University of East Anglia Norwich

School of Economics

A YEAR IN THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS NEWSLETTER 2026/27

2025 - 26

LEADING THE WAY

If economics teaches us anything, it is that periods of disruption are also periods of adjustment, and 2025/26 has given us plenty to reflect on in that respect. We are educating students at a time when generative AI is changing how knowledge is produced, how work is organised, and how employers think about graduate capability. For many students, that reality is both exciting and unsettling. Some of the roles that have traditionally provided graduate entry points are already being reshaped, especially where work is routine, standardised or easily automated. We should be honest about that challenge. But the more important question is not what is disappearing; it is what will matter more. In a world where AI can generate answers quickly, the value of a graduate lies increasingly in their ability to ask better questions, to interpret, to judge, to communicate, and to understand context.

This is why the skills our students need now are not narrower but broader, and not less human but more so. Technical confidence matters, of course. Students need to know how to work with data, manage information, evaluate evidence and use digital tools intelligently. But they also need the capacity to interpret complexity, understand social and economic realities, and recognise that numbers do not exist in a vacuum. To analyse data well is one thing; to understand what it means in a world shaped by inequality, risk, institutions and human behaviour is another. That combination of analytical strength and social understanding is exactly why economics remains so important.

It is also why I continue to believe that education in our School is best understood as a partnership: between those who teach, those who learn, and the professionals who employ our graduates. That partnership is not a slogan. It is the condition for relevance and the basis of our success. In a competitive environment, our edge comes from the quality of the collaboration we build: between staff and students in the classrooms, IT labs, and office discussions, between students themselves as they support one another, and between the School and the professions our graduates will enter. If we want students to progress confidently into employment or further study, they need more than good teaching in the abstract. They need to understand how their learning connects to practice, how employers think, what professional standards look like, and how economic and financial reasoning operates beyond the university. That is why our links with the professions matter so much.

This year, those professional connections have continued to grow in important ways. Access to Bloomberg gives our students the opportunity to engage with industry-standard resources and develop confidence in handling live financial and economic information. The work of our Advisory Board brings valuable professional insight into the School, helping us think carefully about the changing expectations graduates will face. Our mentoring scheme is also becoming an increasingly important bridge between study and progression, giving students access to guidance, experience and advice from those who understand the demands of professional life. These are not peripheral additions to the student experience. They are part of how we prepare students not only to complete a degree, but to convert their knowledge into opportunity.

The wider value of social science has also been visible this year in ways of which we can be proud. The publication of the UK's Fourth Independent Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report in May offered a powerful reminder that social science research helps shape national thinking on some of the most pressing issues of our time. We were delighted that Corrado Di Maria contributed to the economic risks assessment chapter, including the section on risks to the UK macroeconomy. This is work of genuine public importance. It shows clearly that climate change is not simply an environmental problem to be discussed in isolation, but a macroeconomic, financial and social challenge with consequences for productivity, inflation, resilience and long-term stability. The social sciences matter because they help turn evidence into decisions, and analysis into action.

We are equally pleased to see wider recognition of impactful research from ECO through the Academy of Social Sciences' forthcoming report on social science contributions to the UK Government's industrial strategy, which is expected to include Gustavo Fruet Dias's work on the revision of the FCA's market cleanliness statistic methodology. That work, also recognised through the UEA Innovation and Impact Awards, is another example of what we value strongly as a School: research that not only advances understanding, but improves practice.

Within the School, this has also been a year in which student voice has shaped real change. Much of the discussion around AI in higher education has tended to begin with concern: misuse, assessment security, uncertainty and academic integrity.

Those concerns are real, but our students made clear that caution on its own is not a strategy. Their feedback has helped us move from talking about AI as an external threat to thinking more seriously about how to integrate it responsibly into learning. We introduced practical support through the Study Guide, where AI is available as a learning tool students can use when they need it. We have also started embedding AI skills into applied economics teaching so that students learn not just how to use new technologies, but how to interrogate them, test assumptions and apply judgement.

Their report on AI in the curriculum has been an important contribution to that work and a reminder that meaningful educational change is stronger when students are treated not simply as recipients, but as co-creators.

That spirit of partnership has also been evident in the pilot Student Advisors scheme we ran in 2025/26. Our second and third-year undergraduates worked alongside academics to support first-year students as they adjusted to university life, settled into their studies, asked questions about progression and found their place in the School community. It is easy to underestimate the importance of this kind of work, but it matters enormously. Confidence, belonging and informal guidance often shape student success just as much as formal structures do. The scheme was an excellent example of how students themselves contribute to the educational environment and of how partnership can strengthen transition, retention and progression.

There has also been much to celebrate. Our students won multiple Students' Union Transforming Education Awards in 2026, a reflection of the strength, creativity and commitment of our learning community. We were delighted too to see the first cohorts of International Finance students complete their studies, with many going on to further study. That is a significant milestone for the School and a pleasing sign of the ambition that our students bring to their academic and professional journeys.

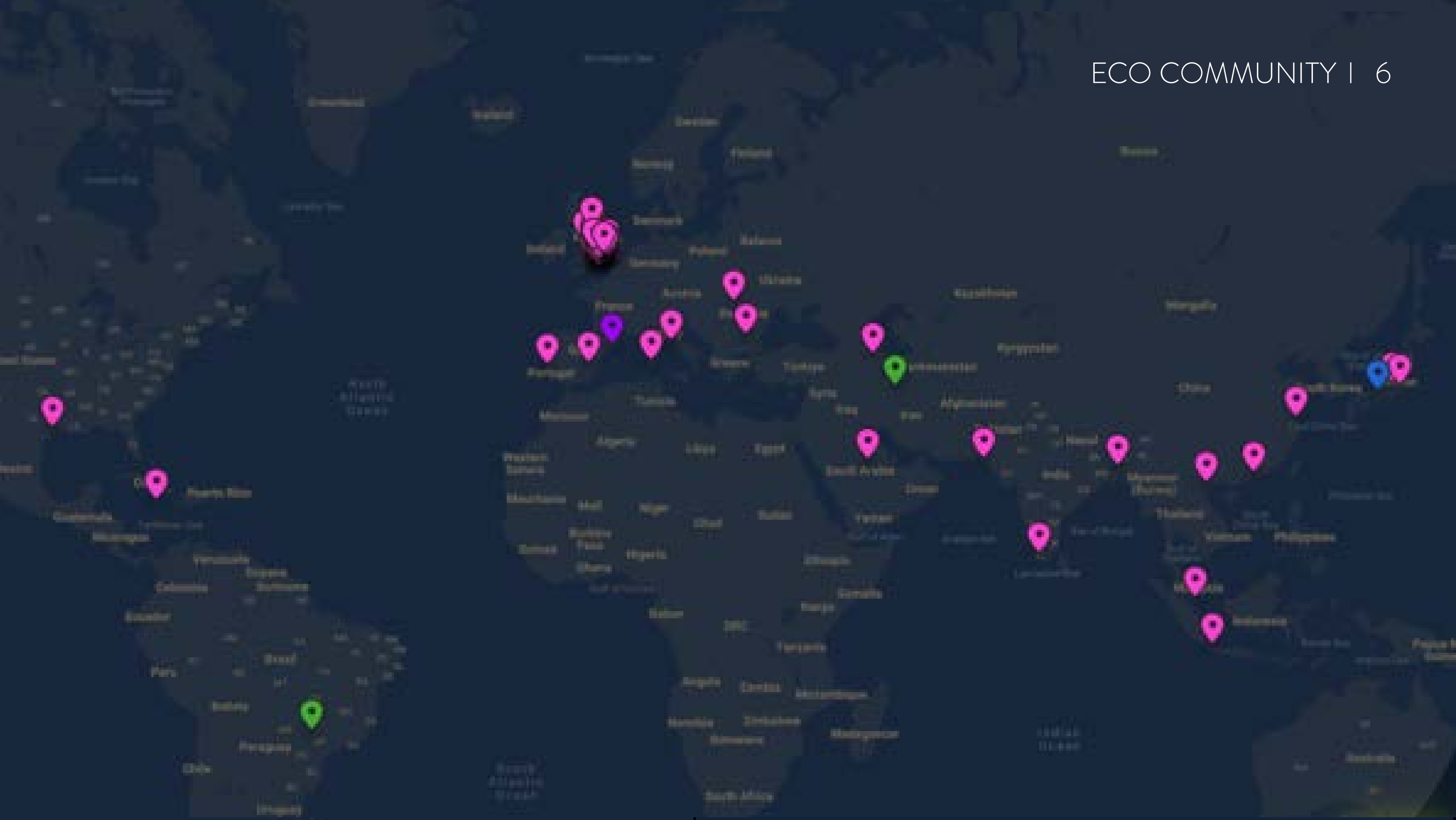
This has not been an easy year, nor should we expect the next one to be simpler. But it has been a year that has reinforced something important: that the right response to uncertainty is not retreat, but investment — in skills, in judgement, in community and in collaboration. If we continue to invest in the partnership between staff, students and the professions, we will continue to give our graduates something distinctive: not just a qualification, but the confidence, awareness and adaptability to progress in a competitive world and to shape it for the better.

