

James Symons-Hicks

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Profile

I am a Pre-Doctoral Research Assistant at the LSE Centre for Macroeconomics, focusing on Fiscal Policy, Productivity & Growth, and Family Macroeconomics. I have also worked as a research assistant at University College London with a focus on financial decision-making and experimental economics. My research interests include macroeconomics, financial economics, behavioural economics, and experimental economics.

Education

University College London
MSc Economics

Sep 2023 – Sep 2024
Grade: Distinction

Awarded Dean's List in Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences

Thesis: “A Q-Learning Approach to Algorithmic Market Making for Risky Securities.”

Core Modules: *Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Econometrics, Research Methods.*

Optional Modules: *Advanced Macroeconomic Theory, Advanced Microeconometrics, Machine Learning in Economics, Topics in Money and Finance.*

Modules Audited: *Advanced Microeconomic Theory*

University College London
BSc Economics

Sep 2020 – Jun 2023
Grade: First Class Honours

Thesis: “Unravelling the Influence of Retail Investors on Liquidity and Volatility in UK Markets”

Selected Modules: *Game Theory, Advanced Macroeconomics, Advanced Economics of Finance, Spanish: Culture and Current Affairs, Mathematical (Real) Analysis.*

Academic Positions

Pre-Doctoral Research Assistant
Centre for Macroeconomics, London School of Economics

- Working with Prof. Matthias Doepke and Dr. Ethan Ilzetzki.

September 2024 – Present
London, UK

Research Assistant
Prof. Antonio Guarino, University College London

May 2022 – September 2024
London, UK

- Working across multiple projects relating to financial decision-making and experimental economics.
- Assisted with interactive, computer-based laboratory experiments of undergraduate students and professional traders.
- Developed MATLAB programmes to analyse experimental data using Maximum Likelihood Estimation.
- Utilised Python to clean experimental data, create graphics, and conduct hypothesis testing.
- Editing and proofreading academic articles for publication.
- Creating and editing conference presentation slides, including creating graphics and visuals.

Research & Publications

The Influence of Market Dynamics on Retail Investor Attention | [Link](#) Oct 2023

- Published in UCL Journal of Economics 2023.*

Impacts of the EU Referendum Decision on the Welsh Economy | [Link](#) Jun 2022

- Shortlisted for UCL's Explore Econ Conference 2022.*

Economics with Humans: The Importance of Behavioural Economics | [Link](#) Jan 2022

- Blog article for The Economic Tribune.*

Other Research Experience

Peer Reviewer, UCL Journal of Economics	2024, 2025
Student Research Fellow, UCL Economic Tribune	Oct 2022 – Jul 2023
Presenter & Panel Discussion Member, Discover Economics Project	June 2023
Scientific Committee, UCL Explore Econ Conference	June 2023

Technical Skills

Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Advanced).

Programming: *Proficient* - Stata, MATLAB, Python, L^AT_EX. *Familiar* - R, Mathematica.

Other: Microsoft Excel (proficient), Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work, LTA Level 2 Tennis Coach.

Other Work Experience

The Access to Sport Project	Nov 2021 – Aug 2022
Tennis Coach	London, UK

- Delivered free/low-cost tennis sessions to children and adults, including 30+ players school groups and summer holiday camps.
- Supported 5 volunteers/junior coaches in qualification progressions by providing on-court feedback during lessons.
- Undertook additional training sessions to teach players with additional learning needs.