

4. Choosing & Registering for Modules

Choosing your modules is a way of tailoring your curriculum to your needs and interests. It is also an opportunity to express yourself and what you find important. The Department encourages students to take challenging modules in Economics but also in other departments. Such modules outside of Economics can complement or fruitfully diversify your degree-course modules. You are encouraged to choose modules in such a way that those taken outside of the Department also add an academically coherent selection of subjects to your degree. In general 'outside' modules (or 'Electives') can be taken for up to 1.0 unit per year. Making a choice of external modules and incorporating them into a rewarding and personally flavoured addition to your curriculum is a shared responsibility of both the Department and the student.

Departmental responsibility:

The choice of Electives should respect the natural progression from introductory subjects in the first year to advanced modules in the last. Furthermore, electives should not unduly overlap with core Economics modules. For these reasons:

- the Department provides information and rules regarding the selection of Elective modules;
- the Personal Tutor will be able to advise the student on the suitability of the modules he/she wishes to take in view of future study and/or career plans;
- the Department will place any student that has failed to select a sufficient number of allowed modules that fit in the student's timetable into available slots of Economics modules by the end of the second week of Term 1.

Student responsibility:

It is the student's responsibility to select modules in such a way that:

- they do not clash with Economics modules and that participation in Elective modules do not infringe on the full attendance expected in Economics modules;
- they conform to the rules the Department has set out in this Handbook and explained during information sessions in Induction Week;
- the student has confirmed access to the module in the 'outside' department and satisfies the prerequisites for the corresponding module.

When you have registered your module choices, you can check whether or not your options/electives have been approved by logging on to PORTICO and clicking on the "View Module Selection Status" option in your Student Academic Details container. Selections are not confirmed until all modules have been approved.

In section 4.1 you will find information on the practicalities of module selection and requesting changes to your module selections. Section 4.2 details what kinds of modules you can select and the rules you need to follow when doing so. Section 4.3 presents a simple but efficient strategy to come to a satisfying choice of modules. Finally section 4.4 contains pointers to sources of advice on how and what to choose.

4.1 Practicalities of Choosing Modules

Each module is assigned a 'course unit' value that is either one (1.0) or a half (0.5). In each year you must choose modules with a sum total of 4.0 units. Provisional timetabling information for all modules at UCL is available via [Portico](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/portico) or at:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/timetable>

4.1.1 When to Choose?

Your module choices should be **completed by Thursday morning** in Registration Week. Making choices after that moment is still possible but modules may be full and no longer available. Returning students can choose and register for their modules online - typically from early August onwards - and choices will be confirmed as soon as possible but may be after Registration Week.

4.1.2 Changing your mind?

Sometimes it happens that after the Wednesday in Registration Week you want to change your module. In such an unfortunate case you need to adhere to the following deadlines and procedures. Any such request requires you to complete an online "[Module Amendment](#)" form via the [Economics Admin Moodle](#) page. If approved, your module amendment will be processed in due course, subject to available space.

Email requests, phone calls or other ways of submitting such requests, or incomplete requests will be ignored.

From the Monday that lectures start only module changes *into Economics modules* will be considered!

If there is still room for students in the module you wish to change into, and if there is no clash in your schedule resulting from the change, Dr Frank Witte will approve your amendment request and Viv Crockford will register your new choice in Portico by the end of the first week of lectures.

In the second week of lectures, requests for module changes will **only** be considered subsequent to an appointment with the Departmental Tutor – Dr Frank Witte (Room G25, Drayton) – either via the [Economics Admin Moodle](#) site under "**Appointments, Contact & References**" (or visit during his open office hours: **Mon-Thu** from **09:00-09:30**).

When the Departmental Tutor approves of your change - *and provided there is still room for students in the module you wish to change into* - Viv Crockford will register your new choice in Portico by the end of the second week of lectures.

Only in very exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control will a student be permitted to change after the 2nd week of lectures has been completed.

4.1.3 Practicalities of Tutorial Classes

You do not choose your tutorial classes!! This is done for you by the College.

- Tutorial classes are automatically assigned to all students via the central College system. Changing classes is **ONLY** possible in order to avoid clashes with optional modules and only providing there are sufficient places. Any changes must be completed by the end of the first week of lectures.
- If you attend the wrong tutorial class you will be marked absent from your registered class.