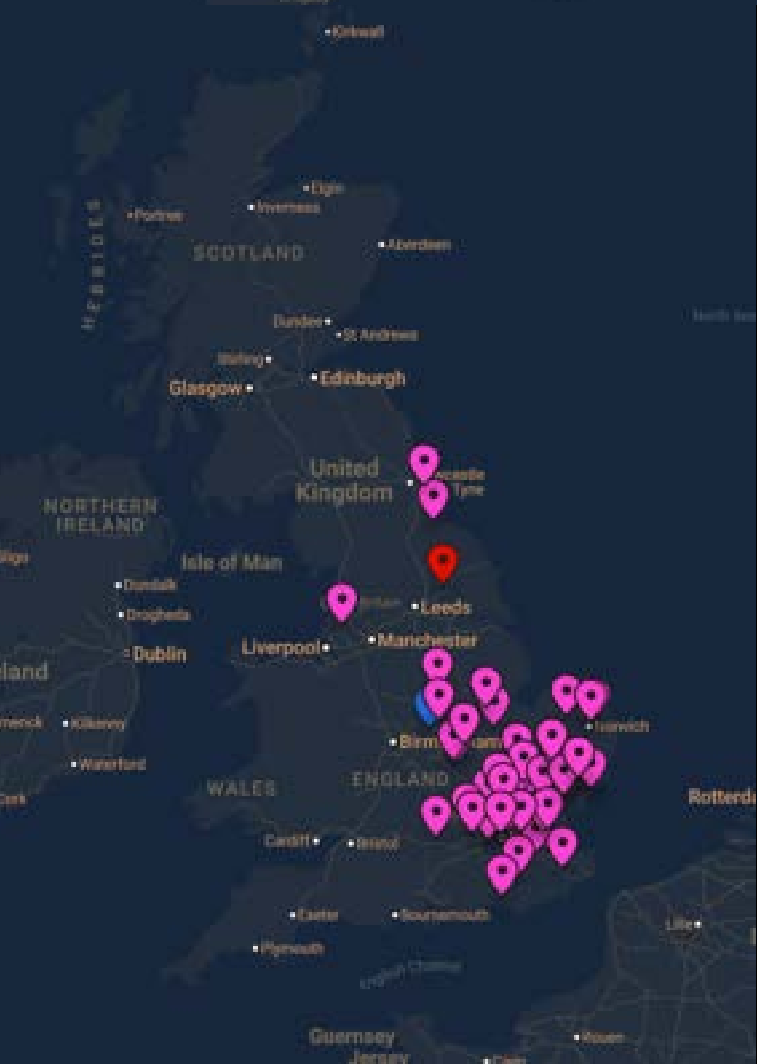
The past year was exciting not only because of what is happening around us, but also because of the changes we introduced in our School life. We adopted a new framework of student-staff collaboration to ensure that student voice is embedded in all important school decisions. We expanded our facilities and launched FEDS: our Finance, Economics and Data Science Lab next to LEDR (the Laboratory for the Economic and Decision Research) where our Masters students are already busy working on their dissertations over the summer. We reviewed our assessments and expanded experiential learning for our students to keep us abreast with the technological changes and labour market expectations. This was indeed a very busy year for us, celebrating many successes and saying some good-byes.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the rolling out of results of the comprehensive assessment review of our Undergraduate courses; expanding the consultancy projects provision to our masters students, the graduation of the first cohort of the BSc Economics, Behaviour, and Data Science students and welcoming the first cohort of our BSc International Finance students. Most of all, I am looking forward to seeing our teaching and study spaces once again busy with students. In our work, we continue to be committed to the high quality of teaching and student experience that hinges upon the expertise of the academics, our links with industry, and student engagement. As academics, we will continue to address the challenges of a changing world through our research and consultancy projects from the economic impact of sports, regulation of the digital economy, through public health, economic equality of gender, and climate policy. I hope you will come to visit us in Norwich to join our busy life of events and conversations.

Prof. Emiliya Lazarova, Head of School


ECO Community





Our Global Community

At the start of the academic year, we asked ECO Students and Staff to place a pin on our Community Map and tell us a little bit about where they're from. We loved seeing and reading about where our community is from and the range of perspectives that make up the School of Economics here at UEA.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

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

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

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

Convenor of the Year

Winner: Juwairiyah 'Jay' Mohammad

Being shortlisted for the TEAs is something I'm really happy about, and it's made me stop and reflect on everything I've been involved in this year. I've led SEEP meetings, bringing together student and staff views and making sure people actually feel listened to.

I've also organised events like the panel event, where we brought in previous students to share their experiences and give students insight into different career paths. A big part of my role has been taking on board different opinions and making sure they're represented in conversations that can actually make a difference.

For me, this nomination isn't just about one thing, but all the small bits of work that come together to improve the student experience. It's been really rewarding, and it's definitely something I want to keep building on.

Student Education Partnership Member of the Year

Winner: Charles Banger

As a first-year Economics student, I was genuinely astonished upon receiving notification of my nomination for the SEP Member of the Year Award at the TEAs. However, what proved most meaningful was not the nomination itself, but rather the recognition from both my lecturers and peers of the considerable effort I had contributed beyond what was immediately visible.

My journey toward this accolade began when I joined EPIC at the start of the academic year, subsequently assuming the role of Chair — a responsibility I had never anticipated. My motivation for taking on this position was rooted in a genuine desire to drive meaningful change: to offer candid, constructive perspectives that would strengthen the School of Economics, and to ensure that my fellow students experienced the most enriching and fulfilling time possible throughout their studies.

Winning the award ultimately affirmed that this commitment had not gone unnoticed.

TEAs
transforming education awards

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Academic Community Contribution Award

Winner: Pemma Lama

Being nominated for the Academic Community Contribution Award is something I am genuinely grateful for, especially as a first-year Economics and Finance student. It is incredibly encouraging to receive this recognition, as it reflects my efforts to contribute beyond my own studies and support those around me. Through my involvement in the Student Economic Experience Partnership, I have had the opportunity to represent student voices and help improve the academic experience, which has been particularly meaningful. Contributing to HARTE articles and media has also allowed me to engage more widely with the community, share ideas, and encourage discussion around important topics. This nomination is not only an honour but also a motivation to continue developing my contributions.

I am looking forward to building on these experiences and helping to foster a supportive, inclusive, and engaging academic environment for others.

Other shortlisted nominees

Inclusivity Champion Award
Zeyu Chen

"This recognition does not belong to me alone; it belongs to every teacher and student who values difference and supports inclusivity, and to a university that has made openness its hallmark. I am deeply grateful for this environment and for the people who make it so welcoming and vibrant."

Kareem Bahgat

"From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone who supported and nominated me. This means more than I can put into words, and it wouldn't have been possible without you."

PhD Supervisor of the Year
Dr. Oana Borcan

"This nomination is a wonderful surprise and a humbling recognition. My sincere thanks go to my amazing students for their hard work, trust and dedication to their research."

UG Advisor of the Year
Dr. Bahar Ghezelayagh

"One of the most rewarding parts of advising is bringing together students from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds, and seeing a truly global Economics community take shape. Supporting that sense of connection and belonging is something I really value. Huge thanks to the students who nominated me."

CELEBRATING EID TOGETHER AT UEA

For many students, Eid is a time to celebrate with family and close friends, share food and enjoy being together. For those studying away from home, that experience can feel quite different. This event was about creating that same sense of celebration at UEA and giving students the chance to come together, enjoy the occasion, and feel part of something familiar and welcoming.

The event came together through the preparations in the weeks leading up to it. We worked together to organise the food delivery, choosing options we thought students would enjoy while making sure everything felt right for the celebration. We also helped put up posters across campus to spread the word and build awareness ahead of the day. By the time it all came together, it felt like a genuine team effort and a lovely reflection of what Eid is really about: bringing people together, sharing with others and creating a sense of community. Overall, the event felt like a positive example of the ECO community coming together to celebrate.

Juwairiyah 'Jay' Mohammad & Kareem Bahgat

CELEBRATING LUNAR NEW YEAR

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

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

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

6th Discrimination and Diversity Workshop

The School of Economics is co-organising the 6th Discrimination and Diversity Workshop, which will take place virtually on 10–11 September 2026. The workshop is jointly organised by colleagues from the University of East Anglia, the University of Exeter, and the University of Birmingham, and brings together researchers working on discrimination, diversity, and inequality, with a particular focus on Applied and Experimental Economics.

We are delighted to welcome two fantastic keynote speakers: Giovanni Peri, from UC Davis, and Paola Profeta, from Bocconi University. The wider programme will showcase research on gender in the workplace, healthcare disparities, LGBTQ+ and diverse gender identities, migration and integration, and inequality in crime and justice.

Two Outstanding Paper Awards, sponsored by the University of Exeter and the EEA Standing Committee on Minorities in Economics, will be presented to recognise excellent research by early-career researchers. These awards underline the workshop's commitment to supporting emerging scholars and promoting high-quality research on discrimination, diversity, and inequality.

Tosin Olusoga 10th Year Memorial

This year, the School of Economics came together to remember Tosin, ten years after his death, in a day full of friendship, reflection and shared memories. Tosin was an Economics student at UEA, and the memorial made clear just how much he meant to those who knew him. Family, friends, staff and students gathered for a memorial service, a walk around campus to revisit the places where he spent his time, and presentations from friends reflecting on his life and time at UEA. Above all, the day was a reminder that Tosin is still very much part of the School's story, and that the friendship, warmth and sense of community he inspired still live on, not least in the student study space that bears his name.

GRADUATION 2026

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESSES OF OUR GRADUATES

Graduation remains one of my favourite days of the academic year. It provides a welcome opportunity to step back from the day-to-day demands of university life and celebrate what really matters: our students' achievements. Seeing so many smiling faces and sharing in such an important milestone is a reminder of why we do what we do.

It was a pleasure to meet proud families and friends, whose support has been so important throughout our students' journeys, and to celebrate with our graduates as they marked the completion of their studies. It was also wonderful to catch up with returning Master's and PhD graduates and recognise the dedication and perseverance that their awards represent.

