

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

Dear first-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 first-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 first a brief outline of how we have responded as a Department. As we still face constraints on room availability and room capacity, we cannot run weekly unit-based 1h seminars as some of you have suggested. While we will have to continue with each IPT week being associated with a specific unit, we have made the following modifications:

- Our IPT sessions will from now on feature a specific focus on assessment preparation. In particular, lecturers will use their unit-linked IPT sessions to discuss solution approaches for the open book 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, or dedicated activities that help you with group-based assessment (such as in ES10007 'Modern World Economy'); 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 our 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
UG Y1 Week 4 Survey Responses

Headline Survey responses (from a total of 87 responses from UG Y1 students):

- **70%** of Y1 students say they are **satisfied**
- **16%** of Y1 students say they are **neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- **14%** of Y1 students say they are **dissatisfied**

Positive Comments (thank you J)

- The online teaching/LOIL is really good and having some form of in person teaching is really nice. Good course content, lecturers are experts in their fields and deliver a well-balanced course
- Problem sets are very helpful and the experience of solving them is engaging
- Great academic support: staff have been very helpful so far, answering responding to questions quickly
- Pre-recorded lectures and Zoom/LOIL for Q&A works well, Moodle + Panopto work well, with all relevant course materials available there
- Ability to study remotely
- In person teaching is valuable and helps us experience what lectures would be like pre-covid
- Support provided during self-isolation and settling into uni life has been exceptional
- Having tutorials online means people can really engage with the content and use the chat function without slowing down the lesson too much

Suggested Improvements

- Provide better equipment (microphones, tablets) to all lecturing staff to make online learning easier to follow; also provide more training to lecturers on how to best use the technology
- IPTs are not great: would like smaller classes, more group work, shorter lessons so that each student/group has some valuable time with a lecturer. One hour of IPT with a lecturer in the room would be better than four hours of staff roving multiple rooms. Consider splitting the four hour IPT sessions into four separate one hour sessions
- IPT sessions also not great for students joining remotely, maybe teach online and on campus groups separately rather than alongside each other in mixed groupings
- Offer more IPT opportunities so that students can meet up and form networks
- IPT sessions should have an explicit unit link and relate to the assessed unit content
- Reduce workload: with flipped classroom (pre-recorded videos and/or pre-lecture reading), LOILs and IPT, study load appears higher than it would be under normal circumstances

Student rep feedback from focus group session on 21 October 2020

- First year student reps would like more IPT opportunities and more Department-based activities that allow them to meet fellow students on their course, build social networks, and make friends.
- First year students who do not live on campus have very few reasons to come to campus to meet/engage with the students living there.
- They are understanding that room availability and social distancing constraints do not allow us to expand very much on our existing IPT arrangements, but they would like to see better technology: better microphone quality, less echo when streaming IPT sessions, etc.