PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	**MA Contemporary Economic Perspectives** (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home Department/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Business School
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 years) Part-time (2 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMACONEP_C
HECoS Code	100450 economics
Start date of programme	Autumn 2026
Date of programme approval	Autumn 2025
Date of last programme amendment approval	Autumn 2026
Valid for academic year and cohorts	**2026-27**
Programme Director	Prof Pedro Gomes
Date of last revision to document	20/10/26

Admissions requirements

Normally, a second-class honours degree (2:2) or above in an undergraduate degree in any subject. However, we welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

Currently, postgraduate economics programmes require a high level of mathematics and statistics, which discourages many students who wish to learn economics but struggle with the technicalities. A prime example is our MSc Economics programme, a well-established programme that supports the department's reputation.

The **MA Contemporary Economic Perspectives** is designed as an independent and distinct programme, targeting a different audience that includes social scientists, journalists, politicians, and entrepreneurs interested in understanding the economic principles that shape our society and economy, without the need for any mathematical training. Its strengths include:

- **Appeal to non-technical audiences:** By avoiding mathematical complexity, the programme opens up economics education to students with diverse academic backgrounds.
- **Broader interdisciplinary reach:** It complements social sciences, political studies, and business, making economics accessible to students from these fields.

The programme is a platform for policy-oriented discussions, real-world applications, and economic literacy for professionals who need to understand economics without the technical rigor of econometrics and mathematics, adding value to both academia and public discourse. After finishing the MA programme, students would:

- be able to read economic research (not produce);
- understand the economic jargon and intuition;
- be able to overview a large number of recent academic papers on specific economic topics, overview and synthesise them;
- be able to write, present and communicate economic ideas, which are highly valued across industries.

By focusing on real-world applications and policy-oriented discussions, the programme addresses economic issues that affect various communities, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to a diverse population. These elements contribute to creating an educational experience that is inclusive and equitable, allowing a wider range of students to engage with economics meaningfully. We aim to build connections with public institutions and media outlets like the *Financial Times* or *The Economist* to ensure the programme is seen as relevant for decision-makers and communicators.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Indicate likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	BUEM087S7	Economics: Theory, Policy and Institutions	30	Compulsory	T1
7	EMEC055S7	Financial Markets, Banking and Regulation	30	Compulsory	T2
7	BUEM136H7	Topics in Economic Policy	15	Compulsory	T3
7	SC07010S7	Dissertation Economic Perspective	30	Compulsory	T3 Deadline September
7		Option modules totalling 75 credits	75	Option	Option
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	BUEM087S7	Economics: Theory, Policy and Institutions	30	Compulsory	T1
7	EMEC055S7	Financial Markets, Banking and Regulation	30	Compulsory	T2
7	BUEM136H7	Topics in Economic Policy	15	Compulsory	T3
7		Option modules totalling 15 credits	15	Options	Option
Year 2					
7	SC07010S7	Dissertation Economic Perspectives	30	Compulsory	T3 Deadline September
7		Option modules totalling 60 credits – students **must** select a taught module in every term	60	Options	T1, 2, 3
Indicative list of options (subject to timetabling and other constraints)					
7	FDME011S7	Fast-track Practical Journalism Skills	30	Option	T1
7	BUMN176H7	Introduction to Analytics and Business	15	Option	T1
7	POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions	30	Option	T1
7	BUMN041H7	Quantitative Methods for Finance and Business*	15	Option	T1
7	BUCI042H7	Data Analytics Using R	15	Option	T2
7	FDME014S7	Digital and Data Journalism	30	Option	T2
7	BUMN069H7	Institutions, Governance and Development	15	Option	T2
7	SSPO243H7	Qualitative Research Design	15	Option	T2
7	BUMN179H7	Data Visualization and Communication	15	Option	T3
7	MOMN074H7	Globalization: Forces, Players and Management	15	Option	T3
7	EMEC033H7	Industrial Economics	15	Option	T3

7	EMEC055H7	Monetary Economics	15	Option	T3
7	SC07009H7	Catapult into Employability	15	Option	July-Aug

*Slightly more technical course, only available conditional on strong statistical background. One module from the Politics or Philosophy Departments can also be selected as an option on this programme.

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student
Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)
Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching are organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

- **Watching pre-recorded videos**: These will serve as the primary sources of knowledge transmission, ideal for our target audience. This approach provides flexibility for students balancing work or other commitments. The videos will focus on explaining key concepts in an engaging and digestible manner, while the textbook will serve as a structured reference.
- **Interactive quizzes**: Students will participate in live quizzes during classes or complete surveys related to economic trends, allowing them to gather and analyse data.
- **Simulations**: Role-playing exercises and games will enable students to act as policymakers or entrepreneurs, making decisions based on economic theory.
- **Video recording**: Students will prepare either a 1-minute video presentation of an economic concept or a longer 5-minute video summarising an economic paper in non-technical terms.
- **Guest lectures and discussions**: Experts from journalism, politics, or business will be invited to speak, followed by student-led debates on economic issues.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

- **Portfolio**: Students will create a portfolio that includes a 1-minute video presentation of an economic concept or a longer 5-minute video summarising an economic paper. The portfolio will also feature book reviews of recently published economics titles and articles. Students should develop a personal webpage to showcase their portfolio and share it on social media.
- **The Economist Article**: Write newspaper articles on current economic topics, using basic data to create charts.
- **Individual Presentations**: Select economic papers and present them in a non-technical manner.

- **Policy Briefs**: Identify a policy problem, review relevant literature, provide economic analysis, and recommend appropriate policies.
- **Literature Review Essay**: Write essays that critically review academic economics literature.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- **describe and discuss core economic concepts**, such as supply and demand, opportunity cost, and inflation, with clarity and insight.
- **evaluate and interpret economic data and research** by analysing real-world examples and policy issues that influence global and national economies.
- **apply economic theories to contemporary policy challenges**, demonstrating an understanding of financial markets, regulation, and economic institutions in a non-technical context.
- **identify and critically assess policy debates**, such as those surrounding public debt, productivity growth, and financial crises, and provide well-founded arguments.
- **to synthesise and present economic research findings** through written articles, policy briefs, and presentations, translating complex ideas for a non-specialist audience.
- **to recognise and articulate economic jargon and intuition**, improving your ability to engage with economic discussions and literature.
- **to develop a personal portfolio of economic analyses and reflections**, showcasing your knowledge and communication skills through articles, presentations, and a curated glossary of economic terms.

These outcomes align with the course's aim to prepare students to critically engage with economic issues and communicate their understanding effectively without needing extensive mathematical or statistical training.

Careers and further study

You will find Economics graduates in the following kinds of roles: economic advisors, policy consultants, research analysts, financial reporters, government policy analysts, economic consultants, and professionals in non-governmental organizations. These roles involve interpreting economic data, analysing policy issues, and communicating complex economic ideas to diverse audiences.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on the careers pages of our website.

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its Common Award Scheme Regulations and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

Please check our website for more information about student support services. This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is available online.

Copyright, Birkbeck, University of London 2022 ©