Congratulations to everyone who graduated this year! It was a privilege to celebrate with you.

Dr. James Watson
Associate Professor in Financial Economics

BROAD HORIZONS FOR THE NORWICH ECONOMIC PUBLICATIONS

Norwich Economic Publications (NEP) has continued to grow throughout the 2025–26 academic year as a student led platform that encourages students to explore economics in an engaging, creative and accessible way. This year's themes, Economic Systems, Innovation and ESG, reflected many of the important conversations taking place in the world today, and students were encouraged to connect these ideas with both their studies and wider real world issues.

Over the past year, the NEP editorial board worked closely together to expand student engagement through publications, podcasts, competitions and online content.

The NEP Essay Competition was a major highlight of the year. The competition received submissions from both undergraduate and postgraduate students, with essays covering all three NEP themes. The quality of work submitted was extremely impressive and reflected the effort, curiosity and originality of the students involved. The competition gave students the opportunity to share their ideas, develop their confidence as writers and researchers, and engage with economic discussions outside the classroom. It also created a supportive environment where students could connect with others who share an interest in economics and current affairs.

Alongside the written publications, NEP continued to grow its podcast and online presence. This year, several podcast-episodes were released covering topics such as placement years, studying abroad, postgraduate study, behavioural economics and student experiences within the School of Economics. These discussions helped make economics feel more approachable and personal for students while also allowing them to hear different perspectives and experiences from across the department.

NEP also increased its engagement through LinkedIn articles, monthly bulletins and coverage of employability events organised by the School of Economics. Members of the NEP team attended events throughout the year and produced summaries and reflections to help share useful career advice and insights with students. These activities helped strengthen the connection between academic study and future career opportunities while also increasing the visibility of NEP beyond the university community.

As the year comes to an end, NEP remains committed to creating opportunities for students to share ideas, express themselves and engage with economics beyond their degree studies. We hope NEP continues to grow in the future and remains a welcoming platform for students with an interest in economics and the world around them.

Violeta Bollano, Chief Editor of the NEP, 3rd Year BSc Economics and Finance

READ AND LISTEN TO THE NEP

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

ECO Sixth Form Partnerships

Strong partnerships between schools and universities help students better understand the opportunities available to them after school. By providing exposure to university life, academic study, and future career pathways, these relationships raise aspirations, build confidence, and help students make more informed decisions about their futures. For many students, they also make higher education feel more accessible and achievable, encouraging them to reach their full potential. UEA's School of Economics works with several schools to give everyone as opportunity to know about what studying at university is like.

Colchester Sixth Form College, Mr Joe Millward:

We greatly value our partnership with UEA and, in particular, the School of Economics. The team has consistently demonstrated enthusiasm, professionalism, and a genuine passion for Economics.

We are especially grateful for the School's commitment to engaging with our students through regular visits and talks that provide valuable insights into what studying Economics at university is really like. These sessions are always engaging, relevant, and thoughtfully connected to issues and interests that resonate with students, helping to bring Economics to life.

This year, our students also had the opportunity to visit UEA. The School of Economics organised an outstanding trip that offered a highly enriching experience. Students took part in practical activities that deepened their understanding of economic concepts such as Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) while developing their digital skills, and they enjoyed a tour of the campus and its facilities.

The visit provided an inspiring insight into the opportunities available at UEA and helped raise students' aspirations for higher education. As a result, many students have become more motivated to pursue Economics at university.

Our partnership with the School of Economics has played an important role in encouraging students to consider Economics as a future pathway, and we look forward to continuing and strengthening this valuable relationship with both the School and UEA in the years ahead.

Saffron Walden County High School, Mr Nate Weersing:

The Economics Department at my comprehensive school, Saffron Walden County High School, has benefited enormously from its strong and longstanding partnership with UEA and the School of Economics.

Over the past three years, the School's outreach activities have provided our Year 12 students with engaging and interactive taster lectures that have significantly increased both enthusiasm for and engagement with Economics. These sessions offer students valuable insights into university-level study while demonstrating the real-world relevance and excitement of the subject.

The impact of this partnership has been remarkable. Since these activities began, more than half of our sixth-form economists have gone on to pursue Economics-related degrees or apprenticeships, and the number of students choosing to study Economics at our school has almost doubled.

NCC Havering Sixth Form Campus, Ms Aysin Hunt:

Strong partnerships between schools, colleges, and universities play a vital role in shaping students' aspirations and future educational choices. Through the collaboration between NCC Havering Sixth Form College and UEA's School of Economics, our students have gained invaluable exposure to higher education opportunities that may previously have seemed distant or beyond their reach.

The partnership has also played an important role in raising aspirations, particularly among students who may not have family members or role models with experience of higher education. Experiencing a university environment and engaging directly with academic staff helped students develop greater confidence in their own potential and encouraged them to consider pathways they may not previously have envisaged.

ECO ALUMNI EVENTS 2025-26

The School of Economics' annual Alumni Event once again brought together alumni, current students, staff and industry partners for an evening of networking, discussion and shared experiences.

This year's event marked a return to our wonderful campus, taking place in The Enterprise Centre (TEC) after several years of being hosted in London. While future editions are likely to return to London, perhaps with some alternating between, it was fantastic to welcome alumni back to Norwich and provide an opportunity to reconnect with the School and the campus where many of them began their careers.

Earlier in the day, the School also hosted its biannual Strategic Advisory Board meeting. Our industry partners provided valuable insights and advice, helping to ensure that our teaching, employability initiatives and wider activities continue to reflect the needs of employers and the changing world of work.

The Alumni Event included a panel discussion on Internships versus Placement Years, led by Pete Dawson (ECO Placement Director) and myself (Ritchie Woodard, ECO Employability Director). The discussion explored the different ways students can gain work experience during their studies and how they can decide which opportunities are right for them.

We were delighted to welcome alumni: Mandave Singh, Shane Joseph, Semande Amosu, Lizzie Cumbers and Louie Sylvester, alongside Richard Ross and Stef Smith, who also provided valuable employer perspectives. Drawing on their own experiences, the panellists discussed what internships and placement years involve in practice, the skills they help students develop, and the different benefits each route can offer. Students gained first-hand insights into how work experience can support career development and improve graduate opportunities.

The event also provided an opportunity for alumni and current students to connect informally, continuing a tradition of graduates sharing advice, experiences and encouragement with the next generation of economists.

ECO ALUMNA IN THE VATICAN

The School also contributed to the inaugural wider UEA Alumni Networking Event, held on campus the following week. Alongside the Norwich Business School (NBS), the School of Law (LAW) and the School of Education (EDU), ECO supported a panel discussion on the future of work. We were particularly pleased to see current MSc Behavioural Economics and Data Science student Ludovica Paradisi representing ECO on the panel, alongside senior professionals from industry and the legal sector, helping to showcase their expertise and perspectives to an engaged audience.

We would like to thank all alumni, students, staff and partners who contributed to both events and helped make them such a success.

Dr. Ritchie Woodard
Employability Director

A University of East Anglia graduate has been appointed to one of the most senior leadership positions in the Vatican. Sister Alessandra Smerilli, who completed her PhD in Economics at UEA, has been appointed by Pope Leo XIV as Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The appointment makes her only the third woman to lead a Vatican dicastery - one of the Holy See's most senior administrative offices.

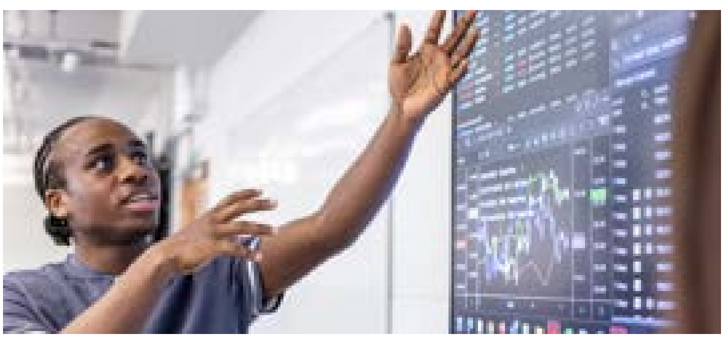
Sister Smerilli currently serves as the second-in-command in the dicastery, which is responsible for migrants, the environment, and development, and will succeed the retiring Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, who is set to turn 80 this month. Professor Robert Sugden, from UEA's School of Economics, said: "Alessandra was a PhD student in economics in the early 2010s and I was one of her supervisors, together with Professor Shaun Hargreaves Heap, who now works at King's College London.

"She wrote a great thesis reporting experiments and theoretical work on 'team reasoning' - the idea that people can solve problems requiring co-ordination or co-operation by looking for the combination of actions that is best for them 'as a team' and then each playing their part in this combination.
"After leaving UEA, she has taught economics at an Italian university and has worked in the department of the Vatican that promotes human development around the world.
"Alongside this work, she has been active in a group of academics who favour a 'civil economy' approach to economics in which team reasoning ideas have a natural fit.
"She and I often meet at this group's workshops and conferences. It's great to hear that the Vatican has recognised her ability by appointing her to such a high office. I'm proud to have had some role in her career and to have her as a friend."

YOU SAID, WE HEARD.

“In ECO, student voice is not an add-on. It is part of how we work, how we improve and how we build the School together”

In the School of Economics (ECO), we are proud of the partnership we have with our students. We believe it is one of the things that makes the School distinctive. Students play a real role in shaping what we do, and that partnership has led to genuine innovation across the School, from new degrees, including BSc Economics and Finance, which began as a student idea, to extracurricular initiatives such as our Python workshops. Our students are not just participants. They are active partners in building our community.



