our students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the job market.

In addition to technical skills, successful economists must also possess strong communication abilities. The rich testimony from mentors and mentees at the Alumni Networking Event in London underscored this point. We must remember that learning extends beyond the lecture theatre to include networking and employability events organised by the School. With our alumni numbers growing, and their professional success expanding far and wide, we are determined to broaden opportunities for our current students through our global alumni community, thereby enhancing career prospects for all our students.

The greatest inspiration for me each year comes from our current students. This year, the NEP Board took our podcasts and publications to new heights, with pieces being featured on national platforms such as the Royal Economic Society's

Women's Committee. Many of our students initiated active fundraising campaigns, with their stories gaining local and national coverage. ECO was the best-represented School at the UEA's Change Makers Competition, demonstrating that entrepreneurship flourishes among economists. We received a remarkable six nominations at the TEAs, winning in four categories. Most of these awards were for our students, whose dedication and professionalism have created an empowering environment within the ECO Community and made the student voice a transformative force in School practices. As we adopt the new UEA model of student representation, our goal is to maintain the strategic and quality assurance roles effectively executed by our course representatives and to enhance the impact students have in integrating and communicating best practices. In doing so, we aim to elevate the Student Voice to a strategic partner in all School activities.

The reputation of our School is also closely tied to the research excellence of our academics. This year, ECO academics were awarded EU Horizon funds to work on AI projects supporting policymakers and UKRI funds to develop behavioural interventions to increase vaccination rates. They published in highly impactful economic journals, including *Labour Economics*, *Games and Economic Behavior*, *International Journal of Industrial Economics*, *The Econometrics Journal*, and *Environmental and Resource Economics*. We hosted two international research workshops focused on Time Series and on Behavioural Game Theory which drew participants from four continents. This growing reputation has led to an unprecedented number of international scholars—Fulbright, Chevening, and GREAT Britain recipients. Our aspiration is to further enhance our reputation, ensuring that the world-leading research conducted by our academics not only inspires a new generation of economists but also drives positive change in the world around us.

Emiliya Lazarova
Head of School

TOM WHITE:

SABBATICAL IN ECO



During last summer, we hosted Tom White, Head of Economics, Business and Politics, Norwich School. Here are some of his reflections during his time with us.

Time for a fresh perspective

Growth invariably demands transformation I am a schoolteacher responsible for 'A' level teaching in Economics, Business and Politics and was very fortunate to have the opportunity to spend a month on sabbatical at UEA in the summer of 2023. My goals were to understand ECO and NBS in terms of the undergraduate experience, the nature of postgraduate study research work, and how academic career tracks work. Having left university in 1991 I was keen to pose the question 'What is Economics?' to working academics and investigate why (in the England) the subject has a male bias. I had a rare opportunity for deeper reflection and reading to answer my own questions about the social purpose of academic enquiry and its relevance to contemporary problems. From a practical perspective I also wanted to come away with contacts and lesson ideas.

Social value?

Over the last decade, my confidence in the social value of Economics has wavered. I found myself questioning whether Economics was merely a mathematical abstraction devoid of real-world relevance. This led me to contemplate whether I should still encourage my students to study a subject that seemed disconnected from reality—especially in light of a parent suggesting that I should redirect students towards mathematics instead of my classroom. My initial scepticism toward macroeconomic insights had me wondering if psychology might provide better understanding than microeconomics.

All my conversations at UEA were characterised by warmth, generosity, curiosity and intellectual excitement and it was a real privilege to share an office with the legendary Bob Sugden. Before lunch on my first day, I had watched PhD discussions about research being prepared for publication and held conversations that ranged from Henry George to Amartya Sen. I really enjoyed the sensation of being the learner and trying to remind myself of concepts while processing new ideas. I am very grateful to the many people who have shown me the way. My stay in ECO was encouraged by Professor Emiliya Lazarova and my long-time collaboration with the department is largely thanks to Dr Mike Brock.

Diversity in recruitment

I have been trying to improve on my approach to recruitment and pupil progression in Economics. As a male non-mathematician, I haven't been as effective as I would like to be in encouraging young women into the subject. Additionally, I haven't really understood the quantitative skills needed to conduct effective research. My working hypothesis was that young women aren't just deterred from economics by visions of City trading rooms, but by the view that the subject is 'too mathematical'. I changed my mind by learning that there is strong recruitment by women on to STEM subjects at undergraduate level. Although I am numerate, I was advantaged by undergraduate study on a BA economics programme and so I appreciate the benefits to ECO of admitting pupils without Maths at 'A' level to increase the range of their intake. I can see that this presents a differentiation challenge (which is typical of all teaching situations) and it presents an extra burden on teaching staff. I know that my econometric skills are almost non-existent, and any further postgraduate work I might do would require me to address this shortcoming as a priority.

I would love to do that as I can see how technical and mathematical rigour makes economics more powerful and differentiates economics from other social sciences.

An advantage of the diverse international backgrounds of ECO is the realisation that the 'women in economics problem' is culturally specific to England (and I do mean England, not the UK). A lack of role models was cited several times as a key issue. My conversations on this topic often connected to my 'what is economics?' questions. Perhaps part of the gender gap might be explained by the perception of the subject as a route into the finance industry, where the nature of employment may discourage some women. I was advised to stress that the subject is about decision making and emphasise that hard work is the key determinant of success rather than 'talent'.

Career progression

I hadn't given much attention to academic careers before my stay at ECO and so I learned a lot as several of my conversations covered the challenges of managing research and teaching career tracks. I often think about the tensions and contradictions bound up in meritocracy and status, so it was interesting to explore that for a university academic's perspective. I learned about a hierarchy of journals, the need to be on a cutting edge of research and for 'name power' in getting fair consideration for acceptance in the most prestigious journals. It's a far harder career path than I imagined. I was able to get a much clearer picture of what a career as a professional economist looks like, from the choice of public facing or finance roles to the split between academia versus government and central banks. I was very impressed by the intellectual diversity in ECO and the bewildering range of research across a huge variety of topics, alongside its specialisms in



experimental economics and competition policy. I can sense some of the difficulties of operating in a very competitive recruitment environment and some of the problems that creates for people working in the sector.

Practical solutions

It was important to include a practical element to my sabbatical so that I would return to school with ideas for new classroom resources. During my stay at UEA I invited the Norwich School Year 12 Business and Economics pupils to the NEWSCL to experience experimental economics by playing through several activities including versions of the Dictator Game and similar activities. I look forward to new collaborations with several academics from ECO. I am very grateful to other academics at UEA who gave me lots of inspiration and classroom ideas. My own reading in Business focusses heavily on ESG and Finance. It is my belief that accountants will play a big role in saving the world and this was reinforced by the conversations I had in TEC with Dr Ellington and his Triple Bottom Line accountancy business. I got lots of advice on teaching entrepreneurship and have come away with some terrific new tools to help pupils cultivate creativity.

In the end I was left with fresh insights and new questions. I have a new appreciation of the demands on academics and the problems in cutting through from research to public acceptance, policy and implementation. I was impressed by the interdisciplinary role of contemporary economics. Now that I am back in the classroom, many of these reflections have been very helpful already, and I am grateful that my UEA sabbatical far exceeded my expectations.

Tom White



TRANSFORMING EDUCATION AWARDS

The Transforming Education Awards returned to campus on 9 May for the first in-person event since 2019. The awards, which were expertly organised by the Students' Union, saw more than 150 staff and students gather to recognise the exceptional impact of the nominees and winners across a broad range of categories.

We were thrilled to get so many nominations in ECO, a clear reflection of the commitment of both our students and staff. We narrowly missed being awarded the School of the Year for the third time but congratulations to the following winners:

School Partnership Officer of the Year
WINNER: Prof Duncan Watson

Duncan was nominated for his complete dedication to the betterment of the student experience. He has supported the fundamental embedding of student voices in decisions at every level of the School, resulting in substantial changes to how the School operates. His work is recognised across the institution as best practice and is being used as a blueprint to better student experience across UEA.

Course Rep of the Year
WINNER: Ivan Hung

Ivan has been widely regarded as being a pivotal figure within the School and the University, championing at all levels a better student experience. He helped to develop and implement a dedicated student voice feedback category across all modules. He has also been recognised across the University, working with the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning, and has provided valuable insight. Ivan has had an exceptional impact on the student experience, both in the School and more widely at UEA.

Academic Community Contribution Award
WINNER: Claudio Barchiesi

Claudio has been recognised mainly through his work as a PAL mentor. As part of this team, he volunteered his time supporting first-year students through a particularly challenging module. He was the most proactive and showed impeccable leadership skills. Students on the module provided very positive feedback, and they also came to the final session on the module to encourage students to attend. He was described as a privilege to have in the School.

Academic Society Partnership Award
WINNER: School of Economics and Economics Society

Economics have been recognised working closely with their societies, as well as attending and supporting events throughout the year. They also make a significant effort to include them in SSLCs and generally use them as a vessel for student voice.



SHORTLISTED NOMINATIONS:

EMPLOYABILITY & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AWARD

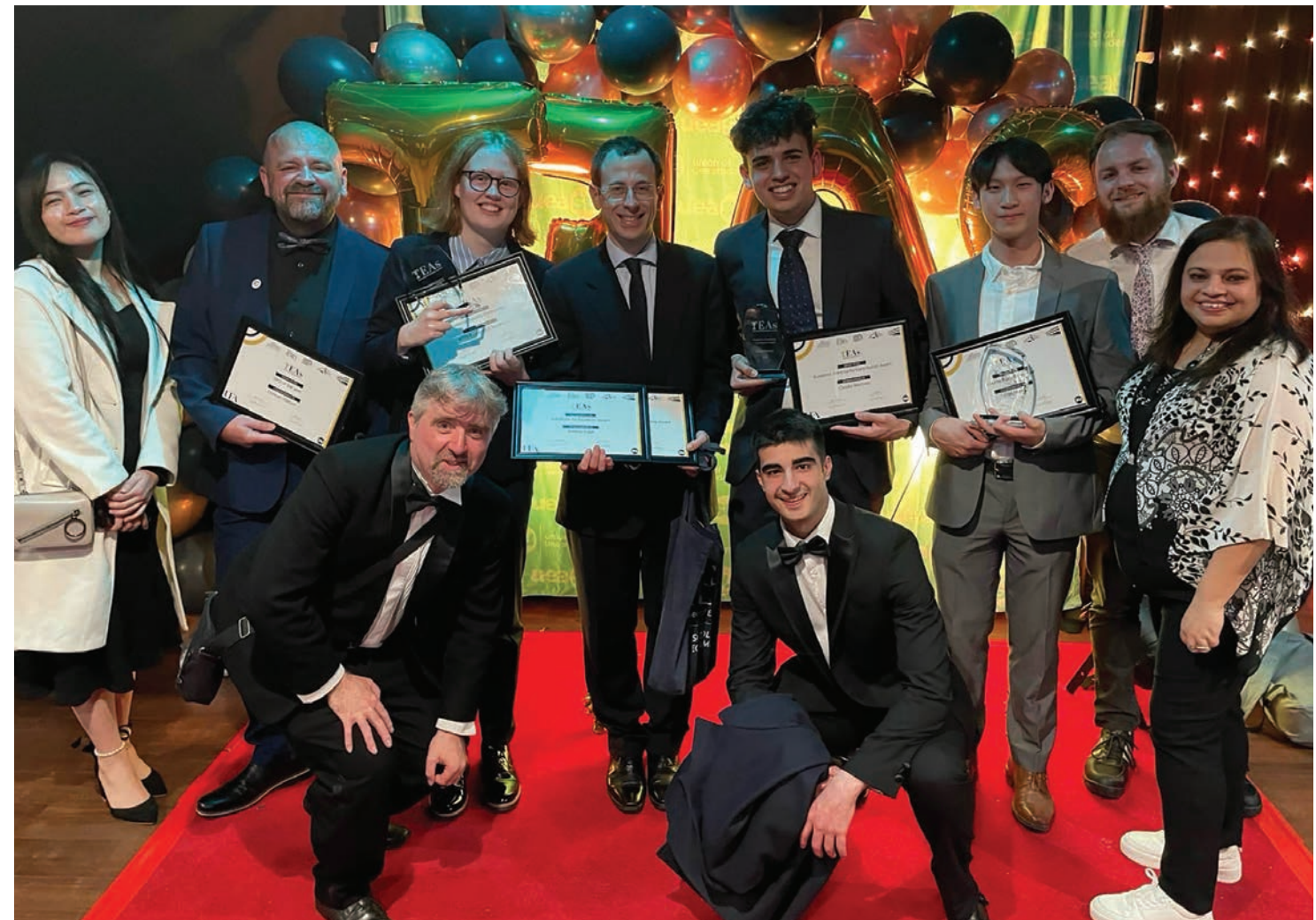
– Andrea Calef ECO

SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

– School of Economics

ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS AWARD

– Andrea Calef ECO





ZIGGURAT CHALLENGE 2023-2024

This year marked the 21st season of the Ziggurat Challenge and was another successful campaign for ECO. Building on last year's success, where we won three events and came second overall, this year we won a whopping eight events (three in the autumn and five in the spring).

This represented our best ever return across a range of events, including walking football, short tennis, sitting volleyball, netball, kwik cricket and pool (these are proudly displayed in our trophy cabinet in the foyer of the Elizabeth Fry Building). Unfortunately, it was not quite enough to beat BIO but it was very, very close – only nine points in it. To put this into context, three spectators at one event would equate to one Ziggurat point. Therefore, had we simply got six more spectators at five of the events we would have won overall! The message is that you don't even need to participate to help ECO win!

Emiliya came third in the Most Sporting Head category, and I managed to win the Staff Champion for the third year running. My commitment to the Ziggurat Challenge remains as high as ever. So much so that I even celebrated my 50th birthday at one of the events!

We look forward to renewing our rivalry with BIO in the autumn.

Pete Dawson



FURTHER INFORMATION

Click here to find out more about the Ziggurat Challenge and how you can get involved.



Celebrating the Annual Economics Society Christmas Ball at the Assembly House

ECO SOCIETY BALL

The School was delighted to support the Economics Society in the organisation and funding for the annual ECO Winter Ball. Staff and students dressed to impress for the event held at the Assembly House on 6th December. This type of event gives students the opportunity to get to know their lecturers in a more relaxed environment and a chance to celebrate the end of the autumn semester! We look forward to working with the new members of the Economics Society Committee in 2024/25 and to putting on more events open to all ECO students and staff.

STUDENT BLOGS

We've had some brilliant students blogs this year. We also have a new Meet the Students series!

<https://stories.uea.ac.uk/engagement>

CHECK THEM OUT HERE

harteuea.org



SUSTAINABILITY, DIVERSITY, AI AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

2023-2024 has been an exciting year for the NEP. This year, we focused on sustainability, diversity, and AI and the creative economy. We have had a great time writing about these themes in differing contexts, as we believe, that these themes are crucial to making a secure and prosperous future.

We continued thinking about these themes during our annual NEP essay competition. There was a brilliant response with great essays that feature in our first publication. Many perspectives and opinions were discussed which became very insightful and interesting reads. I would like to congratulate the winners of the undergraduate competition: Mo Abiodun (1st place), Claudio Barchiesi (2nd place), and Dhruv Ghandi (3rd place). I would also like to congratulate the winner of the postgraduate competition, Gurpreet Singh. All entries can be found in volume 27.

We have been able to carry on with the podcast series. So far this year, we have released 2 podcasts with very different focuses. One on the experience of a black economist and the other with graduate experience in a workplace. We are also looking forward to reading the book reviews that will be coming in soon.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported/ contributed to the NEP this year. There has been an amazing response from both students and staff to the NEP which I greatly appreciate; we couldn't have done it without you! This support has allowed us to create interesting publications and podcasts alike. I believe the NEP will continue to grow and I wish all future boards the best in continuing the NEP name.

Daisy J Groet (BSc Economics, Editor 2023/24)



READ THE NEP JOURNAL

www.uea.ac.uk/about/school-of-economics/norwich-economic-publications/volume-archive



LISTEN TO THE NEP PODCASTS

www.youtube.com/channel/UCyHVUxbtx8zPtkNA9D2EcjA



EVENTFUL INSPIRATION, CONNECTION AND MEMORIES

Our Alumni Networking Event in London on Friday 26th April was a huge success, bringing together our ECO Advisory Board, Alumni, Students and Staff for an evening filled with inspiration, connections, and memories.

The Panel Discussion was a highlight, with our alumni/mentors sharing their unique career journeys and invaluable advice on job hunting. It was truly motivating for our students to hear that there is a place for everyone, and all it takes is perseverance and determination. The atmosphere was electric as our students asked thought-provoking questions and engaged in productive discussions.

It was heartwarming seeing participants reconnecting and making new connections in the networking event after. As the evening continued, the friendly and welcoming atmosphere only grew stronger.

A huge thank you to all who attended and contributed to the success of the event. A special thank you to our ECO alumni Mark Edwards for agreeing to participate in this event and thank you to Andrea Calef and Ritchie Woodard for their extensive support. We know that

there are attendees who travelled from overseas just for this as well! We are beyond grateful and we can't wait to continue providing these opportunities in the future.



GRADUATION 2024

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF OUR ECO GRADUATES



The ECO Graduation ceremony on Monday 15th July was a memorable event filled with joy and pride. We were delighted to see our graduates, accompanied by their loved ones, celebrate this significant milestone in their lives.

We also organised a pre-ceremony event so graduates have an opportunity to celebrate with School staff, peers, friends and family. The atmosphere was electric as the whole EFRY foyer was filled with excitement and anticipation.

During the ceremony, we were honoured to have our Chancellor acknowledge the crucial role played by our ECO Strategic Advisory Board in preparing our graduates for the real world. Their guidance and support have been instrumental in shaping our graduates into successful professionals.

A special congratulations to students Iram Akhter and Harrison White for winning the School of Economics Prize for distinguished performance in the Final Assessment. Your hard work and dedication have paid off, and we are proud to have you as part of our ECO family.

As we reflect on the journey of our graduates, we are reminded of the challenges they have faced and overcome during their time at the University. From living independently for the first time to balancing work and family commitments, these students have truly shown resilience and determination.

To all of our graduates, this degree is not just a piece of paper, but a symbol of your perseverance and dedication. You have proven that with hard work and determination, anything is possible. Congratulations and well done to you all!



UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE BBQ'S

SIZZLING CELEBRATIONS

In ECO, our students always come first.

As another academic year comes to a close, we organised a barbeque event at The Eagle Pub in Norwich for our Undergraduate students, and also a separate event for our PGT and PGR students. We wanted everyone to have the opportunity to celebrate together and unwind at the end of the academic year.

Both evenings were filled with laughter, good food, and great company. We couldn't have asked for a better way to bid farewell to exams and welcome the summer season.

This past year has been filled with endless cups of coffee, late-night study sessions, and stressful moments, but our students persevered and achieved amazing accomplishments. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of them and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for them.



EXPERIMETRICS SUMMER SCHOOL

Professor Peter Moffatt's Experiments Summer School this year was held on 15th and 16th May.

The course was divided into three parts:

In the first part, non-parametric and parametric tests of experimental treatments was covered. There was a focus on the use of power analysis, with the principal objective of finding the required sample size for a planned experiment. The power command in STATA was used heavily. The Monte Carlo method was also taught, and applied to situations in which the power command could not be used.

The second part of the course was concerned with the problem of estimating preference parameters using fully structural models. This was done in two contexts: estimation of risk attitude using data on lottery choices; and estimation of social preference parameters using distribution experiments.

The final part of the course considered estimation of finite mixture models, with applications to depth-of-reasoning models and public goods games.

The Summer School was very popular and had a real mixture of students from different universities around the UK. Despite the gloomy weather, both days were filled with smiles and laughter. Everyone's enthusiasm and eagerness to learn made the event a huge success.

It was wonderful to see our ECO students being very friendly, trying to make other students from other universities feel welcome.

We are beyond grateful for the amazing feedback we received from our participants:

"The content was amazing and I would definitely recommend the summer school."

"The pace and quality of the instructor, as well as the width and depth of the contents both were excellent."

"The organization and communication have been very clear and allowed a smooth landing to the summer school."

These kind words mean the world to us and motivate us to keep bringing our students top-notch educational experiences. And finally, a Big thank you to Professor Peter Moffatt for organising this event!

WORKSHOPS

4TH DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY WORKSHOP

The School of Economics (ECO) in collaboration with the University of Exeter and Loughborough University, organised a successful 4th edition of the Discrimination and Diversity workshop on 2 and 3 July.

Keeping true to its objective of being an inclusive workshop, scholars from around the world tuned in to outstanding presentations on issues relating to access to healthcare, stereotypes, integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, inequalities in education and socioeconomic outcomes of LGBTQ+ individuals. Five paper sessions were dedicated to each of these themes and chaired by experts in the respective areas, and our program featured presenters from the United States, Europe, Singapore and Australia!