4.2 What Modules can I choose?

A significant number of modules simply have to be taken; these are the so-called compulsory modules. Other modules can be chosen from a certain list specified under “Degree Course Structure” in this Handbook. These are typically called “optional modules”. Finally “Electives” are modules that can be chosen from the entire UCL offering.

4.2.1 Compulsory Modules (Year 1/2/3):

Many modules, especially in the 1st and 2nd year, are compulsory. For combined-studies degree students nearly all modules in the first and second year are compulsory.

You will find information on which modules are compulsory for your year and degree program in the earlier section entitled ‘**Degree Course Structure**’.

4.2.2 Optional Modules (Year 3):

Especially in your third year you will be able to choose a significant number of units of optional modules from a pre-defined list. You will find these lists, or the indication of which modules can be chosen, in the section entitled ‘**Degree Course Structure**’. For example, in the 3rd year of the L100 Single Honours Economics programme you must choose at least a minimal number of ECON3xxx modules.

How to choose Optional Modules?

This is usually very straightforward! Consult your degree course structure and check how many optional modules you can choose and what the restrictions on the choices are.

4.2.3 Elective Modules (Year 1/2/3):

Your programme may have a number of units that you can choose *almost* freely among the total offering of UCL. Of course you can use this freedom by choosing modules in Economics. However you can also use this to broaden your curriculum in several different fields, or to deepen your knowledge in one specific area outside of Economics.

In the L100/L101 programmes you can choose 1.0 units per year in Electives.

How to choose Electives?

How to choose Electives?

The following is of relevance to students studying for the BSc L100 and L101 degrees in Economics only. Combined-studies degree students should consult their home/partner department for clarification regarding optional/elective modules:

Section 4.3 will provide an efficient strategy for making these choices. But in order to be able to choose you should have some idea of what is available.

In Economics:

Of course you can choose optional modules from the Economics department. In this case you will find all the necessary information in the departmental module list:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/economics/undergraduate/module-list>

A Language:

See the UCL Centre for Languages and International Curriculum website for further information: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clie/CourseUnits>

Outside Economics (Electives):

If you want to choose outside modules (electives) you are welcome to do so. You can access information of module offerings from other departments either via departmental websites (see: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/departments/a-z/>) or direct via PORTICO (see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/portico>)

4.2.4 Rules for selecting Electives

- In any year you can choose only 0.5 unit of MSIN electives;
- Electives for 1st years can be any module, except the "No-Go" modules detailed below.
- Electives for 2nd years can only contain **one** 0.5 unit module at "introductory" level (i.e. without prerequisites), usually denoted with a departmental 6xxx code, except the "No-Go" modules detailed below. N.B. MATH6403 counts as an appropriate-level option for 2nd year students.
- Electives for 3rd years should be labelled "Advanced" and/or have prerequisites. One module at "intermediate" level (or without any prerequisites) may be allowed **only if the student chooses five or more 0.5 units from ECON3xxx**. MATH6403 counts as one such option.
- Language modules
 - o cannot be taken in a language in which a student is already proficient;
 - o For 0.5 unit modules: students in the 2nd/3rd year may only take language modules at level 2/3 or above respectively;
 - o For 1.0 unit modules: students may take modules at the 1st level (level "AB") in any year;
- The selection of options and electives does not involve timetable clashes.

Electives need to be authorised by both Economics and the department offering the module. Any selection that does not comply with the above rules will be rejected.

4.2.5 NO-GO Electives:

A very restricted number of electives will never be permitted in any year. These are electives that have too much overlap with modules offered by the department, or even with compulsory modules in the department. The No-Go list is the following:

- ECON1602, ECON1604, ECON2601 (aimed at other students)
- MATH6401 & MATH6402 (due to overlap with ECON1004/ECON1008);
- MSIN3002, MSIN7002 & MSIN7009 (due to overlap with core ECON modules);
- SESS2005 & SESS2006 (due to overlap with core ECON modules);
- BOTH of MSIN7004 & COMP6005 due to overlap with each other;
- BOTH of MATH7502 & STAT7003 due to overlap with each other;
- BOTH of MATH3508 & STAT3006 due to overlap with each other;
- TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) is not available as an option for Economics students.

4.2.6 Exceptional Situations

If you feel that an exception to these rules should be allowed in your case, on the basis of special circumstances beyond your control, then you should first discuss this with your personal tutor. If, after the advice of your personal tutor you should wish to request such an exception, you should submit a motivated request to the [Departmental Tutor](#) including:

1. A written motivation why you request the exception and which circumstances beyond your control evoked your situation.
2. A confirmation from the hosting department that you would be eligible and allowed access to the module.
3. A print-out of your tentative schedule from which it is clear that there will be no schedule clashes with your economics courses.

