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Teaching Statement

I started my Ph.D. in Economics at The University of Manchester in 2019. After completing my coursework, in 2021, I became eligible to teach as a Teaching Assistant (TA) within the Department of Economics. From that moment on, I have worked as a TA for the department in all semesters. I love teaching. I believe that teaching provides the first front-seat exposure that a young person has towards academia. When I was an undergraduate student in Ecuador, I remember becoming interested in academia due to the admiration I had for my lecturers inside the classroom. Nowadays, I believe that teaching is the best way for an academic to synthesize ideas and to understand concepts that we apply to our research. In other words, teaching helps me be a better researcher.

My teaching philosophy has evolved over the years. Currently, I view teaching economics, especially at the undergraduate level, as an opportunity to challenge students-deliberately and respectfully-to develop strong problem-solving skills. I recognize that the combination of rigorous mathematical foundations and theoretical reasoning in economics can be overwhelming for some students. However, this also creates an ideal platform to teach them how to tackle difficult tasks. I believe that this is just as important as imparting specific knowledge, as the ability to confront challenges and solve problems will be invaluable in students' future endeavors.

Before coming to Manchester, I worked for 2 years as a lecturer at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) in Ecuador, where I taught the course of Introduction to Economics and an elective course on development economics. Since USFQ is a liberal arts university, some courses were taught to students from different majors. This experience provided me with the opportunity to manage large groups of students, with around 100 students per class. In Manchester, as a TA, I had the opportunity to teach small groups in tutorials consisting of around 20 students per class. I have experience teaching both large and small groups, and I believe the dynamics are markedly different. For instance, small groups tend to engage more in discussion-based sessions, while large groups are typically more receptive to content presented by the lecturer, making materials such as slides and class notes particularly important when teaching large groups.

As a lecturer in Ecuador, I developed an elective course on development economics, which had not been taught before. This course, designed for advanced students, allowed me to engage with them not only through teaching the course material but also by advising them on their final essays, which they were required to submit at the end of the semester. During this process, I guided students on choosing topics, locating Ecuadorian data sources, and working with software such as R and Stata for their coding needs. By the end of the course, the students were highly satisfied and rated the course very positively. This experience provided me with the opportunity to supervise various projects while covering different topics.

As a TA in Manchester, I learned to allow the students to be the protagonists in the classroom. Being a lecturer and/or a TA sometimes grants you the urge to showcase your depth of knowledge on a certain topic. Perhaps lecturers are more inclined towards this, as they aim to transmit complex information in the most effective way. However, a TA, especially in a non-quantitative course, must guide students through

their reflections on the course material. I find this experience enriching because while you must master the topic for that session, you don't always have to be another lecturer; rather, you can be an educator who empowers students with the knowledge they have been exposed to by the lecturer. In this process, one can also enhance student learning by developing their discussion skills and helping them express their opinions to me and to each other without experiencing social anxiety.

My pedagogical approach to teaching varies depending on the situation. When teaching large groups, I believe that the quality of the material, such as lecture notes, and the simplicity with which I explain the material, are key factors. Furthermore, encouraging students to ask questions is crucial in large groups. To facilitate this, technology can be instrumental by allowing students to submit questions in real-time using appropriate technological applications. For small group teaching, my pedagogy is to empower the students and assist them in their reflection on the class material. This approach often involves the use of interactive materials such as discussions, polls, and in-class exercises. For instance, I have found that students engage well with exercises involving the evaluation of example answers to past exam questions. This practice helps them understand what markers typically look for in exam responses and how they can improve their own performance in the actual exam.