The strength of this partnership can be seen in our student voice outcomes. ECO consistently performs strongly in the Student Voice theme of the National Student Survey, and in May 2026 that culture of partnership was recognised at UEA’s Transforming Education Awards. Jay Mohammad, Pemma Lama and Charles Banger each received awards for their contributions to student voice, academic community and student partnership.

This success comes from a simple commitment: involving students in the life of the School. Through this, students are able to shape their experience at UEA, build meaningful relationships with staff beyond the classroom and develop skills and experiences that strengthen their CVs.

At the heart of this partnership is the Student Economic Experience Partnership (SEEP), where students and academics meet throughout the year to discuss priorities set by students themselves. To give this work structure and impact, the SSLC is supported by several subgroups:

- CARE focuses on real-time feedback, identifying what is working well, where improvements can be made and what students want more of.
- SAGE focuses on student engagement, helping the School understand how students experience their studies, their community and the support available to them.
- EPIC (Education Practice and Innovation Committee) focuses on strategy, helping staff and students develop new ideas that strengthen the student experience.

Together, these forums ensure that student voices are heard, valued and acted upon.
In ECO, student voice is not an add-on. It is part of how we work, how we improve and how we build the School together.

Dr. James Watson
Teaching Director

NOT JUST A DEGREE, A SAY IN HOW IT'S BUILT

What if your degree didn't just adapt to change, but was shaped by you? At the School of Economics, that is how things work. Through EPIC, students work directly with staff on teaching, assessment, and where the degree is heading. This goes beyond the usual idea of feedback. It means being involved in decisions that shape what the degree is trying to do and what it is preparing you for.

You can already see the difference. EPIC has contributed to clearer assessment criteria, more structured group work, and workloads that feel more realistic across modules. These are not small adjustments. They affect how your week feels, how clear expectations are, and how manageable the course is in practice. More importantly, they show that student input is not just collected. It has consequences.

The recent work on Artificial Intelligence brought this into sharper focus. The conversation did not stay on rules for long. It moved to a more direct question about the value of the degree itself. If parts of the work can now be done by technology, what are we here to learn? More importantly, what should an economics curriculum now prioritise if it is meant to prepare students not just for university, but for professional life beyond it?

Students are not waiting to be told the answer. There is a growing awareness that some of the skills we have been trained to prioritise are shifting in value. The response has not been resistance. If anything, it has been more demanding. Students want to know how to use these tools properly, but also what sits beyond them. What remains valuable when the technical steps are no longer the hard part. That is one reason the curriculum has to keep evolving: not to chase technology for its own sake, but to ensure students develop the judgement, adaptability and confidence that matter when tools, workplaces and expectations are changing quickly.

The strength of this partnership can be seen in our student voice outcomes. ECO consistently performs strongly in the Student Voice theme of the National Student Survey, and in May 2026 that culture of partnership was recognised at UEA's Transforming Education Awards.

This success comes from a simple commitment: involving students in the life of the School. Through this, students are able to shape their experience at UEA, build meaningful relationships with staff beyond the classroom and develop skills and experiences that strengthen their CVs.

EPIC has helped bring that thinking into how the course is being discussed and developed. The focus is starting to move away from what needs to be controlled and towards what needs to be strengthened. That includes how students build confidence over time, how they work with data in practice, and how they apply ideas beyond simplified models. It also includes how students develop the transferable skills that employers increasingly value: sound judgement, collaboration, communication, problem-solving and the ability to adapt as technologies and ways of working change. The aim is not to add more content. It is to make the degree hold together better and feel more grounded in how economics is practically used.

EPIC is built on a simple idea. If education is changing, students should not just adapt to it. They should have a role in deciding what it becomes. That means helping shape a degree that not only reflects new technologies like AI, but also strengthens the capabilities that students will carry with them into their many different futures.

Charles Banger, EPIC Chair,
BSc Economics and Finance

A SUPERCHARGED SSLC

BUILT BY EVERY TYPE OF ECO STUDENT

Walk into a SEEP meeting and you quickly realise it is not a typical committee. SEEP, the School of Economics Experience Partnership, is our version of a Staff-Student Liaison Committee, but it has become something much more active. It is where students and staff work together to shape what studying economics feels like, not just reflect on it afterwards.
A big reason this works is that there is no single “type” of economics student. Students come to university with different motivations. Some are drawn in by the subject itself and want to push their understanding further. Some are focused on where their degree will take them in terms of careers. Some arrive without a fixed plan and use university to explore different options. Others are just as interested in the wider experience of university life as the course itself. Most students are a mix of these.

The National Union of Students uses similar categories to describe this, referring to academics, next steppers, option openers, and toe dippers. What matters here is that SEEP is set up so all students can get involved in ways that make sense for them:

- **Academics** often use SEEP to shape how they learn. Through CARE (Committee for Academic Review and Evaluation), students work with staff on teaching, assessment, and course content.
- **Next steppers** tend to get involved in the more practical side of SEEP. That might mean leading projects, contributing to initiatives, or building skills like leadership and communication that carry beyond university.
- **Option openers** use SEEP to get involved and try things out. Groups like SAGE (Student Advisory Group on Engagement) give space to explore ideas and work out what matters to them.
- **Toe dippers** often get involved in shaping the wider student experience. That could be through events, initiatives, or helping make the School feel more connected and inclusive.

What really stands out is how SEEP has changed the relationship between students and staff. There is now a genuine link between the two. Students feel comfortable approaching staff and sharing their opinions without worrying about being judged. That makes a big difference, because it means conversations lead somewhere.

Being part of SEEP is also a way of shaping the university experience while studying here. Students can make suggestions, and those suggestions are taken on board and put into action where they can be. It becomes clear quite quickly that ideas do not just get discussed, they lead to change.

A clear example of this is the Student Advisor Initiative. Working with the Senior Advisor, students helped to create a new way of supporting their peers. For those involved, it has improved their own experience while also building skills such as leadership and communication. At the same time, it has created something that will continue to benefit future students. There is also a strong sense of energy among students involved. Economics students are not afraid to ask for what they want, but they are also willing to work with staff to make those ideas happen. It is this combination that turns ideas into real change, while also creating opportunities to meet like-minded students, work together, and contribute to events and initiatives that shape the wider experience of the School.

At its core, this is about building a School where everyone can contribute. The difference is that this is not just an idea, it is something students are already doing. The only question is whether to be part of it. If that sounds like something worth exploring, head to the student space on https://harteuea.org and see where it could take you.

Juwairiyah Mohammad, School Convenor,
BSc Economics and Finance

Research

REGAINING TRUST IN MARKETS

“At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful idea: markets only thrive in the long run if people feel they are treated fairly”

In July 2025, three researchers from UEA had the privilege of presenting our latest work on transactional and distributional fairness at a workshop hosted by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR), Britain’s oldest independent economic research institute. NIESR was founded in 1938 by reformers such as John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge and holding the workshop in its historic library gave us a tangible sense of how economic ideas can shape real policy. The event was attended by senior staff from the Competition and Markets Authority, the Department for Business and Trade, and leading experts on data and digital markets. It showed how academic research at UEA connects directly with the decisions that affect millions of households and businesses.

At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful idea: markets only thrive in the long run if people feel they are treated fairly. When consumers sense unfair pricing, weak competition, or growing inequality, trust in markets, regulators, and the economy as a whole can weaken. This not only harms individual firms but can also fuel political pressure for arbitrary interventions, create uncertainty, and slow growth. At UEA’s School of Economics, researchers are addressing these challenges through two complementary strands: transactional fairness and distributional fairness.

Transactional fairness asks: when are day-to-day transactions fair, and how should regulators think about fairness in practice? Traditional economics assumes that competitive markets automatically work well for rational consumers. Behavioural economics has shown that people often decide in ways that do not fit this simple model. Firms can then use complex pricing or marketing tactics that many people see as exploitative, especially when they are rushed, stressed, or less confident. Our work, building on ideas by Robert Sugden, proposes a fairness standard based on two ethical principles: transactions should be voluntary, and each party should behave in a way that helps the other meet their normal expectations. This means avoiding deception, not blocking consumers’ access to alternatives, and not targeting vulnerable groups. For students, this shows how economics can be both rigorous and deeply ethical; a theme we bring into our teaching on competition, regulation, and consumer markets.

Distributional fairness looks at how market structures affect different groups in society. Research at UEA shows that lower-income households often live in more concentrated markets, with fewer choices and higher prices. Wealthier consumers may enjoy more options, better deals, and greater ability to switch. This means that competition policy is not only about efficiency; it can also help reduce inequality. By protecting competition and resisting excessive price increases in everyday markets, from food and energy to transport, regulators can disproportionately shield poorer households from the harshest impacts. For future economists, this means that understanding competition, inequality, and welfare is central to designing policies that restore trust without sacrificing growth.

Dr. Franco Mariuzzo, Prof. Robert Sugden & Dr. Bruce Lyons

Europe must protect itself against AI as a geopolitical weapon

"Europe still too often treats artificial intelligence as if it were one abstract technology primarily associated with innovation and economic growth."

That has become a dangerous misconception. AI is no longer just an economic tool, but also a geopolitical instrument of power.

That is precisely why Europe must approach AI risks much more specifically. Not all AI poses the same kind of threat. Researchers at the Tilburg Law and Economics Center (TILEC) demonstrate this in a European Commission project on "AI in Autocratic Countries." They distinguish four types of AI: rule-based systems, data-driven learning systems, autonomous physical systems such as drones, and generative AI that produces text, images, and video.