The workshop also featured two special sessions by prominent senior researchers. Professor Jessica Pan from the National University of Singapore presented her body of work on the evolution of gender in the labour market, while Professor Sigrid Suetens from Tilbury University discussed the evidence of taste-based ethnic discrimination in Europe.

The workshop also presented two Outstanding Paper Awards, jointly sponsored by the organising institutions, with the aim of recognising the outstanding work by early-career researchers. The recipients of the two awards are:

1. Gaia Dossi (LSE), who provides large scale and convincing evidence on the racial bias in medical research and innovation.
2. Frederica Meluzzi (CREST), who shows that exposure to female peers born in areas with an egalitarian gender culture significantly increases women's labour supply.

The success of this year's edition sealed the collaboration between ECO at UEA and the Economics and Business departments at University of Loughborough and University of Exeter, ensuring the continuity of this extremely popular workshop.



TIME SERIES WORKSHOP

The second edition of School of Economics' Time Series Workshop on 22nd and 23rd May 2024.

The workshop brought together academics and policy makers from a variety of European institutions such as Goethe University Frankfurt, Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona), University of Bern and Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, as well as The Bank of France and The Bank of England.

The event provided a forum to investigate recent theoretical and empirical developments in time series econometrics.

The Best Paper Award was awarded to José Nicolás Rosas (Pompeu Fabra University) for his excellent presentation.

The highly anticipated workshop was a huge success and the diversity of participants made for some thought-provoking discussions with a variety of perspectives. One participant said 'I know it's crazy but it's so worth it to travel all the way from Germany for this because it is a great workshop!'

A big thank you to our keynote speakers Marek Jarocinski and Dimitris Korobilis for agreeing to present in this workshop, and Martin Bruns for organising the workshop. And of course, a huge shoutout to everyone who participated!



10TH ANNUAL

BEHAVIOURAL GAME THEORY WORKSHOP

The 10th annual Behavioural Game Theory workshop took place on 8 and 9 July at Earlham Hall. On the theme of 'Experimental methods', Alistair Wilson (University of Pittsburgh) started the workshop with a keynote lecture on 'Behavioural Incentive compatibility'.

The Monday included talks on beliefs and belief elicitation and closed with a panel discussion, which elaborated on topics such as the replication crisis, the usefulness of pre-registration, AI bots in online experiments and more.

Victoria Prowse (Purdue University) began Tuesday with a keynote lecture on "Empirical Analysis in Experiment Economics" and elaborated on the influence of cognitive skills, in particular judgement, on success in strategic interaction. Overall, the two days saw many interesting methodological innovations that illuminated the influence of friendship on markets, secret approval of "love marriage" in India, warnings of price rises as self-fulfilling prophecies and the ability of Large Learning Models to classify text.



BINOMA WORKSHOPS

Our colleague Arnold Polanski co-organises the Bilbao-Norwich-Malaga (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 2024 (8th edition) took place at the University of Rennes (France) and was organised by the Faculty of Economics (Faculté de Sciences Économiques ou Faculté d'Économie). We expect to hold the next workshop at University of Granada (Spain) in June 2025.

For more information please contact a.polanski@uea.ac.uk.



UNODC

ANTI-CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC CRIME



ECO's Oana Borcan had the honour of being invited to open the 4th Anti-Corruption Academic Symposium (9-10th December) that was organised in conjunction with the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (CoSP10).

This year the CoSP and the Academic Symposium took place in Atlanta, US. The symposium was facilitated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and it showcased worldwide research on the latest challenges and solutions to fighting corruption and promoting a culture of integrity globally.

As a member of the opening panel, Oana reported the recommendations addressed to the State Parties that anti-corruption scholars around the world synthesised in the Road Map document for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The UNCAC is the only legally binding agreement that stipulates the commitment of signatory states (140 countries, 190 state parties) to fight corruption. The recommendations advanced in the Road Map were the results of three intense Regional Dialogues facilitated by the UNODC (Latin America, Africa and Europe-Asia), which brought together academics, civil society and youth to discuss the next priorities in advancing the implementation of UNCAC by member states.

Prior to the CoSP, Oana had been invited as a representative of the academia for Regional Dialogue for Asia and Europe at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna. Oana acted as a rapporteur for the academic working group and presented the group's recommendations for furthering UNCAC in plenary. The recommendations were included in the anticorruption Road Map document that was presented to UN member states at the UN CoSP in December 2023.



CCC CONFERENCE 2024

CBESS and ECO proudly hosted this year's CCC Conference on the 13th and 14th of May 2024 at the University of East Anglia.

The CCC Conference brought together colleagues from three prominent behavioural science research centres: CeDEx (University of Nottingham), CREED (University of Amsterdam), and CBESS (University of East Anglia).

Organised by PhD students for PhD students, the CCC Conference was a 2-day event dedicated to students to present their research, share their latest findings, and receive valuable feedback from their peers. CBESS was excited to continue the tradition of the CCC Conference, supporting the next generation of researchers in their academic journeys and strengthening the bonds between our collaborative centres.



THE DECISIVE MIND

Sheheryar Banuri's book 'The Decisive Mind' has been shortlisted for the best Behavioural Science Book Award 2024.

The book, which has been translated into many different languages, has been making waves in the world of behavioural science and is being read by people all over the globe! Sheheyar also gave an exclusive talk to our students, unveiling the secrets to masterful decision making.

In the 'The Decisive Mind', Sheheyar explores how understanding your decision-making process can propel you towards your goals. Through real-world examples and his own groundbreaking research, you'll learn how to understand your own process of decision-making, and start to make simple, effective, and efficient choices to get you one step closer to achieving whatever you aspire to.

What You Will Discover:

- Key insights from behavioral economics to revolutionise your decision-making.
- A new framework that empowers you to take control of your choices.
- A simple program that sets you on a path to a more decisive you.



ALL ROUND INNOVATION

In ECO we are very proud of the continued development of our modules and courses and right now is no exception – change which, as ever, is developed by listening to and consulting with our students.

Among our new starters in 2023-4 were the first cohort of students on our new course MSc Economics and Data Science. This new master's complements the recently opened course MSc Behavioural Economics and Data Science – and together – supported by some new bespoke modules, allow research strengths within the School to offer masters degrees that offer highly relevant training, either for students looking to go straight into employment, or for those looking to pursue a research degree.

Innovation aplenty continued across our undergraduate modules too, but a special shout out this year goes to Stefania and Sheheryar for the mini conference they organised for the first time on their final-year module The Behavioural Economics of Inequality. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend this event and it was a real pleasure to listen to the enthusiastic and informed way our students presented their research to an audience made up of ECO students and academics, as well as some external experts.

The behavioural theme continues from September 2024 as we welcome our first cohort of undergraduates onto BSc Economics, Behaviour and Data Science. This new course, which can also be taken with a year on a work placement, or with a year studying abroad, is supported by some exciting changes across our undergraduate programme, changes that

start to benefit our existing students from 2024-5. Notable highlights include a new final-year module in Behavioural Finance, taught by Ariel, which generated a lot of excitement at this year's Module Fair, already becoming one of our larger modules. This completes a suite of behavioural modules covering economics, inequality, and finance, which together really leverage the School's research strengths in these areas, consistent with a key pedagogic goal of the School around research-driven teaching. And finally, all our undergraduate courses benefit from 2024-5 through some sweeping changes to the teaching of econometrics.

But, as ever, there will be no pause in the continued innovation, with plans already underway to work through the summer to create the new module Introduction to Programming and Data Science, which will be taught by Fuyu. This new module will run for the first time in 2025-6, so work is underway now to get things ready for the February Module Choice Fair, where students from across our courses will select this new module as part of their second year.

With invaluable help along the way from our Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), our student-led Education Practice & Innovation Committee (EPIC), and of course all the responses to our module and course surveys, our students play a crucial role in our continuing effort to make the ECO experience the best it can be. We can't do this without our students – so a big thank you to them for their continued support!

James Watson, ECO Teaching Director



GWP (GOVERNMENT, WELFARE AND POLICY) POSTER EVENT

BRINGING ECONOMICS TO THE PUBLIC

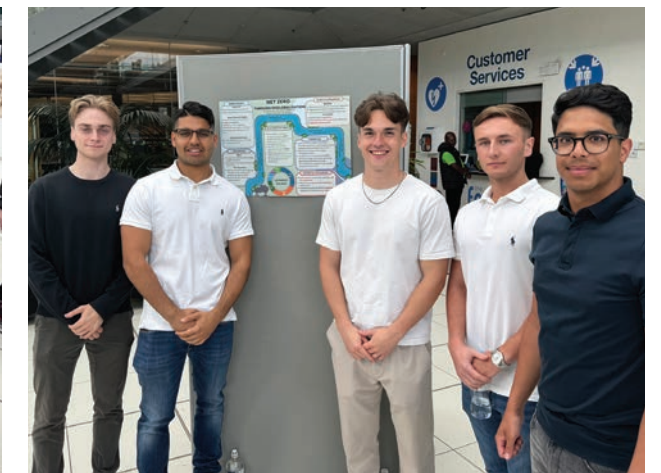
In May 2024, our third-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Government, Welfare and Policy module once again presented their economic policy analysis posters to the public in The Forum in the centre of Norwich.

Students were tasked by the module organiser, Dr Luca Zamboni, to form groups and research a public policy of their choice – local, national, or international – from an economic viewpoint, minus the economics jargon. They then had to bring together their findings and recommendations in an eye-catching poster, explain it and answer questions from the public. The event was supported by two representatives from Risk & Policy Analysts (coincidentally two alumni of ours) who gave feedback to each poster group and offered a fantastic prize of a fast-track job application to RPA for the members behind the winning posters.

The event was a big success thanks to the hard work and overwhelming enthusiasm of our students. They did themselves and UEA proud! We had colourful and creative posters, impassioned explanations, an engaged audience of students, faculty and the general public, and many new insights. Following the recent spike in energy and goods' prices, as well as the increasingly apparent adverse effects of climate change, this year's hot topics revolved around policies to alleviate poverty and inequality, as well as strategies put in place by different countries to achieve the net-zero emission targets set out in the aftermath of the Paris Agreement.

Here's hoping that the great work of the students at the School of Economics shows more young people how they could make the world a better place to live in as economists and inspires them to choose our subject for their future studies.

Dr Luca Zamboni





STUDENT-LED MINI-CONFERENCE

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS OF INEQUALITY

Student-led Mini-Conference for Behavioural Economics of Inequality to showcase innovative teaching practices.

