

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

MEDICAL HUMANITIES

MEDICINE AND ECONOMICS

COURSE CODE: ME33ES

COURSE BOOKLET 2024 / 2025

I Course overview

Resources available for the provision and payment for health care are limited. However, knowledge of economics helps ensure that available resources are used in the most effective and efficient way possible. Economics allows more informed decision making about a variety of issues: choosing between alternative treatments; setting priorities between patients; choosing between alternative new technologies and organising the provision of health care.

This course provides an introduction to the application of economics to health care. It does not assume any prior knowledge of economics.

The course consists of 4 Units, covering the following areas:

1. **Background and basic economic concepts:** where we will introduce the key concepts of demand and supply along with the concept of the market and how these relate to health care
2. **Healthcare Systems:** where we will consider the challenges relating to health care financing and payment to providers. Specifically, we will introduce different ways for organising and financing health care systems, as well as methods of payment to service providers
3. **Economics of health behaviours:** will provide an explanation of why and how we should intervene in population health behaviours and the role of behavioural economics in developing health behaviour interventions; and
4. **Economic evaluation:** will provide an explanation of the rationale for, and main techniques of economic evaluation of health care interventions and their use for decision making.

Each teaching session will be of three hours duration. Each session consists of a mix of lecture, tutorial style, group work and practical exercises. With tutorial integrated within the sessions, **attendance is required* and monitored for class certificate requirements**. Teaching will take place in Old Aberdeen. Due to the interactive nature of the sessions, there will be no recordings made of the live sessions. There will however be support material available in the form of short videos of the basic concepts covered within the sessions.

The course is examined through 2 multiple choice tests (worth 20% overall) and an essay of 1,800 words (worth 80%) on a topic bringing an economic way of thinking to some health care issue or problem. Each multiple choice test will consist of 11 questions giving a total of 22 which will convert directly to the (grade point) CAS mark for that portion of the course assessment. The tests will be open-book but timed and at set times. A list of the essay topics will be provided during the course. The essay is due to be submitted no later than **Friday, 6th December at 2pm**. Further details of the essay will follow including an essay guide and instructions for submission.

* Note we are aware of a potential timetable clash for one session for some students.

II Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

Through this course you should acquire a knowledge and understanding of:

- the key themes of economic theory as applied to health care
- the use of incentives within health care systems
- some of the main techniques of health care evaluation
- the rationale for intervening in health behaviours

Subject specific skills and concepts

Through this course you should be able to:

- critically appreciate the distinctive economic characteristics of health care and how this affects the demand for, and supply of, health care
- apply different health care evaluation techniques
- using behavioural economics to develop health behaviour interventions

Key (transferable) skills

Through this course you should demonstrate and further develop the following:

- intellectual skills for learning and understanding, defining issues, conducting analysis and reaching conclusions
- self management skills for independent study, including the use of time and self motivation
- oral and written communication

III Administration and teaching of the course

The course coordinator is Diane Skåtun who is based in the Health Economics Research Unit (HERU), Room 1.063, Polwarth Building, Foresterhill. If you have any questions regarding the course please contact Diane Skåtun by email:

d.skaton@abdn.ac.uk

All the staff involved with the course are based at HERU which is part of the Institute of Applied Health Sciences (IAHS) within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (SMMSN). Please feel free to look up the Unit to see the variety of Health Economics Research that we undertake: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru>.

The lecturers who will lead the live sessions will be

Diane Skåtun (DS): E-mail: d.skaton@abdn.ac.uk

Paul McNamee (PM): E-mail: p.mcnamee@abdn.ac.uk

Mary Kilonzo (MK): E-mail: m.kilonzo@abdn.ac.uk

Course administrator support comes from Ryan Watson ryan.watson@abdn.ac.uk

IV Timetable of delivery

The sessions are mainly on Monday afternoons BUT there is one on a Thursday morning. Don't forget it! All sessions are at the Old Aberdeen campus (ZB17 or 18). The 2 multiple choice questionnaires are included within the timetable as they will have timed, restricted access but they will not be taken in a set lecture/tutorial room.

Date	Topic	Unit	Lecturer	Venue
Mon 28/10/24 2-5 pm	Introduction to Economics and Markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic economic concepts: demand and supply • Markets 	1	DS	Zoology ZB17
Mon 4/11/24 2-5 pm	Healthcare Markets	1	DS	Zoology ZB17
Mon 11/11/24 2-5pm	Healthcare Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing • Payment systems and incentives 	2	DS	Zoology ZB17
Thur 14/11/24 9am-11	Economics of health behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why and how should we intervene in health behaviours? • Behavioural economics 	3	PM	Zoology ZB18
Fri 15/11/24 9am-6pm	Mid-course Test (Unit 1 & 2) Timed for 1 hour once opened	1&2		My Aberdeen
Mon 18/11/24 2-5pm	Economic evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic evaluation as a basis for priority setting in health care • Costing in economic evaluation 	4	MK	Zoology ZB17
Mon 25/11/24 2-5pm	Economic evaluation (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit assessment in economic evaluation • Use of economic evaluation in decision making 	4	MK	Zoology ZB17
Mon 2/12/24 2-3pm	End of Unit Test (whole course)	1,2,3 &4		My Aberdeen
Fri 6/12/24 2pm	ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE			My Aberdeen

V Reading

Each unit will have a reading list uploaded to MyAberdeen along with additional supplementary material to support your learning.