N.B. Requests for exceptions that are submitted after the first week of lectures will not be taken into consideration.

4.3 A strategy for choosing Electives

The task of finding Electives that satisfy the above rules from the wealth of modules offered by UCL may seem a daunting task. However, in a few fairly simple steps this problem can be broken down into a few key choices. It is important to do so before you seek advice! When you want your Personal Tutor or the Departmental Tutor to be able to give you sensible advice, you will need to give them a starting point! This strategy will, in the worst case, give you a good starting point to ask advice about. In the best case it will resolve “the module selection problem” for you.

4.3.1 Step 1: “Choose as you go” or “Plan ahead”?

Some students prefer to plan ahead. Typically these students will formulate some aim or goal they wish to achieve with choosing their options and electives. Other students will want to choose as they go. They have no specific goal in mind but they simply want to choose options that they enjoy from whatever it is there is on offer.

Because the rules for choosing electives say that there must be a natural progression to advanced modules in Year 3, this implies that you need to decide whether you “plan ahead” or “choose as you go”. In the latter case there is a risk that, by the time you reach your third year, you will basically be confined to Economics modules because your first & second year electives did not build you up towards an advanced elective.

If you want to avoid this situation it is good to ask yourself which subject field you would want to be able to study at an advanced level in Year 3. So you need to “plan ahead”.

4.3.2a Step 2: “Plan ahead”: Pick a subject field

If you decide to “plan ahead” then the idea is to choose advanced level modules that you would like to be able to take in your 3rd year. You carefully read the module descriptions and identify the prerequisites (if any). You then use your 2nd year elective slots to satisfy as many of these prerequisites as possible and you repeat the same to see whether you need to use any of your 1st year elective slots for the prerequisites of the 2nd year electives.

How to deal with prerequisites?

Sometimes prerequisites can be very vaguely specified with sentences like “the first two years of ...” Evidently you cannot satisfy this literally if you are studying a different subject. But feel free to closely study the content of modules and to see whether the following things can be true:

- You actually don't need the whole first two years of a programme, but just 1st and 2nd year modules on particular subject;

- You can argue that some of your ECON modules actually cover some of the prerequisite material.

If you think that this is the case then write that down in your plan and take your plan for advice to the departmental tutor of the department(s) offering the modules you want to take. If they advise you are eligible to take the modules you selected, maybe with some modifications they propose to your choice, then you proceed to step 3.

4.3.2b Step 2: “Choose as you go”: Pick a subject field

If you decide to go for “choose as you go” then pick one or more subject fields you are interested in and visit the departmental websites, in particular the module listings. Check out all the modules listed as “options for outside students” or modules whose code is prefixed by a 6xxx, or any modules that do not have prerequisites.

You will see from the rules that you can choose 3 such modules: 2 in your 1st year and 1 in your 2nd year.

If you are a 1st year student then you can select the two you would enjoy most and go to step 3.

If you are a 2nd year student then you probably have one half-unit of electives left. You can either choose an economics option or find an elective that is deemed “advanced” yet has no prerequisites, or an elective that you feel you are qualified to take despite the fact you don’t have the prerequisites. In this case you should seek advice of the departmental tutor of the department offering the module! If they advise you are eligible to take the module proceed to step 3.

If you are a 3rd year student then you can either choose two economics options or find one or two electives that are deemed “advanced” yet have no prerequisites, or electives that you feel you are qualified to take despite the fact you don’t have the prerequisites. In this case you should seek advice of the departmental tutor of the department offering the module! If they advise you are eligible to take the module proceed to step 3.