The assessment structure of Behavioural Economics of Inequality featured a student-led mini-conference where students presented a variety of innovative interventions aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion in higher education and the workplace. The conference hosted presentations on a range of topics, from the use of AI to mitigate biases in recruitment processes to student-led webinars aimed at increasing diversity in economics, from peer mentorships to training programs aimed at reducing the gender leadership gap observed in the workplace.

The event was attended by over 30 participants from both the University and external organisations, including representatives from the NHS, Norfolk County Council, the Royal Economic Society, and various private sector women's groups. Students' experience was enhanced by the friendly atmosphere and the active audience participation, with attendees directing numerous, and at times challenging questions to the presenters.

The coffee breaks and refreshments at the end of the event provided a further layer of realism to the conference offering in addition valuable networking opportunities to the presenters. Because of the high quality of the presentations and students' engagement with the audience, one group was invited to present at the next Royal Economic Society Inclusion & Diversity Network event, while another was put in touch with Discover Economics to discuss their webinar idea.

Other than providing valuable experience to the students in engaging with a larger audience and in refining their presentation skills, this made the module material and learning experience more engaging for the students. Finally, by facilitating student-led interventions and presentations, the School of Economics contributed to the dissemination of cutting-edge research and practical solutions in the field of inequality and discrimination highlighting the School's commitment to a more diverse and inclusive environment.

Stefania Sitzia



TACKLING GLOBAL QUESTIONS THROUGH AN ECO-COIL

During my exchange at the UEA, I participated in an ECO-COIL (Collaborative Online Learning) project, a challenging international experience that also involved students from the University of Navarra and the University of Illinois.

This project provided us with the opportunity to explore the significance of 'home market labour standards' in the context of a global economy. Specifically, our work focused on "A Minimum Wage Paradox? Balancing Livelihoods and Economics".

The Academic Project

The topic has been approached from the perspective of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), analysing its implications in different countries such as the US, Nigeria, Italy, Brazil, and Japan. Our findings reveal considerable variability in outcomes across these regions. For instance, in the United States, the minimum wage has been instrumental in lifting approximately 900,000 people out of poverty, despite mixed impacts on employment. In Brazil, minimum wage increases have significantly reduced poverty and improved income distribution. Conversely, in Nigeria, while the increase in minimum wage raises low-income workers' earnings, inflation erodes these gains, diminishing overall welfare. In Japan, minimum wage hikes have notably reduced wage inequality among women, with minimal job losses. In Italy, the absence of a statutory minimum wage is mitigated by national collective labour agreements, although not all workers are covered.

Our conclusion is that while minimum wages can elevate living standards, reduce inequality, increase purchasing power and boost employee morale, they

also raise labour costs. This can lead to inflation, higher business expenses, and potentially increased unemployment and poverty. Thus, there is significant divergence in results, reflecting diverse economies and complex applications of minimum wage policies across different socioeconomic contexts.

Learning and Impact

I decided to participate in this experience "for a bit of fun" (as we would say in Italy). Being an Erasmus student, I wanted to experiment and approach an educational method I had never encountered before. As it turned out, the ECO-COIL was the best choice I could have made for that. This international project helped me develop strong teamwork skills, improved my organisation and communication skills, and allowed me to expand my network easily and enjoyably.

At the beginning, I was scared because I did not know what to expect, or if I would be capable of completing the tasks. However, I overcame all my fears and broadened my perspective - all while having fun and engaging with peers on an equal footing. This was a project that required much more commitment than a regular class assignment, but it was completely worth the effort! My teammates and I overcame many barriers: we debated, often clashed over differing opinions, and we conquered time zone differences by meeting online at the most unusual hours. Yet, despite our different backgrounds, each of us managed to carve out our own space in the project and provide valuable contributions.

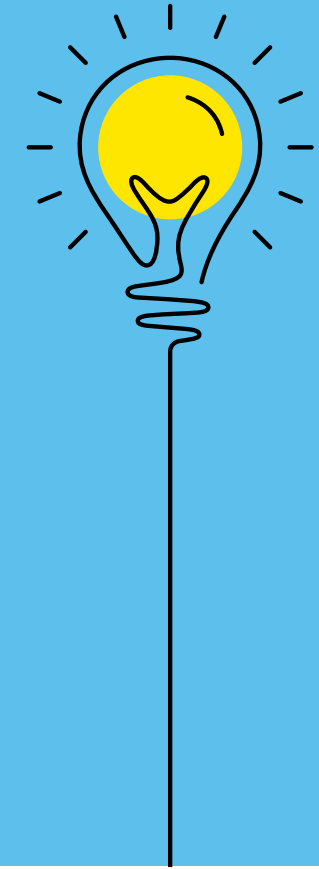
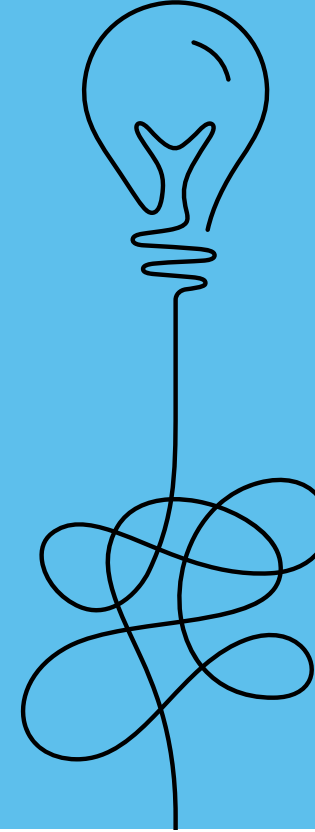
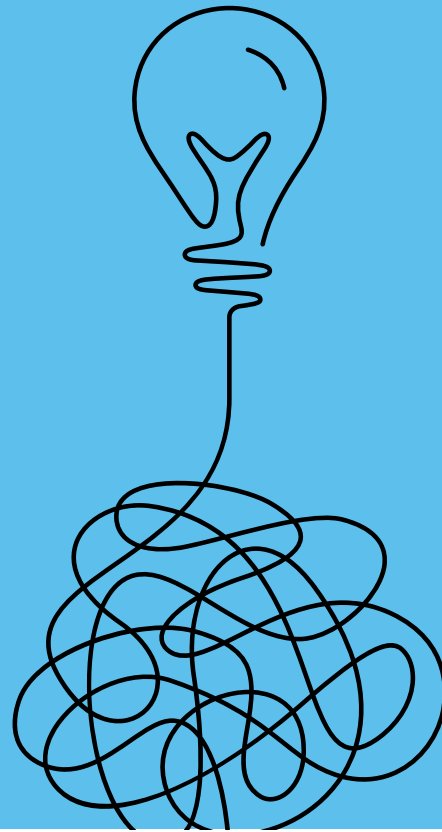
It was, without a doubt, the most educational, stimulating, and challenging experience of my entire academic career. And I would definitely not change my choice of doing this again, for anything in the world.

Susanna Marchioni



ILLUMINATING MINDS:

THE DAWN OF HARTE UEA



The establishment of HARTE UEA at the University of East Anglia this year marks a notable development within the School of Economics. Standing for the Hub for Academic Research & Teaching in Economics, HARTE UEA is dedicated to advancing innovative teaching methods that integrate educational theory with practical application, thereby enhancing how economics is taught and learned.

This initiative is driven by our goal to move further beyond traditional teaching methods, fostering an environment where students actively engage with economic concepts, enhancing their critical thinking abilities and preparing them as industry leaders. Learn more about it at harteuea.org.

In its inaugural year, HARTE UEA has begun to establish a diverse research portfolio, with several studies published on enhancing the student experience. This includes a comprehensive analysis of student evaluations of teaching, where identified gaps led to the development of advanced models for assessing lecturer performance. We have also developed a bespoke method for analysing the National Student Survey results, creating an index that has received national press attention for its thorough assessment of student satisfaction. These efforts are aimed at refining our measurement of the student experience, deepening our understanding of its strengths, and identifying areas for improvement. Concurrently, we are addressing barriers that may deter students from pursuing economics, particularly by making technical training more approachable and engaging. Our 'research-driven' learning framework has improved on how technical training can be delivered, transforming passive lectures into dynamic, interactive learning experiences.

Looking ahead, we have several ongoing education research projects that aim to further enhance the learning experience:

1. **Balancing Books & Bills** [Lead Researchers: Fabio Arico, Ritchie Woodard & Laura Harvey]: This project investigates the economic pressures that force students to balance work with their studies. It identifies a wide range of motivations, from covering essential living costs to supporting lifestyle choices and advancing career ambitions. The insights from this study are informing policy discussions aimed at making higher education more accessible and adaptable, taking into account the diverse needs and circumstances of the student population.
2. **Bridging Educational Gaps** [Lead Researchers: Fabio Arico, Ritchie Woodard & Laura Harvey]: This initiative focuses on addressing educational attainment gaps and upholds the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Utilising advanced empirical methods, we've gained valuable insights that enhance our understanding of these gaps and help us develop effective interventions. This research not only informs our internal strategies, but also contributes to broader national conversations over equity in education.

3. **AI Transformative Education** [Lead Researchers: Oana Borcan, Ritchie Woodard & Bahar Ghezelayagh]: This project represents a significant advancement in learning-enhanced technology by incorporating AI tools like ChatGPT into our teaching methodologies. It investigates how AI can enrich teaching methods and addresses the integration challenges these technologies pose within traditional educational settings. Our findings will provide crucial evaluations of AI's potential and limitations in academia, offering key insights for effectively deploying these tools to better educational results.

Reflecting on our progress, it's evident that the achievements at HARTE UEA have been made possible by the unwavering support from the entire economics community, including both our staff and students. We deeply value this collaborative effort, which is fundamental to our ongoing success. As we continue to advance economic education, we invite you to stay engaged with us at HARTE UEA, where we are committed to delivering an experience in economics that both informs and inspires.

By Duncan Watson and Ritchie Woodard

EPIC ECLIPSES:



ILLUMINATING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the School of Economics stands out as a pioneer in innovative teaching and learning strategies. At the heart of this transformative journey is the Education Practice and Innovation Committee (EPIC), a student-led group renowned not just for its progressive approach but also for integrating student feedback into our curriculum.

EPIC's commitment to harnessing student insights and advancing pedagogical methods has been crucial in defining our educational identity and was instrumental in shaping HARTE UEA, solidifying our status as leaders in economics education.

REPORT 1: EPIC drafted three insightful reports this year, each aimed at enhancing different aspects of our academic offerings. The first report focused on a comprehensive analysis of student satisfaction feedback. The insights gathered indicated high levels of contentment among our students, yet they also provided valuable suggestions that led to further improvements, such as the enhanced use of rubrics. These adjustments have clarified expectations and better aligned assessments with student understanding, thereby paving a clearer path to academic success.

