

Covid-19 – Week Four Check In Survey: Response from the Department of Economics – UG – Final Yr

Dear final year Economics students,

I would like to thank you all for your time to join Maria, Matteo, Andreas, and me last Friday to talk about how we have acted on your feedback regarding our online and on-campus teaching provision this year. We have solicited your views through two channels: the first was a focus group with all economics UG student reps on 21 October, and the second was the University's 'Check In' Survey in Week 4.

I'd like to say a big Thank You to those of you who have taken the time to complete the survey. We have received the anonymous responses from final year economics students and have analysed them so that we can get a better sense of your experience and take this opportunity to react to your suggestions for improvement. You can see the headline student satisfaction figures below, along with a summary of the most frequent open comments. In addition, I have included also the key points raised by your student reps at our focus group meeting on 21 Oct.

As there is quite a bit of detail there, I'd like to give you here a brief outline of how we have responded as a Department (and within the constraints such as physical room availability and social distancing measures) to adjust our offering to you in light of your feedback.

As our IPT provision appears to be the main area where you see room for improvement, here is what we have adjusted from this week (Week 7) onwards:

- Our IPT sessions will feature a specific focus on assessment preparation. However, as we still face constraints on room availability and room capacity, we cannot run weekly unit-based seminars. Therefore, we will highlight two specific units every week, each of which will provide unit-specific and assessment-relevant content for those who are enrolled in one or both of these units. For all remaining students (who are enrolled on neither of these two units), dedicated rooms will be provided as study space, along with a selection of assessment-relevant seminar questions for students to work on individually or in groups. Your personal timetable has been updated to reflect which unit and room you have been allocated to for IPT in every week.
- Lecturers will use their unit-linked IPT sessions to discuss solution approaches for the open book coursework assessments that you will be given during the Department's assessment period between 4 January and 22 January 2020.
- Lecturers will use their unit-linked IPT sessions to provide interactive demonstrations of how to tackle/solve relevant sample exercises; You will also receive further guidance about your assessments from your lecturers in your LOILs. Lecturers will offer enhanced signposting of the assessment-relevant materials so that you can structure your revision accordingly
- In order to improve online delivery, we have placed orders for additional teaching equipment for lecturers, including headsets+microphones, web cams, tablets, and electronic pens. We hope that this will enhance your experience of the online lessons
- Finally, we will continue with regular Teams meetings with you, your student reps, and your cohort so that we can hear from you directly about any issues or matters arising.

I'd like to thank you once again for your feedback and your open and constructive interaction with us. Take good care of yourself, and all the best for the remaining five weeks of the teaching term.

All the best,

Andreas, Matteo, Maria, and Peter

Final-year Week 4 Survey Responses

Headline Survey responses (from a total of 35 responses):

- **63%** of UG finalists say they are **satisfied**
- **23%** of UG finalists say they are **neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- **14%** of UG finalists say they are **dissatisfied**

Positive

- LOILs are working well and are effective
- The use of Teams and Zoom facilitates interaction with lecturer in and outside the LOILs
- Material for all units is video-recorded (including seminars)
- Units are more engaging and interesting compared to previous years, and teaching has become more interactive
- Consistent and swift response to the challenges of COVID-19
- Well organised Moodle pages and good effort of lecturers to move their content online in an effective way
- online delivery allows for more flexibility in terms of spreading the workload which positively affects mental wellbeing
- a deeper approach to learning is encouraged as interaction with lecturers has increased

Suggested Improvements

- Offer regular unit-specific seminars and support by teaching assistants
- Please no more group projects as interaction with unknown people via the internet is difficult
- Please no IPTs because of infection risks and the additional workload they impose on already stretched students
- Please make sure that all lecturers have stable internet connections
- Please provide more information about the format and content of the exams
- Please increase the online accessibility of books and other reading resources
- Relate the IPTs more closely with assessment
- IPTs activities should be more relevant for students and their chosen units. Also strengthen the connection of IPTs and units even if this may mean that not everybody needs to come to campus every week
- IPTs should offer more opportunities to interact with the lecturer
- Please re-introduce the no-detriment policy
- Please use IPTs for exam or career preparation
- Please improve experience of online IPT participation (e.g. students off campus can't hear well questions raised by students in the room)

Feedback from Final Year Student Reps at focus group meeting on 21 October 2020

- Final year reps were in principle appreciative about the nature/content of our 'programme-level' IPT activities, BUT they said they are simply too 'costly in terms of time' due to the lack of a unique link to their individually chosen units.
- Final year reps suggested that students would prefer dedicated assessment preparation sessions (especially in the context of the open book assessments/deeper learning, which implies a move away from pattern recognition and memorization), discussion of approaches to assessment-style questions, mock assessments, etc. They would like to be taught unit-specific assessment strategies and 'deep learning' skills
- Final year reps say that attending IPT on campus takes an undue amount of time (4h and at least one hour to get to and from campus), especially given that the activities can be done similarly well from their apartments.
- Final year reps say that IPT should not convey *additional* content (this is in the context of our final year IPT construction thus far, where two thematically linked units are in charge of IPT delivery to ALL students – this implies that there is a non-negligible and changing group of students every week which has to engage with content/topics from units that they have not chosen, even if it can be argued that this is beneficial for their general economic knowledge and training).
- Final year reps say that even with unit-specific assessment prep, they would prefer not want to come to campus if the activities can be done equally well online from their apartments/rooms in the city. This is often more comfortable for them, saves time, avoids the need to travel to campus. They suggest that they have established social networks and are therefore not reliant on IPT/campus time to give them a sense of belonging or opportunities for social interaction.
- On LOILs, some student reps suggested that the flipped classroom model appears to have increased their workload, although it was not entirely clear whether this is due to them being encouraged to work steadily every week in preparation for LOIL sessions, rather than leaving some of the reading to the revision period.