Case Study #4 - Rubric   
Econ 4075: Fall 2023

Georgetown University

**Objectives:** There is no right answer to this assignment. Even no concrete answer can be correct if well defended. You can and should have provided a wide range of thinking on the three regulatory options. The point of this assignment is to show that being a good economist, and indeed a critical thinker more broadly, requires us to carefully weigh all available evidence, consider uncertainty, and to rely on more information input than a simple efficiency test. The goal therefore was for you and some of your peers to wrestle with an issue, to juggle much in both hands, and to nevertheless emerge with something worthwhile for a busy professional relying on you for good advice. As such, you will be graded not on what standard you choose but on how you describe your thought process in the memo and the video presentation. Clear, concise, logical, convincing, and compelling arguments receive full credit. For each metric below, a 1 is minus five points and a 2 is minus two and a half points. A three entails no decrements.

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| **Clarity:** As with everything else, clear communication conveys a stronger message. | | |
| 1 Your argument is incomprehensible. If there is a take-away, it is not apparent. You do not provide any understanding of the merits of different options. | 2 There are occasional moments of clarity in your argument, but they lack cohesion, appear jerky, and often do not provide a take-away. Some regulatory options are not described. | 3 Your argument is comprehensible, well-organized, and you provide a clear overall take-away and conclusions throughout the document, although not necessarily on every point. Alternative policy options are mentioned. |

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| **Concision:** An important element of this assignment is being attuned to the needs of your audience. If you are not able to quickly cut to the chase, then all your work researching options could be fruitless. | | |
| 1 Your memo and presentation are lengthy and not well organized. You might ramble or list disjointed topics in a stream-of-consciousness that is hard to follow and lacks clear take-aways. You go over the page or time limits excessively. | 2 Your memo and presentation are organized, with only minimal rambling or disjointed thoughts. It is easy to follow what you are saying. You do not go over the page or time limits except minimally. | 3 Your memo and presentation are well organized and tidy. There is no rambling. Thoughts are connected in your memo. Your speaking has connecting phrases. You do not go over the page or time limits except minimally. |

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| **Logic:** Your memo and brief can incorporate normative judgements as well as positive statements, but it is important to convey that you understand when statements are opinions and accordingly support positions with adequate explanation. | | |
| 1 Your argument does not rely on analytic or logical thinking. The decision-making process is overly described in normative terms (e.g., “we should protect rural systems”) without explaining why. | 2 Most of the argument is logical. Where trade-offs exist, these are explained by weighing the trade-offs instead of using purely normative opinions. Some normative opinions are not explained or justified. | 3 The argument is entirely logical and straightforward. Trade-offs are weighed with appropriate caution and comprehension, and the rationale for making any normative judgements is explained. |

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| **Convincing:** The persuasiveness of your memo and verbal briefing mostly rests on how well you appear to understand the subject. Answers that demonstrate you do not understand the context of the regulation are not convincing. Providing more evidence to support your position lends credibility to your case. | | |
| 1 Your arguments do not hold water. There may be inconsistencies in what you suggest, perhaps valuing environmental justice while ignoring affordability or vice versa. You do not use any of the source materials to justify your case, or you incorporate a few materials in a simplistic way. A decision-maker will find your suggestion laughable. | 2 Your arguments are generally sound. A decision maker will consider your view, but they may not necessarily be moved to agree with what you say. You use some of the source materials to justify your case, but you use a limited set of the materials. You might also use the source materials in a way that doesn’t consider their implications, such as ignoring unquantified or unknown benefits. | 3 A reasonable decision maker will strongly consider your take-aways. You use ample evidence that is provided or from other sources, either using it to justify your case or to explain why they are not material to your take-away. |

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| **Compelling:** The point of your memo and brief is to ensure a more effective, defensible regulation. If you believe your position, then you should care whether your bosses are willing to support it. As such, it is important to convey to them why they should make your position a priority. | | |
| 1 Your arguments, while logically sound and even convincing, are not engaging in any way whatsoever. Your memo or verbal presentation do not convey the importance of the regulation or the need for your standard. | 2 A decision maker would find your case to be interesting, and they consider the rule to be at least relevant among competing priorities. You might describe affordability or environmental justice considerations. | 3 A decision maker would find your description compelling. The implications of your standard are so wide-ranging and important that they decide to make this rule a priority among many competing obligations. You describe affordability and/or environmental justice considerations. |

Specific decrements:

1. Does not provide a video (-15)
2. Late submission -- memo or video is submitted after the start of class on November 27th (-10)
3. Take-away on your standard is not listed at the start or close the start of the memo (-5)
4. Does not consider economics for the proposed standard (-5)
5. Does not mention explain alternative options for the policy specialist to consider with respect to the proposed standard (-2)
6. The memo or video relies solely on summarizing options, benefits/costs, or source material without explaining their relevance to the argument for a specific standard (-2)

Specific additions:

1. Provides clear policy options to improve the equity or efficiency of the standard (+5)