REPORT 2: This report tackled the challenge of creating authentic group assessments. Prompted by recommendations from our Advisory Board, EPIC initiated a pilot project on 'authentic' group assessments to test theoretical knowledge while building essential skills in teamwork, leadership, and practical application. These initiatives ensure our graduates are not only well-versed in economics but also immediately effective in any professional setting.

REPORT 3: The third report focused on optimising the balance and fairness of assessment loads across courses. Driven by a commitment to enhance course-level outcomes, this study has spurred further strategic discussions on improving assignment distribution. These efforts are primarily motivated by the goal of helping students perform optimally without the undue stress of disproportionate assessment burdens.

The collaborative spirit fostered by EPIC has resonated throughout UEA, with our close staff-student relationships gaining broader recognition. Other Schools are now looking to replicate our model, aiming to match the proactive and inclusive atmosphere we've cultivated. This environment supports not only academic excellence but also the personal growth and well-being of our students.

Further testament to the effectiveness and impact of EPIC's initiatives comes from the Student Union, where two of our committee members were honoured. Receiving awards for EPIC's outstanding contributions, these recognitions marked the largest number of accolades given to a single committee this year.

As we look forward to another academic year, EPIC continues to stand at the forefront of educational innovation. With each report, recommendation, and revision, EPIC ensures that the School of Economics not only listens to its students but actively incorporates their insights into the fabric of our educational strategies. This ongoing dialogue between students and staff enriches our learning environment, making it both a beacon of pedagogical leadership and a collaborative community where every voice is valued.

Here's to continuing our journey of innovation and excellence together—inspired by our students, guided by EPIC, and celebrated by our entire community.

By Ivan Hung and Duncan Watson



STUDY ABROAD WITH A DIFFERENCE

I found out that I had a scholarship place on the program for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) at Ochanomizu University just two months before I arrived in Tokyo.

It was a whirlwind which definitely worked in my favour, being a homebird, as it meant I didn't get too much time to ponder on the decision or ruminate over the idea of being so far out of my comfort zone. Although I'm very outgoing, I find the first stages of friendship labour intensive and difficult, so the idea of starting afresh did fill me with dread. I was the only girl going from UEA, and I was a bit older than the others which subconsciously added to the deck of worries held in my head which I can now identify as a protective mechanism in case everything went wrong – I can gladly say that none of my worries came true.

Ochanomizu is an all-female university based in Tokyo. It was the first institution of higher education for women in Japan. To be going to this establishment, which has pioneered for equality since the day it opened its doors, to study ED&I felt like such a prestigious opportunity. Due to the composition of the course and the difference in term times, when we first arrived, we were enrolled on a summer course which was much bigger than our ED&I course, all from different continents and countries across the globe. We were put into groups of five and when we discussed the topics we were assigned, I found myself in a state of awe. I was sat in the most diverse room I

have ever seen, listening to stories, asking questions, and comparing cultures. Up until then I thought I valued diversity highly; however, I walked away that day knowing the true meaning of diversity in thought, approach and beliefs when it comes to team work.

Another of the key beliefs that I brought back with me to the UK was real feelings of awe towards immigrants who move across borders in pursuit of a better life. I will be honest and say that it was really hard, and although people throw the term 'culture shock' around – it is a very real thing. As our behaviours are underpinned by our entire beliefs systems, I experienced lots of internal conflict. Also, the stark difference in norms means that you're subconsciously aware of being a societal outsider. It made me reflect and wonder how I can change how I present myself to others so that they feel valued and welcome. I don't think this experience is exclusive to studying in Japan; anyone moving to a different culture will experience these feelings to a varying extent, I am sure. As we were saying our goodbyes to the wonderful friends that we made at Ocha, Misa Sensei said something very poignant which echoed what I had been feeling for the duration of my time there: 'I hope that if anything, this experience teaches you to be kind to people who are not from where you are from, and to be open to all opportunities that are thrown your way.' What a wonderful lesson to have learnt from such an incredible experience.

Lottie Melvin



READ MORE YEAR ABROAD BLOGS BY UEA STUDENTS

<https://ueaontheroad.wordpress.com/about/>

REFLECTING OVER THE PAST YEAR

During the last academic year, our economy has been affected by a combination of enduring and new challenges. While we are now experiencing a disinflationary economy and the possible conclusion of the monetary tightening cycle and have recently emerged from the uncertainty brought on by UK general elections, we still face the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Overall, it is still unclear whether the UK has overcome its recent stagnation.

All these factors have significantly impacted the UK job market. However, while the unemployment rate is still relatively low (4.4% in April 2024), it has increased compared to last year. The situation is more concerning for the 16-24 age group, whose unemployment rate has risen substantially to 13.6% , more than three times the overall rate. Additionally, the number of job vacancies from March to May 2024 has continued its downward trend, totalling 906,000, not too far from the pre-pandemic revised figure (816,000 between December 2019 and February 2020), according to Labour Market Overview, released by the Office for National Statistics in April 2024. These figures suggest that our students and graduates' job market has become more challenging, and, for this reason, ECO has kept on providing significant support to our students and graduates through various activities.

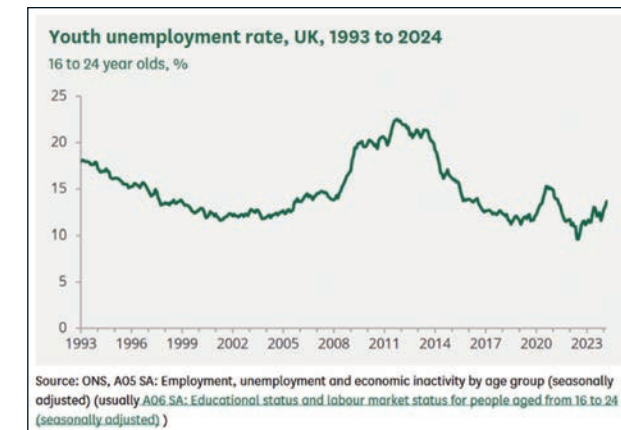
While recruitment is slowly moving back to more in-person activities, the reality is that many organisations still run them in a hybrid way with a mix of virtual and

face-to-face interviews and assessment centres, which signals that applicants need to train in both formats. To address this, ECO provided students with many opportunities to practice in form of repeated sessions of mock interviews, 1-on-1 meetings with employers (both in-person and remotely), and personalised career support meetings. Moreover, in order to keep our curricular and extracurricular provision up-to-date, we extensively liaised with ECO Advisory Board members as well as employers.

There is a clear demand for digitally-skilled economics students (including artificial intelligence). We met this demand with the now-traditional offer of ECO Python Workshop, which saw record participation with over 100 students attending the three-day introductory coding course. Furthermore, we are considering providing our students with a background in artificial intelligence, following a successful pilot project we recently carried out. Our module and course provision are under continuous revision, and in the coming year, we will witness the launch of the BSc Economics, Behaviour and Data Science and module in Behavioural Finance. These efforts do not neglect the importance of soft skills, which artificial intelligence cannot replace. Through constant cooperation with employers, we have offered activities to develop effective oral communication, empathy, and networking skills, among others.

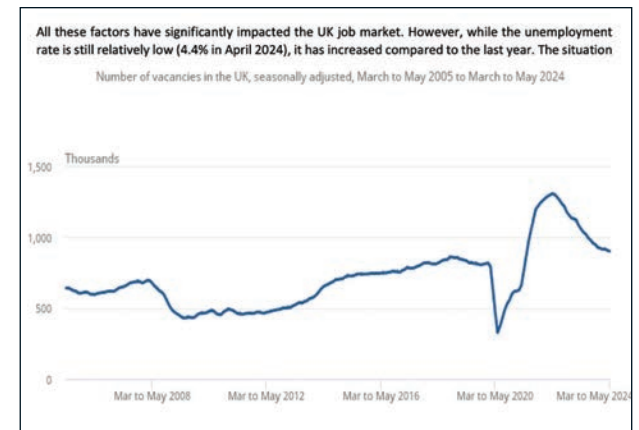
The ECO students' employability calendar was vibrant, featuring weekly events and activities. Students had the opportunity to explore a wide range of sectors for their own job market via various employability events, hosting alumni, employers, career coaches on a blend of training sessions, panel discussions, and an increased provision of guest lectures.

ECO Alumni Event in London.



As usual, the highlight event was the ECO Alumni Event, which took place on the 26th of April 2024 in London. The event featured a panel discussion on mentoring and coaching, followed by a lively Q&A session. Attendees benefited from the insights of ECO mentors (alumni) and mentees (current students) and a keynote speech by Mr. Mark Edwards, a distinguished ECO alumnus working in the finance industry. The ECO Alumni Event was a wonderful opportunity for ECO students to connect and network with advisory board members, alumni, and staff members.

As hinted above, to support our students, we implemented the ECO Mentoring Scheme, successfully matching around 50 students with ECO Alumni, allowing the former to benefit from their mentors' experience and expertise. We also continued our ECO Internship scheme which had two rounds this academic year. This rather competitive selection represents another opportunity for our students to learn before going to the external job market. We provided students



with feedback at each stage of the hiring procedure, and the chance for 12 successful candidates to work alongside academics on frontier research projects, enhancing their skills.

We acknowledge that the job market rapidly changes and, considering its current dynamics, we are committed to continuing our support for our students, emphasising the development of soft skills such as self-awareness, confidence, and networking. To ensure maximum participation, all employability events, though recorded for those who could not attend in person, have been held on campus. Our efforts have been rewarded with strong participation rates and clear signs of skills development.

Nonetheless, this is just the past. As we approach the new academic year, we look forward to enthusiastically supporting our students.

Andrea Calef

ECO INTERNSHIP CASE STUDIES

INTERN:

Valeria Gonzalez Jimenez,
MSc Economics and Data Science

PROJECT OUTLINE:

From Tweets to Trades: Assessing the Influence of Social Media on Novice Investors' Decisions. This research project delves into the complex dynamics of how social media influences the investment decisions of these novice investors.

PROJECT LEAD:

Dr Ariel Gu

How did you benefit?

During my internship I had the opportunity to explore the field of behavioral economics, an area that I had not previously handled in detail. With this experience I have expanded my understanding of how social media is transforming the financial landscape and affecting investment decisions, especially among novice investors.