Converging threats are the greatest risk

Each type brings different risks. Generative AI, for example, can be used to flood European societies with tailored disinformation and influence elections. Autonomous weapons shorten the time between detection and attack, making escalation faster and more dangerous. In addition, Europe makes itself vulnerable by remaining dependent on foreign chips, cloud infrastructure, and AI models.

The greatest risk emerges when these threats converge: cyberattacks, disinformation, and political manipulation can simultaneously put critical infrastructure and democratic institutions under pressure.

Europe needs targeted defensive strategies

Europe therefore does not need more general debates about AI, but targeted defensive strategies. Together with independent research institute Centerdata, the researchers are developing a real-time dashboard that can identify threats from countries such as China and Russia at an early stage and help policymakers respond more quickly.

The question is no longer how Europe can economically benefit from AI, but how it can protect itself against AI as a geopolitical weapon.

Prof. Jens Prüfer

Based on: He, Kun, and Jens Prüfer (2026). "AI Risks to Nations: A Domain-Modality Framework for Risk Assessment," Tilburg Law and Economics Center (TILEC), Tilburg University, in progress.

Can AI help us coordinate better and more fairly?

“How would YOU play a repeated Prisoner’s dilemma? – A situation where cooperation helps everyone, but individual incentives tempt people to act selfishly.”

In 1984, Robert Axelrod showed in a famous tournament that a simple “tit-for-tat” strategy—cooperate first, then copy your opponent—outperforms most other approaches.

More than 40 years later, the idea of finding good strategies through such tournaments has been identified as one way in which humans can share leadership about societal decisions and norms with Artificial Intelligence. Specifically, AI could automate this process, generating and testing strategies and offering real-time advice to decision-makers. The key question is whether people trust and adopt that advice?

For some time already, computers perform better than humans in games such as chess or go. While playing those games is not unavoidable, there are games that we cannot avoid in our day-to-day life. One such game is arguably the “MAD Chairs game”: Imagine five people trying to sit on four chairs. If you sit alone, you get rewarded. If someone else picks your chair, you both get nothing. Quite a bit like Musical Chairs. Coordinating on the access to a limited resource is what we do when choosing lanes in traffic, a profession, or a lifeboat, and deciding when to contribute to a conversation. Autonomous vehicles will play MAD Chairs. Can we avoid technology in such unavoidable games?

Together with its creator, Chris Santos-Lang, the ECO researchers Amir Jafarzadeh and Stefan Penczynski studied human behaviour in this game.

The norm that tended to govern choices after 20 rounds had at least three participants attempting to hoard their ‘own chair’ while the remaining player(s) rebelled against this social order. The results were not only highly unequal, but also had imperfect efficiency.

The second investigation looked at the behaviour when advice was given according to the strategy that won an Axelrod-type tournament. This strategy has players take turns and makes sure that those following the advice end up with about the same rewards.

Surprisingly, the advice increased neither the average reward nor the equality among players. The norm behaviour now was to follow the advice. As opposed to before, generating rewards was therefore in reach for every participant. However, many players did not follow the advice and ended up dragging down the average and the equality. Whether this was due to mistrust, misunderstanding or other factors remains to be explored.

These are early results, but they illustrate vividly that - as long as the adoption is voluntary - the success of AI in shaping society will depend not just on how good its advice is - but on whether people are willing to follow it. By design, the benefits accrue mainly to those who choose to follow.

Dr. Stefan P. Penczynski

How AI Is Changing the Way We Make Financial Decisions

I was delighted to speak at a recent business breakfast briefing in February 2026 on how artificial intelligence is reshaping investor behaviour and financial decision-making. The event brought together professionals, business leaders and academics for a lively discussion on markets, technology and the future of decision-making under uncertainty.

As an academic in the School of Economics at UEA, my research focuses on behavioural finance: how real people make financial decisions, often in ways that differ from the perfectly rational models found in textbooks. That perspective is becoming increasingly relevant as AI tools move rapidly into investing, wealth management and everyday financial choices.

My talk explored a simple but important point: AI can help people process information, but it can also influence what they believe. Investors make decisions based on expectations about the future, their tolerance for risk, and the choices available to them. AI can now generate forecasts, summarise market news and recommend portfolios within seconds. Yet while technology can assist judgment, it cannot remove uncertainty or bear risk on behalf of the person making the decision.

This creates new behavioural challenges. When predictions are presented with percentages, charts and confident language, people may trust them too easily. Numbers can make uncertainty feel smaller than it really is. In that sense, AI may not replace human judgment, but it can strongly shape it.

I was especially pleased to contribute to the event through my long-term relationship with Chadwicks Wealth Management, where I serve as an external behavioural finance consultant. This collaboration has involved applying research insights to practical questions such as client decision-making, communication, and the role psychology plays in financial planning. It is a valuable example of how academic research can inform professional practice, while real-world challenges in turn inspire new research questions.

The audience brought thoughtful and practical questions, ranging from trust in AI systems to whether automated tools will improve decisions or simply change how mistakes are made. These are important issues not only for investors, but for policymakers, businesses and households as AI becomes part of everyday economic life.

Events like this show the value of connecting universities with industry and the wider community. As researchers, we generate knowledge—but it becomes most powerful when it enters real conversations and real decisions.

Dr. Ariel Gu

TIME SERIES WORKSHOP 2026

The fourth edition of School of Economics' Time Series Workshop on 28th & 29th May 2026.

The 4th edition of the "UEA Time Series Workshop" took place in person at UEA ECO May 28-29, 2026. It is designed as a forum for academics and central bankers to discuss recent advances in time series econometrics. Both theoretical and empirical submissions were encouraged in an open call for papers.

Keynote speeches are given by

Raffaella Giacomini **(University College London)**

Christian Matthes **(University of Notre Dame)**

Robert Taylor **(University of Essex)**

In addition to these, presentations include topics such as climate shocks, fiscal policy, and productivity shocks, all with a strong focus on time series econometrics. Presenters come from different backgrounds, including the central banks of Spain and England, and academic institutions in the US, the UK, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy.

Support for the workshop is generously provided by the International Association for Applied Econometrics, the Society for Nonlinear Dynamics and Econometrics, and by the British Academy.

A best paper award has been chosen by the programme committee (Gustavo, Nikos, and Martin) and was given to the best paper presented by a junior researcher (a current PhD student or a researcher less than 6 years after their PhD defence). This years winner was Damiano Di Franceso from the Sant'Anna school of Advanced studies in Italy, pictured below.

Dr. Martin Bruns

Teaching

Celebrating the First Graduates of our 3+1 International Finance Programme

July 2026 marks the graduation of the very first cohort of students from the 3+1 International Finance programme.

Launched in September 2025, the project represents a significant step forward in the cooperation between the School of Economics at UEA and overseas partners. The first cohort of 41 students has successfully completed their studies and is preparing to begin new chapters in their lives. As we celebrate the success of the programme and look forward to its future development, it is great to hear the students' thoughts, experiences, and recommendations regarding the project.

Jiacheng Yang:

"One of the most rewarding aspects of my experience at UEA has been meeting many professional, kind, and supportive teachers. They not only provided valuable academic guidance but also offered thoughtful advice whenever I felt uncertain about my future direction. Throughout the year, I actively participated in activities organised by ECO and the wider university community. As a member of the UEA Ballet Team, I travelled with my teammates to five different cities to compete against other universities, and we achieved first place in all five competitions this academic year."

Ye Guan:

"I am truly grateful that I chose UEA for my studies. At first, I thought everything would be difficult, but as I gradually got to know my teachers, I found them to be friendly, caring, and patient, which made my academic life far less stressful and much more enjoyable.

The campus environment is wonderful and uniquely connected with nature, creating a truly special atmosphere. During this year, I not only gained valuable knowledge, but also built lasting friendships. These are the things I value most from this experience."

Zhangyani Liu:

"My connection with UEA began when I was attracted by its strong reputation and the welcoming environment of the city. Nearly a year has passed so quickly, and my experience here has been truly rewarding. The excellent teachers and well-designed modules, together with studying alongside classmates from different backgrounds, have made me feel the warmth of home in the UK.

At UEA, teachers are always approachable, patient, and responsible, whether in academic discussions or casual conversations. I feel very fortunate to have chosen UEA as part of my journey. The friendships, knowledge, and memories I gained here will always stay with me."

From France To Norwich

“If you ever get the chance to do an exchange abroad, take it! The doors it opens might surprise you.”

When I found out Norwich was available as an exchange destination, it immediately stood out to me. It was my first choice, and from the very first week, something about this place just clicked. I was not alone in that feeling, as Norwich was recently named the UK’s overall Best Place to Live by The Sunday Times in its 2026 guide, and living here, it is easy to see why.

I came from the Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France, where economics is taught intensively and campus life follows a familiar rhythm. UEA introduced me to a different pace - one where independent thinking is genuinely encouraged, and curiosity is met with enthusiasm. What surprised me most was how naturally I connected with my lecturers. Back home, that closeness takes time to build. Here, it happened almost immediately.

The experience that defined my time at UEA most was a workshop on ‘Women for a Resilient Economy’, organised by Dr Liliana Harding, our tutor through the ‘Regional Economic Integration module’. The event brought together students and researchers from the UEA and the Carpathian National University in Ukraine. I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of about France, sharing a cross-border perspectives on gender representation in economics. Across the three countries, we found the same story repeating: women outperform men in educational attainment, yet remain underrepresented in higher-paying roles, leadership positions, and/or economics itself.