4.3.3 Step 3: Check whether your selection is “in the rules”

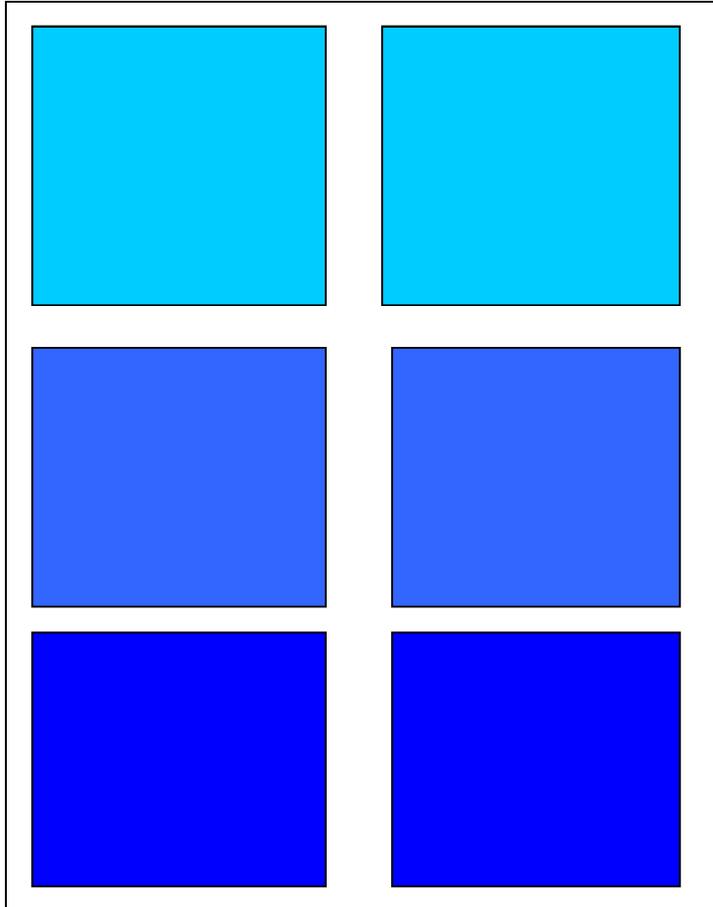
Check whether your selection satisfies the rules in section 4.2.4 and 4.2.5. If they do then you can register your choice in Portico and if you have done all correctly you should receive approval.

If your choice doesn’t satisfy the rules 4.2.4 or 4.2.5 then you should consider changing your selection by repeating some of the steps but for different choices. If your choice doesn’t satisfy the rules but you believe that you have a very strong case for an exception you should consult section 4.2.6 and make an appointment with the Departmental Tutor.