I was able to learn about how controlled experiments are carried out in simulated and other environments. I have explored how different types of financial information shared on these platforms impact decision-making processes. This includes analysis of investor confidence, propensity to invest, and susceptibility to herd behavior. In addition to this, I have learned about the importance of designing sound experimental methodologies to address specific research questions. An essential part of my learning has been understanding how to evaluate and use information sources in the context of financial and economic research.



Additionally, I have gained knowledge about the importance of quality metrics in research, including ABS rankings for academic documents. This is critical for my future dissertation as it will help me evaluate and select relevant, high-quality literature to support my research.

In summary, my experience in this research internship has been fundamental for my academic and professional development. I have gained knowledge at the intersection of finance and technology, as well as practical skills in experimental design and critical data analysis. I am excited to apply these learnings to future academic research and am committed to contributing new ideas and perspectives to the evolving field of behavioral economics.

Project Lead Feedback:

I have had a very positive experience with the intern program. The primary objective of the project is to prepare a grant proposal focused on exploring the impact of social media on people's investment decisions. During the internship, Valeria has shown great competence and has communicated effectively. The comprehensive literature review she completed was well-organized and thorough. Her ability to synthesize complex information into a clear, structured format not only facilitated a smoother proposal process but also enriched our understanding of the subject matter. This significantly contributed to the overall quality of my project. I appreciate her hard work and the professional attitude she brought to the team.

INTERN:

George Bakosh,
Year 1 UG, BSc Politics and Economics

PROJECT OUTLINE:

Now that you mention it: Populism on perceptions and attitudes. The aim is to understand how the existence of populist parties within a country's political spectrum, their agenda, narrative and communication strategies impact voters' perceptions and attitudes.

PROJECT LEAD:

Dr Rui Silva

How did you benefit?

The Spring Internship was a great opportunity for me to get involved in scientific work with an actual researcher. This experience gave me an idea of what kind of research can be done in political economy. Getting this new perspective allowed me to understand better what options I can have in pursuing a career as a social scientist, and I consider the political economy as one of the possible future fields. In practical terms, I mastered my skills of working with various and vast academic literature, and how to be precise in delivering required information and analysis. Also, I gained some initial skills in working with data despite being only a first-year undergraduate student.

I learnt not only how to derive, process and analyse available scientific outputs, but also how to create them from crude statistics. The creative part of the scientific inquiry is the thing that inspires me most, and I was excited to be a part of such a creative process. Continuous and scrupulous work with the research topic gave me a detailed and nuanced understanding of contemporary populism in Europe. My project lead was an integral part of my personal development during my internship. He supported me throughout my whole journey. I felt comfortable asking questions and obviously making mistakes as it is an indispensable part of learning.

Project Lead Feedback:

George did a phenomenal job surpassing what anyone could reasonably expect from an undergrad student. George easily met everything required from him, and went very much beyond, producing work at an outstanding pace and excellent quality. Despite the lack of training in econometric methods, George was able to learn, on his own, how to work with Stata, and to produce an excellent analysis of the data used in the project. Overall, George was excellent.



INTERN:

Thu Hang Nguyen,
MSc Economics and International Relations

PROJECT OUTLINE:

Classifying and coding chat messages sent by participants in an economic experiment. The intern will have the opportunity to contribute to developing various parts of the analysis of the data.

PROJECT LEAD:

Dr Anders Poulsen

How did you benefit?

This experience with quantifying qualitative data has reinforced my critical thinking and analytical abilities. It allows me to practise detecting patterns, questioning my own and others' preconceptions, and learning more about how to process qualitative data to acquire significant insights into human behaviour.

This internship gives me the confidence to undertake experimental research in behavioural economics in the future, as well as to apply for employment that require appropriate field abilities.

Project Lead Feedback:

Thu-Hang worked diligently on the data analysis, and, crucially, made several important suggestions about how to analyse and classify the data that I had not thought about myself – so this helped a lot to improve the quality and impact of the work and overall project. We worked as equals, which not only significantly benefitted the project itself, it was also a pleasure to collaborate with Thu-Hang. I highly recommend our students to seek internship opportunities within the School of Economics and encourage my colleagues to treat them as junior researchers and equal partners.



PLACEMENT CASE STUDY

NAME:

Dan Hughes

COMPANY:

Lidl GB

ROLE:

Retail Placement Student

Why did you decide to do a placement?

I chose to undertake a placement year during my university studies primarily because I recognised the invaluable benefits it offers in terms of gaining practical work experience before graduation.

In today's competitive graduate market standing out to potential employers is crucial. A placement year not only allowed me to apply what I've learned academically but also demonstrated to companies that I am proactive, adaptable, and capable of contributing effectively in a professional setting. This firsthand experience not only strengthens my CV but also provides me with insights into industry practices and trends that will be invaluable as I transition from university into my career.

Ultimately, the decision to pursue a placement year is driven by my desire to maximise my employability and ensure that I am well-prepared to thrive in the job market upon completing my degree.

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

I completed my placement year at Lidl GB, the leading, fasted growing supermarket chain in the UK. Lidl GB is part of the larger Schwarz Group, the 4th largest retailer in the world and as a group had an annual turnover of \$167.2 billion in 2023!

My role as a Retail Placement Student encompassed various responsibilities that provided a comprehensive understanding of the retail business. I was involved in store and warehouse operations, supply chain practices, HR and recruitment services and many other additional departments. Further, I had the chance to work on strategic projects which implemented a new recruitment practice to enhance efficiency and reduce costs within the business.

Throughout the placement, I developed a multitude of valuable skills. My analytical skills were honed through data-driven decision-making and performance analysis. Effective communication and teamwork were crucial as I collaborated with diverse teams across different departments, my problem-solving abilities were challenged by addressing operational issues and devising innovative solutions to these tasks. The most important however was that of my leadership skills. The opportunity to lead and manage a team whilst still at university is an invaluable skill and experience to have that behind me has given me so much confidence moving forward.



Overall, my placement at Lidl GB was an enriching experience that equipped me with practical skills and a deep understanding of the retail industry, preparing me to excel in my future career.

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

The transition back to UEA and into my final year was smooth and rewarding. The practical experience I gained during my placement year at Lidl GB gave me a new perspective to university studies. I came back feeling more confident and focused, with a clearer understanding of how my studies applied to real-world scenarios. This experience also enriched my contributions to class discussions and group work, ultimately making my final year both productive and fulfilling.

What are your plans after graduation?

Following on from my placement year after graduation I am thrilled to continue my career with Lidl GB, having secured a place in their highly competitive graduate scheme. This opportunity will allow me to build on the skills and experience I gained during my placement year, diving deeper into retail management and strategic operations. I am excited to contribute to Lidl GB's continued success and growth as the largest growing



supermarket chain in the UK, whilst also further developing my leadership and business acumen.

What advice would you offer to students for a placement?

My advice to students looking for a placement is to apply for as many opportunities as possible. Personally, I applied for at least 60 positions before securing my placement. It's important to work hard and stay persistent because placement schemes are highly competitive. Don't be afraid to take any opportunity that comes your way. I initially didn't envision myself in a retail role, but I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Lidl GB and it has led me to a fantastic role after graduation. Keep an open mind and be prepared to seize any opportunity, as it can lead to unexpected and rewarding career paths.



MENTOR/ MENTEE



We know that our graduates will be entering a fiercely competitive job market and we want to do the best we can to prepare them to succeed.

To help with this in 2020 we set up the ECO Mentoring Scheme which gives our students the opportunity to connect with experienced alumni who will be able to provide them with invaluable advice to help them make the best of their time at university but also to provide direction about their desired career paths.

This year we have gathered some of the comments and feedback we have received from our students (mentees) and our alumni (mentors):

MENTEE'S:

Lewis Perzhilla

Year 2 BSc Business Finance and Economics

Initially we held a call on Microsoft teams getting to know each other, lasting around 30 minutes and was mainly about what I wanted to gain from the mentor scheme. After that the relationship became more informal and we exchanged a few text messages about what I was doing to progress my career such as trying to find work experience, internships, etc.

Then another couple of phone calls catching up about similar sorts of topics. I have taken Milan's advice in contacting businesses for work experience alongside regularly looking out for internship opportunities on UEA Career Central and online.

Numar Uddin

Year 1 Economics with Accountancy

Everything is progressing nicely, me and Milan do utilise social media apps; LinkedIn, WhatsApp to communicate weekly if not bi-weekly. We have had many virtual meetings/conversations. He has helped me in terms of applying to certain opportunities that are available.

MENTOR:

Milan Pandya

Regarding Numar - things have progressed exceptionally well! We meet on an ad-hoc, regular basis, and Numar has made great progress in various different areas. From changing his degree to align more closely to his objectives, to helping him establish his LinkedIn profile - we've made great progress in various domains in a short space of time. In addition, he's completed work experiences at the likes of PwC, PIMCO, and Citi alike. I would say, a true testament to the hard work he's put in.

MENTEE:

Serwaa Boateng

PGT, MSc Finance and Economics

It's been a great journey so far. Adolf is always ready to assist me and he has been extremely helpful.

MENTOR:

Adolf Nourrice

The mentoring is progressing well. Yes, we had 4 discussions since we started the mentoring relationship. I recommended she starts a journal that would help with the mentoring process.

Serwaa is keen to have a career in banking either in UK or her home country Ghana. We also discussed her academic work, specifically her dissertation. I was able to hear out her ideas and provided some guidance on how she could approach some tasks. The only challenge is the distance and time difference.

MENTEE'S:

Tehillah Brefo-Boateng

Year 1 BSc Business Economics

Our relationship is progressing well. We're meeting each other about once a month. Chris has been very helpful in giving me advice and helping me understand what paths I can take. I am happy with my mentor.

Ben Arpaia

Year 3 BSc Economics

The mentoring arrangement is progressing well. We have had regular meeting every few weeks over the past 3 months and these have been very useful whether simply to talk about current university work or discuss current economic related news stories. I am not sure yet exactly what will happen with our arrangement once I graduate from university in the summer but we have mentioned potentially continuing the meetings just more spread out.

MENTOR:

Chris Poray

I believe the relationships are going well, understanding more about their paths and what the right moves are for the time etc.

Happy to be a useful sounding board for them, they're a lot further on and more switched on than I was in my first year!

MENTEE:

Iasonas Emmanouel

Year 3 BSc Economics

The face-to-face meeting in London offered me a fascinating insight into the music industry. During this time, I had the privilege of meeting Michael Anderson, Beatchain's COO, and Joe Woolford, the Music Distribution Manager. Their advice was particularly valuable as I refine my applications for data analyst positions within the music and creative industries—sectors that align closely with my personal interests and academic background.