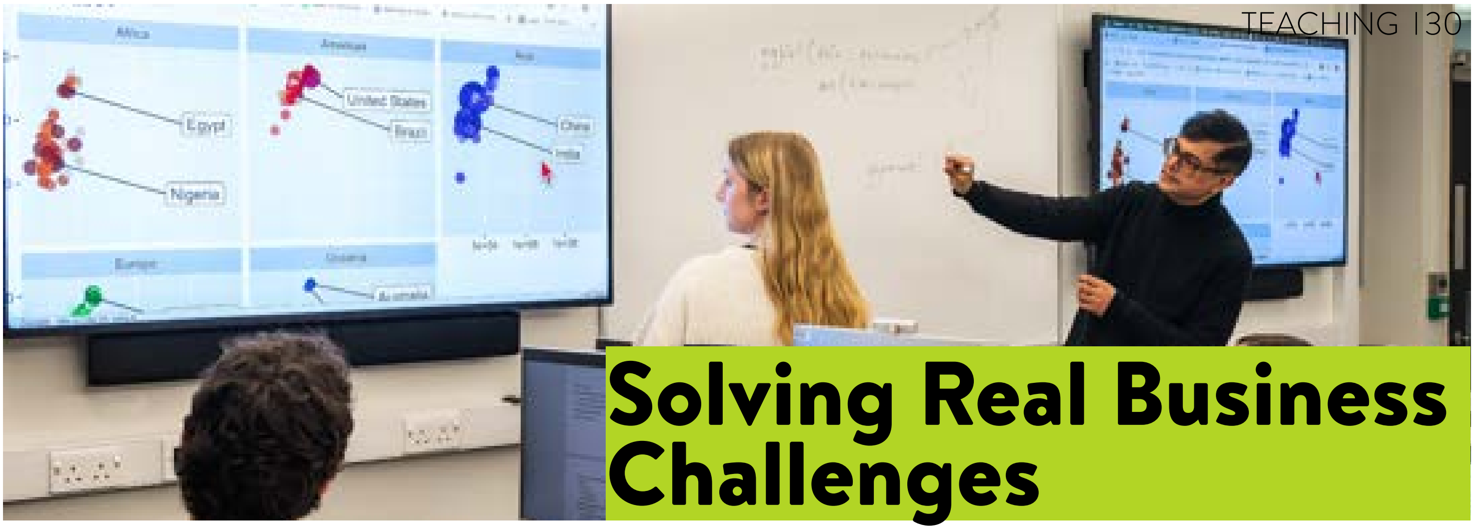
What struck me most was not the differences between our countries, but how much we recognised ourselves in each other’s experiences. That shared understanding felt like the most powerful outcome of the day. It led me to write a piece for the Norwich Economic Publications (NEP) titled “From the Classroom to the Labour Market: Gender Roles in Economics”, my first publication and shortly after Ruby Howard invited me onto an NEP podcast to extend the discussion with her in a dedicated episode. Both experiences gave me a confidence I had not expected to find here!

What I had also not anticipated was how directly those conversations would shape my next steps. The publication from the workshop caught the attention of professors back in France. Before my UEA semester had even ended, I was accepted there for a research internships: in environmental economics and its integration in Africa. Moreover, a second internship focused on econometrics and data analysis is already planned for next year. For that, Dr Fuyu Yang’s Introduction to Programming and Data Science module deserves real credit. She introduced me to coding, and that foundation is now underpinning everything I am building towards in research.

And what made UEA particularly special was the Economics Society events, the Coffee Cookies and Chat events, and the Economics Summer Ball. It is a place where every student, whatever their background, is made to feel truly welcome.

I arrived as a visitor and left feeling like part of something. That is the kind of exchange experience you hope for and I was lucky enough to live it.

Fanilo Ramaromampiandra – ECO exchange student from Université de Lorraine, France



Solving Real Business Challenges

“I’m now much more confident taking on open-ended problems and bridging academia with industry.”

In the final year, undergraduate students have the opportunity to conduct a consultancy project with a business, public sector organisation or charity, providing them with some professional work experience and giving the organisations access to our talented students and their economic analysis and skills. Here, we showcase the reflections of two such students who undertook consultancy projects this year; one a timely project to analyse the impact on migration forecasts due to the introduction of unitary authorities in the region, the other a microeconomic analysis of business decision making in the technology sector.

Tom Collins:

“My consultancy project with the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP), hosted by Local Government East, was one of the most rewarding experiences of my degree. Working on a live, commissioned brief, producing migration forecasts for proposed new council structures ahead of Local Government Reorganisation, gave my research genuine real-world purpose. Every analytical decision had a direct implication for how local authorities might plan services for vulnerable populations, which sharpened my thinking in ways that purely academic work rarely does.

The project developed skills I hadn’t anticipated, navigating incomplete datasets, making defensible assumptions under uncertainty, and communicating complex findings to a non-academic audience. It also gave me a clearer sense of the kind of work I want to pursue; I came in with an interest in government policy and left with a much stronger understanding of how evidence actually informs public sector decision-making.”

Alex Page:

“Undertaking my consultancy project with NTT Com Asia was arguably the most rewarding decision I have made during my time at UEA. The consultancy-style dissertation focused on whether direct liquid cooling and photonic interconnects were worth investing in for a regional data centre operator. Despite the steep learning curve, the project gave me space to develop in ways a traditional dissertation wouldn’t have. I came out of it with a working understanding of data centre operations and energy economics, neither of which I had touched before. More than that, the format pushed me to manage the project on my own terms, drawing on the workshop skills taught earlier in the module. I decided what to model, what to leave out, and how to pitch recommendations in a client setting. Working to a real-world brief brought a different kind of pressure, and I’m now much more confident taking on open-ended problems and bridging academia with industry.”

The opportunity for students to apply their skills and knowledge to a live project brief for an organisation is hugely rewarding, and the benefits for their professional development are clear to see. Organisations find the outputs valuable and use them to inform their decision making and operations.

HARTE UEA RE-LAUNCHED

Where Student Thinking Becomes Visible

“HARTE Creates a setting where student thinking does not disappear after assessment but remains part of an ongoing academic conversation.”

HARTE UEA, the Hub for Academic Research and Teaching in Economics, has been relaunched with a structure that reflects more clearly what it is trying to do. The previous version brought together a range of useful material, but the connections between teaching, research and student experience were not always easy to follow, and the purpose of the site could be lost. The relaunch addresses this by making those relationships more explicit.

This is evident in the organisation of HARTE UEA. The main sections, Teachers, Researchers, Students and Community, do more than group content. They reflect how economics operates within the School, with teaching and research sitting alongside student experience rather than being positioned above it. Moving across the site makes these relationships easier to see. The HARTE Manifesto provides a point of reference throughout, framing economics as applied, pluralist and engaged with real world problems, and this perspective runs through HARTE UEA rather than sitting apart from it.

The Students section is where this approach is most visible. It now sits at the centre of HARTE UEA rather than alongside it. The Student Hub brings together committees working on strategy, quality assurance and engagement, alongside practical resources such as ECO Bridge and the ECO Study Guide. These are presented not as separate initiatives but as parts of a wider system that links student support, curriculum development and academic engagement.

This carries through to the student publishing space within HARTE UEA, where the blogs are organised into three clearly defined series: Student Insights, Shared Perspectives and Equity Diaries. Each provides a distinct way of engaging with economics, whether through applying it to real world issues, collaborating

with staff, or reflecting on questions of inclusion and belonging within the discipline. Taken together, they position student work as part of the academic environment rather than something that sits outside it.

The rest of HARTE UEA supports this direction without distraction. Interactive resources help students work through ideas and apply them, and the progression from encountering a concept to seeing it used or challenged in practice is evident. The Community section extends this by linking students, alumni, advisors, blogs and podcasts into a visible network.

This matters because much of economics teaching still separates learning, research and application more than it needs to. HARTE UEA brings these elements into the same space and makes their relationship visible. In doing so, it creates a setting in which student thinking does not disappear after assessment but remains part of an ongoing academic conversation.

HARTE UEA now functions as a hub in the full sense of the term: a place where teaching, research and student work are brought together, made visible, and used.

Prof. Duncan Watson - **Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement**

CHECK OUT THE HARTE BLOG HERE!

https://harteuea.org/

Employability

EMPOWERING EMPLOYABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Ritchie Woodard, Employability Director

INTERNSHIPS

Gaining Insight into Academic Research

The School of Economics (ECO) runs student research internships, providing students with the opportunity to support the research activities of academic staff while developing valuable professional skills. This year, six projects were supported through the spring, with a further six supported over the summer.

One of our spring interns, final-year Economics student **Elle Phillips**, worked with **Dr. Sheheryar Banuri** on a research project developing a new agent-based model to help predict policy responses.

Reflecting on her experience, Elle explained:

“As a final-year Economics student, I was interested in applying because I wanted to gain a better understanding of what academic research looks like and develop skills beyond those used in coursework. I was also eager to experience an independent style of work to explore whether research could be something I would like to pursue in the future.”

She highlighted that the application process itself was a valuable learning experience:

“The application and recruitment process involved having my CV reviewed and taking part in an online interview, which was incredibly valuable as it gave me practice in presenting my skills and experiences professionally. This alone helped build my confidence for future applications and interviews.”

During the internship, Elle conducted literature reviews exploring the factors influencing household and firm behaviour, helping to identify and summarise key findings from academic research. Reflecting on the skills she developed, she noted:

“This internship experience improved my confidence in reading academic research efficiently and extracting the most important information from large amounts of reading. I also developed my written communication, organisation, and attention to detail, all of which are transferable skills that will be useful in future employment.

