

# Essay advice for coursework assessments specific to EC549

## Why does EC549 have essays as coursework assessment?

Essays are meant to give you an opportunity to think deeply about topics we see in EC549 and train you to do a good exam. We have an essay and an ICT which is a timed essay.

## Essay

The essay should be no more than 1,500 words long. Essay topics are listed at the end of the Module Outline.

The essay will be used to assess the extent to which you are able to use seminar discussions, lectures and further readings to write a piece of work that shows structured, critical and economically informed knowledge on a particular topic.

The essay also gives you the opportunity to reflect in depth on a given topic and, therefore, encourages your learning process and helps you to develop critical views and written communication skills.

You are expected to make use first and foremost of the readings and resources recommended for this module both in the outline and the Moodle page for this module. This includes web resources highlighted in lectures.

In the Economics Guide, you will find general advice on referencing and essay writing. In the Moodle Page, I will provide you with further advice specific to this module.

## In-Course Test (ICT):

The in ICT will be a timed essay which will take place in week 12 (the venue and exact time will be as indicated in your SDS timetable as stated in the module's Fact Sheet), you will have about 40 minutes to complete it. The timed essay will test the same skills as the essay but, it will also give you an opportunity to demonstrate those skills in an exam environment. This will provide you with an opportunity to assess the material that you have gathered and considered relevant to the timed essay topic. *Timed essay* topics are provided at the end of the Module Outline. You will be able to choose one of those topics. You will be advised to prepare a draft essay **on your chosen topic** prior to the ICT date. The timed essay has the same requirements as the essay regarding use of references and depth of content. The only difference is that you now have to do it under exam conditions (also, you will not be required to provide a detailed reference list, author (date) with in the main text will be enough).

## Top 10 TIPS for getting a first in an essay or timed essay (you can also find general advice on essay writing and referencing at the Economics Guide Moodle module):

1. **DECIDE ON YOUR ESSAY TOPIC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:** This will allow you to start making links between material you have in lectures and seminars and essay content.

2. ORAL PRESENTATIONS WILL HELP YOU DO A GOOD ESSAY! The oral presentations in seminars will help you understand how to use papers in the reading lists for the purposes of the essay and timed essay. That is why we have them!
3. BUT, DO NOT HAND IT IN TOO SOON: up to deadline you can revise it and fine tune it according to new material we see. Some essay topics require that you connect across issues seen in different lectures across term.
4. START WITH RESOURCE GATHERING: your notes on lectures and seminar exercises, relevant textbook chapters and papers from reading list and the Module's Moodle page. Look at the essay topic, read the material then go back to essay topic then start thinking about the structure.
5. STRUCTURE IT WELL: obviously you need an introduction, main text and conclusions but, also think about the line of argument that constantly links back to the essay topic (see Economics Guide for general help on essay writing).
6. REFERENCE PROPERLY: do not copy paste, you must explain things in your own words (see Economics Guide for help on referencing). Except for the Foreign Direct Investment essay topic (where you need to search other papers beyond those in reading list), you must use recommended textbooks, papers in reading list and other web sources in the Moodle Page first and foremost. This advice is specific to EC549.
7. PROVE YOU CAN USE ECONOMIC MODELS TO EXPLAIN THINGS: This is very important for the first. Use as much graphical analysis and relevant maths from lectures and seminars as you can to explain the topic and link to the journal articles and other sources. You need to showcase your technical ability. You need to show how your understanding of the lecture enables you to understand debates in webs, data and journal articles in a deeper way.
8. DO NOT JUST SUM UP JOURNAL ARTICLES AND OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES: Use them in depth. This is very important for the first. What you say needs to be relevant to the essay topic, summing them up without connecting to topic and your line of argument is not good enough. You do not need to understand the econometric techniques but, you should try to connect the intuition of the results to the essay topic. For theoretical papers, the main challenge will be to understand the assumptions of the economic models they use and how they compare to our textbook models. The most challenging thing is to be able to discern what you should use and is relevant to the topic and what you can leave out. Oral presentations will help with this.
9. DO NOT DIGRESS: whatever you have to say, say through sources, for example, if you disagree with the conclusions of a model, you should criticise the specific assumptions or refer to papers that have tested the model empirically. Don't just tell me you hate free trade!!!
10. USE World Trade Organization site: this is a specific requirement for the timed essay: there are many legal texts there but, I am only interested in "the economics" of that they contain.