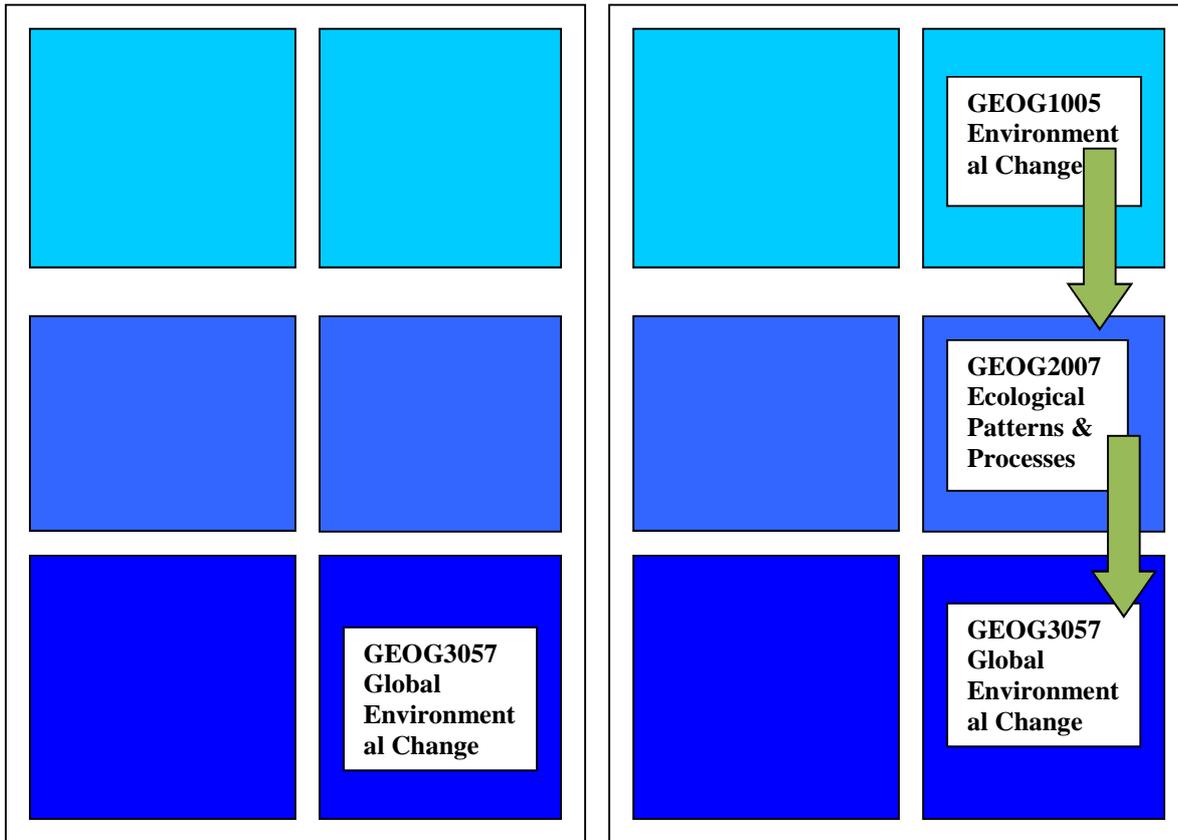
4.3.4 A Block Diagram

The strategy above becomes a little easier to visualize when you consider your 6 half-units to be six boxes in a block diagram that need to be “filled” with a module choice each. Instead of devoting many words we simply will give two examples here.

We start out with a clean sheet of 2 year 1 elective, 2 year 2 electives and 2 year 3 electives.



Now suppose this student decides she wants to study Environmental issues in depth in addition to her Economics modules. Then she might find the GEOG3057 as an interesting elective for year 3. So at the start of step 3 her “block diagram” will look like this:



Then she looks up what the prerequisites for this 3rd year module are and she finds that all that is required is “a background in Environmental Geography”. So she returns to the module list and identifies a 2nd year module GEOG2007 as a module which would give her some background in Environmental Geography. So she adds it to her plan, on the right.

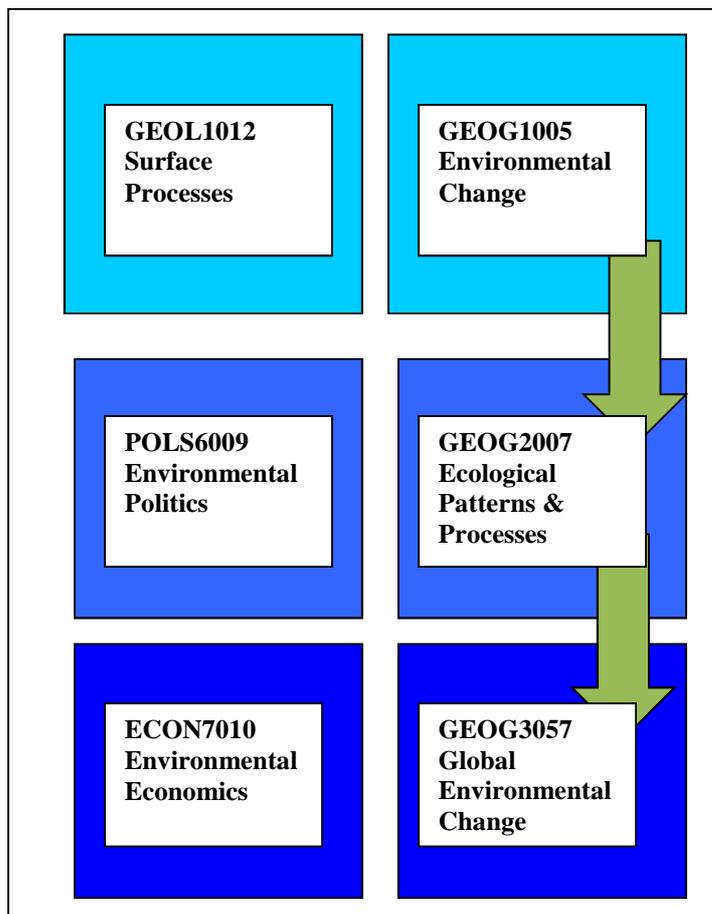
However the 2nd year module GEOG2007 does have a prerequisite: the 1st year module GEOG1005. So she adds that as a first year elective. Now she has constructed a selection of 3 electives that lead up to a 3rd year module in year 3 and that will give her Economics degree an additional personalized flavour. However she has three further electives left!

She could choose to now go to the GEOG departmental tutor to discuss her plan. Maybe she has overlooked something and possibly she needs a few more modules to add in order for her to properly get the most out of her “Environmental” electives. The block diagram that she has made will facilitate the discussion with any advisors, whether they are personal tutors or departmental tutors.