She also commented on how collaborative the process was: “I enjoyed seeing how collaborative research can be. Discussing ideas and receiving feedback throughout the internship helped me better understand how economic research develops over time and the importance of using credible academic sources.”

Her advice to students considering similar opportunities: “I would strongly recommend applying, even if you feel you do not have sufficient experience yet. This internship helped me build confidence professionally and gave me a clearer understanding of how research is conducted outside of university assignments. Most importantly, it was a great opportunity to gain experience in a professional academic environment, which allowed me to continue developing skills that will be useful in many future career paths.”

Her supervisor, **Dr. Sheheryar Banuri**, praised the contribution she made to the project:

“Elle made a tremendously valuable contribution to my current research project. Her work focused on reviewing the literature on household and firm behaviour, identifying the key factors that shape economic decision-making, and summarising these insights clearly and carefully. This kind of literature review is not peripheral to the project; it is a critical component of model design and calibration.”

The internship programme continues to provide students with opportunities to apply their academic skills in a professional research environment while contributing to live research projects within the School.

Working with the RNAA

“Applying economic theory to real world questions - such as regional economic impact, stakeholder value, and community engagement - has strengthened my understanding of how academic knowledge can be translated into meaningful societal outcomes.”

This spring, I have had the opportunity to move beyond lectures and seminars and take part in a research project with clear civic purpose and regional impact. I am currently working as a Student Research Assistant on a large scale Social and Economic Impact Assessment commissioned by the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association (RNAA), in collaboration with the School of Economics at the University of East Anglia.

The RNAA plays an important role in supporting agriculture, education, culture, and the rural economy across Norfolk. The wider project aims to better understand and evidence this contribution by analysing economic impacts, social and educational outcomes, stakeholder engagement, and by benchmarking RNAA activities against similar organisations nationally. While the project will continue to develop over the coming year with additional researchers and contributors, my role forms part of the initial phase, helping to establish a strong research foundation.

Working under the academic guidance of Dr Bahar Ghezelayagh, my responsibilities have included reviewing academic literature, supporting the design and refinement of survey instruments, and working with data gathered from multiple sources. Through this experience, I’ve gained valuable insight into how economic research is carried out beyond the classroom and how evidence is produced to inform organisational strategy and public understanding.

A particularly important aspect of this work has been its civic dimension. The project directly supports an organisation that serves the regional community, contributing to informed decision making and long term planning.

Being involved has highlighted the role universities and students can play in fulfilling their civic duties - using academic skills and research capacity to generate knowledge that benefits local communities, institutions, and economies.
The internship has also helped me develop practical skills, including independent working, critical thinking, and professional communication. Applying economic theory to real world questions - such as regional economic impact, stakeholder value, and community engagement - has strengthened my understanding of how academic knowledge can be translated into meaningful societal outcomes.

I am grateful to the School of Economics Employability Team, and Dr Ritchie Woodard, for the funding that made this opportunity possible. Their support reflects a clear commitment to integrating employability, civic responsibility, and research led learning within the student experience.
I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr Bahar Ghezelayagh for her guidance, encouragement, and support throughout this internship. Her mentorship was instrumental in helping me contribute effectively to this massive project and develop both as a researcher and as a professional.

Overall, this experience has been both challenging and rewarding. It has reinforced my interest in applied economic research while demonstrating how student involvement can contribute to projects with genuine public value. I am proud to be contributing to the early stages of a research programme that will continue to grow over the year ahead, delivering insights that matter to Norfolk and beyond.

Mohammed Roomi, 2nd Year student, BSc Economics

ROYAL NORFOLK AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MENTOR SCHEME

The School of Economics mentoring scheme connects current students with alumni mentors, creating opportunities to share experiences, explore career paths, and build professional confidence. By bringing together students and graduates who have recently navigated similar challenges and decisions, the scheme enables both mentors and mentees to learn from one another and develop valuable professional relationships.

One of this year's mentoring partnerships brings together first-year Economics and Finance student Pemma Lama and Jed Notarianni, a 2023 graduate in Business Economics with a Placement Year who is now a Leveraged Finance Associate at NatWest Group.

MENTEE

Pemma Lama
Year 1 BSc Economics and Finance with a Placement Year

Before starting the mentoring scheme, I hoped to gain a better understanding of careers in finance and how to make the most of my time at university. The experience has been really valuable so far. Jed has shared insights into his role in Leveraged Finance at NatWest, provided CV advice, and discussed different career paths, as well as things he wishes he had done differently at university.

The most useful aspect has been hearing first-hand industry perspectives and receiving practical advice as I begin thinking about placements and internships.

Come prepared with questions and make the most of the opportunity to learn from someone with real industry experience.

MENTOR

Jed Notarianni
BSc Business Economics with a Placement Year - currently a Leveraged Finance Associate at NatWest Group

Pemma is curious, engaged, and always willing to ask thoughtful questions, which has led to some great discussions around careers in finance, internships, and making the most of opportunities at university.

What has surprised me most is that, while my own journey might not seem particularly remarkable, sharing lessons I've picked up from colleagues, mentors, and my own experiences can still have value.

I'd encourage future mentors not to underestimate the value of their own experiences, and future mentees to approach the relationship with curiosity, tenacity, and an open mind.

BECOME A MENTOR, SHAPE LIVES

Contact eco.reception@uea.ac.uk to sign up for 2026/27!

Celebrating the Impact of PhD Mentorship

“The PhD gave me a confidence I had never had before - not just in what I know, but in my ability to learn, question, and contribute.”

I was honoured to be nominated for the PhD Supervision Award at this year’s Transforming Education Awards, standing alongside a truly inspiring panel of nominees.

There is an immense sense of fulfilment in guiding PhD students through their academic journey—taking those early, rough ideas and shaping them into robust, fully realized research programs that open doors in both academia and industry. My greatest satisfaction is watching them grow into creative, independent thinkers (who often go on to land much better-paying positions than me!).

One of the nominees perfectly captured why we do this, saying:

“The PhD gave me a confidence I had never had before - not just in what I know, but in my ability to learn, question, and contribute.” This completely encapsulates the essence of what we aim to support: a deeply personal journey of growth and empowerment.

To make the night even better, I was absolutely thrilled to see a large group of our own students nominated for several roles. Their recognition highlights their incredible work in building an inclusive, participatory community that directly enhances the quality of education and the overall student experience.

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners!

Dr. Oana Borcan
Associate Professor in Economics

A Year on Placement

For ECO Students who opt to take a Placement Year, they spend 9-12 months of their third year on a full-time placement. These Placements are valuable first-hand experience of working in industry and often pave the way for a successful career in the future. Here's what some of our students had to say:

Malek Salisbury-Jones, BSc Economics And Finance With A Placement Year

Where I worked: Bank of England
Job title: Sterling Rates Dealer, Markets

Why did you decide to do a placement?
I decided to do a placement year because I kept hearing how competitive the graduate job market had become, particularly for students leaving university without much practical experience. Many organisations are increasingly looking for candidates who already have workplace experience, and some opportunities can also come from internal pathways. The placement workshops at UEA were also really helpful, especially hearing from previous placement students about how much they had learned and how the year helped them return to university with more focus and a clearer idea of the career path they wanted to follow.

Can you tell us a bit more about the organisation, your role, and the skills you learned?
I worked at the Bank of England in the Sterling Markets Division as a Sterling Rates Dealer. My role involved supporting analysis of UK rates markets, including gilts, money markets and derivatives, as well as contributing to internal notes, senior presentations and markets briefings. I also supported open market operations, engaged with market participants and internal stakeholders, and worked on improving market monitoring through coding and data analysis.

The placement helped me develop a wide range of skills, including analytical thinking, communication, stakeholder engagement, coding in R and Python, presenting to senior colleagues, and working confidently in a professional financial environment. It also gave me a much stronger understanding of financial markets and how economic policy operates in practice.

How did you find the transition back to UEA and your final year more generally?
The transition back to UEA was positive overall. Although it took a little time to adjust back into studying full-time, I came back with much more focus, confidence and motivation. Having spent a year in a professional environment, I felt I had a clearer understanding of why my degree was useful and how it connected to the career path I wanted to pursue. The placement year also made me more organised and independent, which has helped a lot during final year.
What are your plans after graduation?
After graduation, I have been invited to return to the Bank of England on the graduate scheme.

What advice would you offer to students looking for a placement?
My main advice would be to apply to as many placements as possible and not be discouraged if you do not secure something straight away. The process can be competitive, but many organisations continue recruiting later into the year, so it is important to stay persistent. I would also strongly recommend getting support with your CV from CareerCentral, lecturers, placement advisers and anyone else who can offer feedback.
It also helps to build your CV wherever you can, whether through internships, shadowing, online courses, society roles or any experience that gives you something meaningful to talk about in interviews. If you reach a final-stage interview, make full use of the support available, including CareerCentral and Pete, as they can help you think through the kinds of questions you might be asked and how to structure your answers.

Sam Gates, BSc Economics And Finance With A Placement Year

Where I worked: Bank of England
Job title: Research Assistant

I chose to do a placement year to gain experience and apply what I'd learned in a real working environment before finishing my degree. I knew it would strengthen my CV and give me a clear advantage when applying for graduate roles, as employers value practical experience alongside academic qualifications. It also helped me develop professionally, build industry contacts, and get a much clearer sense of the kind of career I want to pursue.

The Bank of England is the UK's central bank. Its main jobs are setting monetary policy (most visibly through the Bank Rate, which influences interest rates across the economy) to keep inflation low and stable, and maintaining financial stability by regulating banks and acting as lender of last resort. It also issues banknotes and runs the core payment systems that the financial system relies on.