I had the opportunity to meet Marc Williams, the founder of the record label Odd Child, at their office. Odd Child is one of Beatchain's many partners, and meeting the rest of their team provided me with a deeper understanding of the music industry's dynamics.

My mentor also provided specific feedback on my CV, suggesting that I highlight my personal experiences in the music industry. Following his advice, I have updated my CV to include the website I created for the independent label I have managed, as well as including more detail for my role as a research analyst intern.

MENTOR:

Eden Hamilton

It's all been going well, typically we call every two weeks and mostly been discussing his options with both applying to jobs and doing a masters! Also have reviewed his CV and LinkedIn just to help build it up a bit and it's been positive! I've been on holiday past two weeks but will catch up with him when I'm back as sounds like he's in the swing of applications at the moment and then will look to do some mock interviews when/if he has any come up for grad schemes!



PLACEMENT CASE STUDY

NAME:

Anmol Singh

COMPANY:

RSM UK

ROLE:

Internal Auditor

Why did you decide to do a placement?

The main appeal of a placement year is the significant advantage it provides for employment prospects. It sets you apart from many applicants who have either only internships or no practical experience at all. More importantly, it helps you determine what you want to do in your career. There are no “bad” placement experiences; even if you dislike the job, it helps narrow down your career preferences, much like a test drive when purchasing a car. This clarity is beneficial when applying for graduate roles, as you’ll gain clarity on your preferences regarding remote or hybrid work, location, and sectors. Regardless of your future career choice, the experience is invaluable on your CV.

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

Initially, I was worried as I had forgotten much of the content from the first and second years. The first few weeks were a shock due to the different lifestyles of a 9-5 job and university. However, this pressure helped me establish a solid routine, and after a few weeks, I felt much more confident. This continued through my final year, and the work ethic I developed during my placement helped me achieve a first in both my final year and overall degree.

What are your plans after graduation?

I enjoyed my placement year and plan to return to RSM, as they offered me a graduate scheme during my placement, which includes studying for a professional accounting qualification.

What advice would you offer to students for a placement?

Do it! It’s a great way to improve your job prospects and get a firsthand look at the employment world. Taking a break from studies to try something new was one of the best decisions I made, greatly enhancing my third-year performance. Apply to jobs regularly; I aimed for 2-3 applications a week and used CareerCentral for CV, assessment centre, and interview support.



A TRUE COMMUNITY SPIRIT

As a naïve 18-year-old moving across continents to pursue a degree in Economics, transitioning to an entirely new world in the midst of the global pandemic appeared a daunting challenge.

The blow of abrupt change was significantly softened by UEA’s School of Economics’ warm welcome. To me, UEA ECO is truly a community, and that is what makes it shine so brightly.

I felt part of this community from the outset – at Pizza and Chat events with faculty, and socials with the Economics Society, I already felt at home. As I worked as an ECO Ambassador at Open Days and Applicant Days, I learnt more about the school and its various learning opportunities, which emboldened my passion for Economics, enabling me to delve deeper. Along the way, I forged many nurturing friendships and gained valuable insights from interactions with professors, especially with regards to career progression options.

One distinct fantastic aspect of studying at ECO is its interdisciplinary nature of teaching. This has been

very useful in opening my mind to potential career paths I wasn’t aware of prior to attending UEA. Beyond teaching, employability events hosted by the school have been instrumental in this, through weekly networking events with industry experts across finance, competition, business management, consulting, policy, and many further sectors.

My most cherished aspect of these 4 years was my year on placement at the Civil Service, working on the UK’s industrial decarbonisation strategy. I’m grateful to the school for organising the placement process and employment guidance in a very timely and helpful manner. Not only did I gain valuable data-analytics and on-site stakeholder engagement experience from this role, I built a strong network which will aid in my progression henceforth, and realised my desired vocation in policy and global development.

Iram Akhter

UEA CHANGE MAKERS



L-R: People's Choice Prize winner Vanya Chellani, Change Makers 2024 winner Adam Syed (credit: Alan Bennett).

If you could change one thing about the world, what would that be? This question summarises the goal of the UEA Change Makers programme.

Change Makers is an annual competition, organised by the Student Enterprise team at UEA that selects 10 students with visionary business ideas that can improve the planet, people, or community. Once enrolled in an eight-week Accelerator programme, they receive £1000 in funding to grow and test their concepts.

The competition aims to develop participants' self-confidence and familiarises students with the fundamentals of social entrepreneurship.

The Grand Finale event, held on Thursday 29 February, was an opportunity for each of the Change Makers finalists to pitch their creations, with a top prize of £3000 up for grabs.

Finalist ideas included: a sexual and reproductive health platform targeted at women in conservative countries; a series of children's books to explain to them adverse family situations; and a platform focused on youth empowerment and climate optimism.



ECO WINNER!

We were thrilled that our student, Vanya Chellani, was awarded the People's Choice Prize! Vanya, a first-year Economics and Business Finance student raised in The Gambia, West Africa, developed *Belly Buddy*: an app that allergy sufferers can use to scan products at supermarkets to identify any ingredients or formulations they may be sensitive to. Encouraged to join Change Makers by one of her lecturers, Vanya highlighted that the Accelerator course offered a comprehensive overview of entrepreneurship; she thinks that venture creation "is an area that people often underestimate... because there is a lot to explore when starting a business and I didn't quite realise how complex it can be."

Vanya discovered new facets of her personality while on the programme: "I have learned my ability to tolerate stress is not as good as I thought it would be, however it has improved drastically by the end of the experience".

Vanya sees *Belly Buddy* evolving into "an app or platform for people to manage their gastro-intestinal conditions and to make their lives more bearable".

Sync the City

A number of our students were part of the hundred-strong crowd who took part in this year's UEA sponsored Sync the City 2023 event – which challenges participants to form a start-up company in just fifty-four hours.

Vanya Cellani, who is studying BSc Economics and Finance, was chosen as one of just ten leaders from the initial forty-seven who pitched start-up ideas, with the ten receiving mentoring support from members of Norwich's business community. Vanya's startup is an app called *Belly Buddy*, which helps people to scan food packaging in the supermarket, providing feedback on whether the product is likely to affect their digestive health.

Vanya said:

"I learned so much over the weekend and am going to come back next year. You learn about being part of a team, public speaking, pitching an idea and actually building something – it's loads of fun. I'd definitely recommend this to other UEA students."



PETE



JIBO



GEORGE



NIKOS



MATT



ANDREA

LECTURERS HELPED ME TO SECURE MY DREAM GRADUATE ROLE

We are extremely fortunate in the School of Economics to have lecturers who are truly committed to our achievements as students. I can certainly speak from experience for what becomes attainable when you fully engage with the support provided within the school. My lecturers' support has played a significant role in my success in securing a place on the Civil Service Fast Stream, where I will be beginning work in the Government Economic Service later this year.

Setting my sights on the Fast Stream

It goes without saying that one of the most important aspects of final year is searching for a graduate role. I was fortunate enough to have completed a placement year, working for the Civil Service at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

As an aside, I cannot recommend a placement year enough. My year was full of amazing experiences; I had the chance to live in London, to work with some great people and make some genuine life friends, and I had the opportunity to develop important workplace

skills and greatly improve my confidence. Being honest with myself, during my first and second years I had not applied myself nearly as much as I should have, and at times I was feeling detached from my studies. My placement year allowed me time to reflect, and by September 2023 I returned to UEA refreshed and determined to achieve the utmost in my degree.

What my placement year had also given me was a strong sense of what I wanted to do next. I had felt genuine belonging in the Civil Service, and like a valued member of the team. This meant that when it came to applying for graduate schemes, securing a place on the main Civil Service graduate programme, the Fast Stream, was my primary ambition.

Asking my lecturers for help

Having learnt the lessons from my first two years, in my final year I applied myself far more in my lectures, alongside frequently visiting lecturers' office hours. I have been continually impressed at the time and interest my lecturers have been willing to give, and so

when it came to the preparation for my final assessment centre, I knew I could turn to them for support.

One of the principal tasks of my assessment centre was to produce a technical economic report on a subject given to me just days before my assessment. Though I was allowed to prepare for this ahead of time, I was not allowed to take any notes with me. Given that this was one of the major components of the assessment centre that I could control beforehand, I hurriedly sent out an email to some of my lecturers asking if any of them had time to spare. At exceedingly short notice, many of them offered to help.

My success at the assessment centre

On the Friday morning before my Monday interview, Pete, Jibo, and George all joined me on a Teams call to discuss my draft. They took the time to read through my work, challenged me constructively, and offered their own perspectives on the task at hand. Later in the day, Nikos met with me to follow up on this and look for alternate perspectives, whilst Matt gave me some great tips and encouragement over email. Finally, at gone 9pm, Andrea joined me on a Teams call, giving up an hour of his evening to help me summarise everybody's advice, and to offer his own input and encouragement.

Their advice directly contributed to me improving the succinctness of my arguments, but they had also helped instil me with confidence and a sense of self-belief. It has made me incredibly grateful and proud to be an Economics student at UEA. Fortunately, I was successful, and I am now excitedly awaiting beginning my career with the Government Economic Service later this year.

What you can take away from my experience

I am incredibly grateful for my lecturers' support. Their contribution undoubtedly played an important role in my success. Overall, the main take away from my experience is that the help and support is there if you ask for it. We are unbelievably fortunate to have lecturers within ECO who are willing to go above and beyond to support us and share in our successes. They are truly invested in our success, and this makes me incredibly proud to have been an ECO student at UEA.

I would like to thank all the staff and lecturers within ECO for making the School what it is, but most of all in this context I would once more like to extend my thanks to Andrea Calef, Pete Dawson, Jibonayan Raychaudhuri, Georgios Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Angelopoulos, and Matt Aldrich for helping me secure my dream graduate role.

I strongly encourage everybody who reads this to make the utmost effort to engage with their lecturers, to ask questions at office hours, and to seek out their support in any of your endeavours. My experience alone attests to the fact that they are more than willing to help.

Toby McGarry



MAX LAVENE

CLIMBING MOUNT KILIMANJARO

ECO Graduate aims to become first complete spinal injury tetraplegic to climb Mount Kilimanjaro

Max Levene broke his neck playing rugby aged 17 and was paralysed resulting in complete tetraplegia. Max went on to study BSc Business Economics and MSc Development Economics at UEA and has been working in the civil service since leaving university.

Max is still involved in rugby and is currently planning to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in September. He aims to raise lots of money for two charities, inspire fellow disabled people, and become the first complete spinal injury tetraplegic in a wheelchair to ascend to the top of the mountain. Max talked to us about his upcoming climb and his experience with UEA.