She could also decide to go and look for another set of 3 modules that she can nicely fit into another “track” of modules from an entirely different discipline. Or maybe she decides to choose the remaining three electives “on the go” rather than to do any planning on them.

However she could also decide to complete her whole list of electives herself before asking for advice. For example she could choose to supplement her choice with three

more electives from three different departments. Maybe she would like to incorporate the Economic and Political aspects of the subject field as well as some of the geological. Then she might end up with a diagram like this:



It is important to realize you may need to go through this process a few times before you have a selection that really satisfies the rules. Modules may be full, the teaching department may advise you NOT to take these, or possibly you cannot make the prerequisites work within the number of electives you have.

However, if you present your choices and considerations in such a way, you will make it easier for those advising you to understand *what* you want and *why* you want certain modules.

4.4 Module Selection Advice

Students should discuss their module selections with their Personal Tutor. You can do so not just at the start of the academic year, but also during an academic year when you are thinking about the modules for a subsequent year on the basis of the feedback and marks you receive in your current modules.

Where the interpretation of the departmental rules is problematic, or an exception is sought, the case should be raised with the [Departmental Tutor](#).

4.4.1 Personal tutor advice

Your Personal Tutor will expect you to have followed something like the strategy outlined in section 4.3. So bring your block diagrams along to show your personal tutor what your considerations were. It is also useful to bring a timetable of your choices.

Note that it can be very useful to discuss such things also in a group meeting with your personal tutor and fellow students. Many of your fellow students will be facing similar choices and similar problems.

4.4.2 Departmental Tutor advice

You need to make sure that the department offering the modules will actually allow you to take them! So it is highly recommendable to either seek an appointment with the departmental tutor of that department or to settle the issue by Email.

If you have the “okay” from the teaching department and if your choices are in line with the regulations in this Handbook in 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 and if you feel you have had enough advice from your personal tutor than you can see what to do in section 4.4.3.

If you want more advice or if your selection needs any exceptions you should consult with the [Economics Departmental Tutor](#).

4.4.3 After the Advice: registering your choice!

After you have collected the advice you need to:

1. Submit your selection online via [PORTICO](#).
2. Check the approval status for each of your modules on [PORTICO](#). You will be able to do so via the “Student Academic Details” container.
3. You need to check *regularly* until all your modules are signed off as approved. However, please note that this is a very busy time for staff so approvals may not take place until after the first week of lectures.

You will be sent an e-mail if an optional module or elective module is *rejected*. If this happens you will need to complete an online "[Module Amendment](#)" form via the [Economics Admin Moodle](#) page. If approved, your module amendment will be processed in due course, subject to available space.

4.4.4 Intercollegiate Teaching: Modules at Colleges Which Do Not Charge UCL

If you wish to take a module in another College that you think does *not* charge UCL, then you need to follow the instructions below. N.B. even where no charge is levied, taking a module outside UCL will only be permitted if no similar module exists internally.

- Check with the Fees Section of UCL Registry that the institution does not charge UCL a fee for you to take the module. (If they do then please see the section entitled ‘*Intercollegiate Teaching: Modules Taken at Colleges Which Charge*’ below).
- The module you desire to take must be officially offered under the course-unit system. No exceptions to this rule are possible.

- It is your responsibility to ensure that the module does not involve timetable clashes with UCL lectures or tutorial classes which you are required to attend. Don't forget to take account of travelling time between colleges.
- Obtain the details of the module in question, including the module outline, code, title and unit value.
- Request approval of the Economics Departmental Tutor ([Dr Witte](#)) by submitting the full course outline from which the course units are evident, a confirmation there is no charge to UCL, and a copy of your timetable including the times and dates of the proposed outside module, to him.
- If approval is given and the other criteria above are satisfied, then submit the elective together with your other module selections.

4.4.5 Intercollegiate Teaching: Modules Taken at Colleges Which Charge UCL

- Students will only be permitted to take intercollegiate modules at other colleges of the University of London which operate a charging policy in respect of such modules if it is a required element of the student's programme of study or if there is some exceptionally strong academic reason for the student to take the module.
- Approval for students to take modules which attract a charge must be obtained from the Senior Tutor and the Registrar (or an officer designated by him). Applications should be sent to the Examinations Section for onward transmission to the Registrar.
- A student who takes a module for which a charge is made without having first obtained the appropriate approval will be personally liable for the charge.

As a result, please note that modules at the LSE and at SOAS will not be permitted options to be taken by Economics students.