I worked in the Market Intelligence and Analysis Division. Within that division, I worked on a team called MET - MPC Expectations Team. My team was a UK rates team responsible for collecting market intelligence regarding UK rates and more specifically market expectations for upcoming MPC (bank rate) decisions.

Each MPC round (every 6–8 weeks), my team and I speak with around 40–50 firms, investment banks, hedge funds, asset managers, economists, traders, and others, to gather their views on the markets and what these mean for the UK. We cover a wide range of policy-relevant topics, including inflation expectations, tariffs, geopolitics, GDP forecasts, QT expectations, and more. I also acted as a research assistant, pulling data, building charts and running dashboards at request.

This led me to develop a wide range of skills, most notably in stakeholder management, data analysis and coding (Python and RStudio).

I found the transition back into university life quite easy. I had a lot of friends who also did placement years, which made it easier coming back to uni. I certainly found that after the year in industry, I found my desire to work a lot higher, and it really motivated me throughout the year. You will certainly enjoy the more free time you have compared to a 9-5 role.

I had two options post graduation, one being to continue my studies by doing a master's at King's College London in Economics and Finance. However, given the current job market, I chose to return to the Bank on their graduate scheme.

My advice would be to definitely do a placement year. It is the best way to take the first step onto the job ladder and really does set you up for future jobs and graduate roles. I would also say don't give up or be disheartened by the rejections. I applied to over 50 placements and only received one assessment centre, which turned out to be the Bank. So apply to as many places as you can and don't get disheartened.

Want to know more about our placement programmes?

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

Student Life

ECONOMICS SOCIETY

"It has been a great year for the Eco Society filled with some key highlights and good to see so many members who have attended and helped at our events"

The year started with a visit to a few pubs to welcome our Freshers to UEA and the best sights of Norwich. This was a great night to break the ice and introduce Freshers to the Eco Society.

Keeping to the pub theme in February we had a fantastic night at the Garden House for our pub quiz. Hosted by the wonderful and witty Pete, our talented quiz master, it was a great but tense night with students going head-to-head with lecturers. Lots of fun was had and a surprisingly vast amount of knowledge was shared. I am pleased to report a student team came out on top with Team P(ete) values being crowned the overall winners.

The highlight of the year was our Summer Ball! We gathered at the Assembly House in the centre of Norwich on 15th May. It was a brilliant evening with 65 members dressed splendidly for the occasion. Everyone was celebrating the end of year and for some the end of UEA. The venue, music, food and company made it a truly momentous evening.

Thanks to all who attended and to the volunteers who helped plan the event and decorate the venue. Each and every one of you made the night extra special and one to remember.

As President, I am very proud of what the Eco Society has achieved this year and thank you for all the support along the way. It has been great to see so many of our students and lecturers attending our events and sharing the laughs. I am looking forward to welcoming our Freshers in the next academic year and good luck for the future to all those leaving UEA Eco community. We are planning more fun social events next year, if you have any ideas or would like to help in anyway, please do let me know.

So, thank you for last year and here's to next year! Happy Summer!

Darcy Gledhill, Economics Society President
2nd Year BSc Economics

CHALLENGING THE CHAMPIONS

The Ziggurat Challenge once again brought together staff, students, alumni and colleagues from across UEA for another year of "friendly" competition, community spirit and sporting rivalry. As always, the challenge provided opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities, from traditional sports to quizzes, games and novel team events, reinforcing its role as one of the UEA's most inclusive extracurricular initiatives.

For Team ECO, the 2025–2026 season was another successful one. While BIO retained their long-standing grip on the overall title, ECO secured second place overall for another year, continuing our position as BIO's closest challengers. Much like the perennial runners-up found throughout sporting history, we remain determined that one day the champions trophy will make its way across campus.

Our success this year was built on strong performances across a variety of events. ECO claimed victories in pool, sitting volleyball and the newly introduced bench ball competition, demonstrating both versatility and teamwork. We also received the Accuracy Award, which recognised performance across a range of throwing-based activities, including cornhole and other target sports. While perhaps not the most prestigious title in world sport, it is one that economists are particularly proud to win, given our natural appreciation for precision and efficiency.

Individual achievements also deserve recognition. Our Head of School, Emiliya, finished third in the Head of School category, an impressive accomplishment in a highly competitive field. Meanwhile, I was fortunate enough to finish first in the Staff Champion category for the fifth consecutive year. Maintaining such consistency becomes increasingly difficult over time, making this milestone particularly satisfying.

Beyond the results, however, the Ziggurat Challenge continues to showcase what makes the UEA community special. Success depends not only on sporting ability but on participation, enthusiasm and a willingness to get involved. Whether competing in volleyball, answering quiz questions, throwing beanbags at targets or simply supporting teammates from the sidelines, every participant contributes to the atmosphere that makes the challenge so enjoyable.

Congratulations to everyone who represented the School of Economics this year, especially our Student Activators (Darcy, Laura and Zia) and Cate and Nicole who came along to many events and who I hope will become official Activators next year!

The challenge for 2026–2027 is clear: keep building participation, keep enjoying the competition and, perhaps, finally find a way to end BIO's remarkable reign at the top.

Dr. Peter Dawson
ECO Ziggurat Staff Champion

ECO STUDENTS EXPLORE CHINA

This summer, School of Economics students took part in the inaugural Study Tour China programme for China–UK Youth Mobility, delivered through the High Achiever Programme (HAP). The fully funded two-week experience in Beijing and Jinan combined academic learning, cultural exchange, and industry engagement, offering students a unique insight into China's economy, sustainability agenda, and technological innovation.

The tour began at the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, where students completed The Making of a Future CEO programme. Through lectures and discussions, they explored China's economic development, financial markets, digital trade, and cross-cultural business strategies, while comparing Chinese and UK economic systems. A highlight was visiting iFLYTEK, one of China's leading AI companies, to see first-hand how artificial intelligence is transforming sectors such as education, healthcare, and translation services.

The second week took students to Shandong University in Jinan for the Green China programme, which focused on sustainability, environmental protection, and future technologies. Students examined China's approach to waste recycling, zero-carbon buildings, new energy vehicles, and smart mobility. A visit to electric vehicle manufacturer BYD provided valuable insight into China's rapidly growing role in the global EV industry and its efforts to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility.

Beyond the classroom, students immersed themselves in China's rich cultural heritage through visits to the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, and Baotu Spring. They also explored the influence of Confucianism and Taoism on Chinese society, gaining a deeper appreciation of the cultural values that continue to shape the country's development.

Students described the programme as a transformative experience that broadened their understanding of China's economic transformation, technological leadership, and global influence, while creating lasting connections with peers and partner universities. The School of Economics extends its thanks to the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE), Achieve International Education Group (HAP) for making these fully funded international study opportunities possible.

Dr. Bahar Ghezelayagh

ECO Students at the Royal Norfolk Show

Students from the School of Economics put their research skills into practice at the Royal Norfolk Show, contributing to a live project focused on measuring the event's economic and social impact on the region. This project is part of a two-year project between the School of Economics and The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association.

Students engaged directly with exhibitors, businesses, and visitors to collect valuable data that will help assess the wider contribution of one of the UK's largest agricultural events. The project provided a unique opportunity to apply economic and data analysis skills in a real-world setting, while gaining first-hand experience of economic impact research.

The initiative highlights the School's commitment to combining academic learning with practical experience, enabling students to work on projects that support evidence-based decision-making and contribute to the local community. The data gathered will help inform future planning, investment, and policy decisions linked to major regional events and the agricultural sector.

Beyond the research itself, the experience allowed students to develop their professional communication, networking, and analytical skills while representing UEA in a high-profile public setting.

A special thank you goes to Mohammed Roomi, Zulfu Hurum, Adiv Chowdhury, Gerardo Figueroa Golarte, Will Griffiths, Ainur Matimkhankyzy, Holly Griffiths, Nikkita Chahal, Nikita Popov, Fleur Elizabeth Philip, Lowell Green, Kareem Bahgat and Manuka Grihihagama for their professionalism, enthusiasm, and dedication throughout the event. This project wouldn't have been possible without them.

Dr. Bahar Ghezelayagh

Faculty Professional Services

As part of an ongoing restructure within the Faculty of Social Sciences (SSF), the Faculty Professional Services (FPS) team has undergone a number of changes in preparation for the 2026/27 academic year.

One of the main changes is that the FPS teams supporting the School of Economics (ECO) and the School of Global Development (DEV) have been brought together. As part of this, the School Coordinators and School Administrators supporting both schools are now based together in the Elizabeth Fry Building (EFRY) Reception. Please continue to visit the EFRY Reception should you require any assistance.

As part of the restructure, we have also said goodbye to several members of the ECO FPS team. Joanne Yaxley, Helen Bush, Chloe Poll and Esther Palin have all taken up new roles elsewhere within the University. We thank them for their hard work and commitment over the years and wish them every success in their new roles.

For any enquiries during the year, please continue to contact **eco.reception@uea.ac.uk**, and a member of the team will be happy to assist or direct your enquiry as appropriate.

We look forward to working alongside our colleagues from DEV and wish all ECO staff and students a successful 2026/27 academic year.

John Dows
School Administrator

University of East Anglia Norwich

School of Economics

OUR GOALS FOR 2026/27

Deliver on our Mission:
EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNITY, OUTSTANDING.

Industry-informed AI integration
to prepare our students for the careers of the future

Deliver Student-led Quality of Education Enhancements

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