Why have you set out to climb Mount Kilimanjaro?

In September, I'm aiming to be the first spinal cord injury complete tetraplegic to ascend to the top of the mountain. I broke my neck playing rugby for my school in Truro, in Cornwall, when I was 17. But, just before that, I was with my parents who were living out in Kenya, and I'd seen Kilimanjaro and set myself the goal of one day climbing the mountain. When I had my injury, I assumed that I'd never be able to do anything like that for the rest of my life.

However, last year, I was having a discussion with someone over some beer, and they said, "How about we give it a try?" Since COVID, my partner has been pushing me to do more. She asked, "Why don't you go for it?" and we decided, "Let's give it a crack."

We're raising money for two really excellent charities – the Rugby Football Union Injured Players Foundation and the Inspire Foundation. The RFU Injured players foundations have supported me fantastically over the years and helped me do my masters at UEA by funding my accommodation. The Inspire foundation conduct spinal injury research and currently working on neurostimulation of the bladder to regain continence through electric stimulation.

I've now got eight people in my team – ex-school friends – and, excitingly, sponsors are coming on board. We've raised near £2000 so far, but we're aiming for a minimum of about £20,000 before we go. You can read more about the fundraising campaign on our GoFundMe page, and I'd be really grateful for any support from the UEA community.

How are the preparations going?

It looks like we'll be able to get the equipment for the climb so that's fantastic. Now we'd like to raise as much money for the charities as possible.

I did Mount Snowdon last year with some mates and that was a very different scale. It was only one day, but I did it with the same people who will be going on the Kilimanjaro trip, and it makes me think more would be achievable. I also do try and keep fit. I've got a personal trainer now and I've been working hard.

When I had my accident, I made a promise to my mum that I would never play wheelchair rugby, and I managed to hold that promise for about 8 years. My

partner got fed up with me talking about how much I'd love to play and eventually told me to do it, or she'd be suffering for the rest of her life listening to me about it. I then played for about a year and a half before telling my mother (after she'd had a few glasses of wine). She's forgiven me now. And the rugby is helping to keep me fit!

How did the rugby community support you after your injury?

Oh, the support was amazing and from all over the world. I had various shirts sent to me from lots of different teams. I had messages from professionals all over the world, and lots of people who were just into rugby. I've become friendly with some rugby communities simply because they'd got in touch at that point. Will Carling even got in touch to support me.

How did you decide where to study at university?

UEA hadn't really come on my radar to begin with because it's not somewhere that too many people from Cornwall end up. But I had a mate who went to UEA, and he suggested it might be good for me. I went out to visit and fell in love with the place. It instantly became my number one choice. It had good access to a disabled student, I loved the lake, and I just loved the look of it all. It seemed like a nice mixture of an urban and rural environment.

And then how did you find your time at UEA?

I absolutely loved it. tried to get involved as much as I could. I was the disability Union officer for a year, and I often got involved in Union council. We ran a society for disabilities as well. I stayed for my masters as well because I didn't really want to leave. The social life was really great and I have many fond memories of the LCR.

And what was the plan for after you graduated?

I always wanted to do something centred on economics, but I didn't quite know what that would be. I think the period where you've just left university and you're trying to find work is tough. I applied to lots of places but didn't really get anywhere. And then I had a chat with one of my lecturers and he said, "Have you thought about applying for the civil service and the fast stream?" So, I applied and for it and got onto the fast stream as an economist. I ended up at the Department for Work and Pensions and I've been there for almost 8 years.

I've done various interesting roles and I use economics all the time in facilitating policy, so my degree has been very worthwhile. Although it's based in London, I've spent more and more time working from home and I've found that the civil service is an accommodating place to work if you've got extra needs.

You've been involved with disability organisations at UEA and later on in your fundraising. What drives you?

I want to spread awareness that people with disabilities – any disabilities – can achieve great things. Yes, people need additional support, and we should have that support, but, with it, we can go on to succeed. When I was first injured, I wondered if I would ever have goals and dreams again, but I started to look up to people like Sir Frank Williams, the F1 owner, who had a similar injury to me. I'm inspired by the Paralympics, and I think it's really important to be able to see disabled people doing well in life. At the same time, we should celebrate the everyday as well – for some people being able to get out of bed will be a fantastic achievement.

And you also have a YouTube channel centred on the disabled experience. Tell us about that.

It's a small channel, but I don't do it for views. It's more that if I meet someone who's newly injured, I can say "Hey, look at this. I've done skydiving, I've climbed Snowdon, I've driven a race car, I've done all sorts of things, and the options are out there. You don't have to feel like it's the end of your life. I'm working. I've got a partner." I love getting feedback. I did a video while on holiday in Greece on accessing Athens as a disabled person. I had comments saying how useful it was and how people could use the tips while travelling themselves. I particularly like receiving comments from newly disabled people who are looking for guidance.

Max studied BSc Business Economics and MSc Development Economics at UEA.



MAX'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Max talks about his preparations for the climb on his YouTube channel.



FROM ITALY TO SUFFOLK

CYCLING AGAINST CANCER



Claudio Barchiesi, an ECO student at UEA, has completed a charity cycling trip from his hometown in Italy to his grandparent's house in Suffolk, to raise money for an Italian cancer research organisation. Here is his story...

The idea first came to me after a series of events that were very close to my heart and made me think: "why haven't we still found a cure to a disease that is killing millions of humans still today?" Over one in two children born today in the United Kingdom are expected to develop a form of cancer.

It irritated me that I couldn't do anything towards this fact, but I felt the need to do something to change this. This is when I saw the chance to bring people together against a common goal, in a world in desperate need for collaboration, to do something for a common good. I came up with the idea to set up a crowdfunding. I also knew that to raise a significant amount I had to do something special, but that I would also commit to and enjoy. And knowing that I had to come back to the UK to start my second year here at UEA, I thought that if I cycled back, I might just be able to attract just enough attention to achieve such goal. So, I set myself a target of €1 per km for a total of €1587, thinking that it wouldn't seem such an unobtainable target pictured in this way. I set up GoFundMe account and started spreading the news.

I knew it would be extremely hard, especially with no cycling experience... and to be fair, I didn't even have a bike! The time constraints I had were extremely tight. In the 6 weeks of training I had, I got on my brother's bike and started training every single day, cycling at least 90km a day, to simulate the daily distance, and filling bike bags with books, to simulate the weight. Then I set out to prepare the organisation side of things. I contacted local church communities across Europe that I had found on google, telling them about my story and what I intended to do. Doing so I managed to get so many families who offered me a meal and bed for the night across Europe. It still would have been expensive to find all the necessary gear, not having done anything similar before. I therefore wrote to many different companies in the cycling industry, knowing the worst outcome I could get was no reply. Astonishingly, so



many people are willing to help for a good cause and many companies donated lots of equipment, from energy bars to sportswear to cycling accessories. I even managed to get a fantastic used bike of my own, which pleased my brother!

I then set off on my trip, cycling through eight European countries, seeing the most stunning scenery and incredibly wonderful people. It was not only a trip that I will remember forever but also a chance to help and do something good. By the time I arrived on the 6th of September in the UK, I had raised over €4500, tripling my initial target. It was such a great experience which not only opened my eyes to the world but also gave me a chance to get people to come together and contribute to something good. When I pulled up to my grandparents' house, I felt immense pride in what I had achieved. Being able to read about my story on the BBC also made me shed a tear. But what made me most happy was how many people had helped and supported me, even those who had no idea who I was. Something that I want people to understand is if I did this, with no experience at all, everyone can do something. And if we could all do something for a better good, then things could go a long way. The message I wanted to convey by doing this is that if I did it, anything is possible, so why not give it a shot, and you might be happily surprised...

Claudio Barchiesi

GREAT Scholarships

Congratulation scholars!



SCHOLARSHIP

MY 'GREAT' LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Receiving the GREAT Scholarship (a scholarship jointly funded by the UK government's GREAT Britain Campaign and the British Council) to study MSc Economics at the University of East Anglia (UEA) has been a life-changing opportunity.

The financial support from the GREAT Scholarship relieved a significant burden, allowing me to focus on my studies and take advantage of everything this incredible experience has to offer. After deciding to apply for the program, I searched for scholarships. Then I found the GREAT Scholarship weblink, where I had to submit a video based on specific questions. Although the process was competitive, with only one quota for a Bangladeshi student at UEA, I was fortunate to receive the scholarship.

I chose UEA for its strong reputation in academic excellence and innovative research within the School of Economics. Also, the MSc Economics program at UEA is a perfect blend of theoretical and practical knowledge. The compulsory modules in economic theory and econometrics have been particularly impactful, enhancing my analytical skills and deepening my understanding of complex economic concepts. The variety of optional modules, such as environmental economics, allowed me to tailor my studies to my interests, making the learning experience both engaging and rewarding. Additionally, the pre-session training was immensely beneficial. It provided a solid foundation in essential techniques such as calculus, matrix algebra, and econometric software. This preparation was crucial for solving the challenging coursework. The faculty members at UEA are not only experts in their fields but also dedicated mentors who genuinely care about their students' success. Their guidance and mentorship have been invaluable, especially with understanding difficult topics.

One of the unique aspects of the program is the opportunity to write a dissertation after completing the two semesters. Choosing my own dissertation topic

has allowed me to delve into a subject I am passionate about, with the support and supervision of a staff member of the School of Economics.

Also, my favourite place on campus is the library. I spend most of my time there, enjoying its quiet and conducive environment for studying. The extensive resources and supportive staff have been helping me succeed academically. The library's atmosphere fosters uninterrupted study sessions. The availability of numerous study materials and access to online databases have been particularly helpful in conducting research for my assessments.

Living in university accommodation has been a total game-changer for me. It has provided me with a convenient and comfortable living environment, close to all the campus facilities. This has made it easier to attend classes, access the library, and participate in various campus activities. The accommodations are well-maintained and provide a supportive community where I have made friends from all over the world.

Beyond the classroom, life at UEA has been vibrant and fulfilling. Every Friday, I meet locals at the International Meet event to learn about their culture and language. These interactions have helped me feel more integrated into the community and enriched my understanding of the local culture.

The Student Union societies organise tours to visit various places in Norwich, providing opportunities to explore the city's rich history and vibrant culture. Hanging out with friends during these outings has been a great way to unwind and build lasting friendships. Norwich, with its historical landmarks and lively cultural scene, offers a perfect backdrop for my studies.

I am truly grateful to the University of East Anglia, especially the School of Economics, for giving me this opportunity.

Syeda Sajia Afroz Rumpa

OUR GOALS FOR 2025

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