

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

MEDICAL HUMANITIES

MEDICINE AND ECONOMICS

COURSE CODE: ME33ES

COURSE BOOKLET 2020 / 2021

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 covers 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 unit will consist of a mix of lecture-videos, fact-sheets and activities in conjunction with live sessions where you will take part in tutorial-like activities. The material will be released in stages over 4 weeks allowing a block of time towards the end to complete your assessment. Details of the reading for each Unit will be posted along with the Unit materials.

The course is examined by means of an essay of 3,000 words on a topic bringing an economic way of thinking to some health care issue or problem. A list of topics on which essays can be written will be provided during the course. The essay is due to be submitted no later than **Friday, December 4th at 2pm**. Further details of the essay will follow including instructions for submission.

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, formerly found in the Polwarth Building, Room 1.063, Foresterhill but currently based in her home office! If you have any questions regarding the course please contact Diane Skåtun by email: d.skatun@abdn.ac.uk

All the staff involved with the course are based at the Health Economics Research Unit (HERU). HERU 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 take the live sessions will be

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

Marjon van der Pol (MvP): E-mail: m.vanderpol@abdn.ac.uk

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

The course secretary is Diane Gerrie, email: diane.gerrie@abdn.ac.uk

IV Timetable of delivery

There will be a staggered release of Unit material. Live sessions will take place on **Thursdays 10-11am** with one additional introductory session on **Monday 26th October 2-3pm**. The planned programme is as follows.

	Date	Topic	Lecturer
Live session	26 Oct (2-3 pm)	Introduction to course	DS
Unit 1 released	26 Oct	Background and basic economic concepts	
Live session	29 Oct (10-11am)	Unit 1	DS
Unit 2 released	2 Nov	Healthcare Systems	
Live session	5 Nov (10-11am)	Unit 2	DS
Unit 3 released	9 Nov	Economics of health behaviours	
Live Session	12 Nov (10-11am)	Unit 3	MvP
Unit 4 released	16 Nov	Economic evaluation	
Live Session	19 Nov (10-11am)	Unit 4	MK
ASSIGNMENT DUE	4 Dec (2pm)	ESSAY DUE DATE	