TEACHING GUIDE - 2026-2027

Economic and Social impact of projects: why and how?

UGRA_015125

Departments	Department of Economics, Finance & Accounting
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	2
Teacher responsible	Maria Laffaire - maria.laffaire@esade.edu

Course Goals

This course has been designed to provide skills and competences for future leaders, entrepreneurs, and policy makers to understand the need and basic procedures to adopt an evidence-based approach to program and policy design, implementation and evaluation.

Teaching methodology

The course consists of a combination of interactive lectures and development of a group project. The lectures are interactive and filled with real life examples on every topic. The students are expected to participate and to be able to gradually incorporate the concepts to a proposal for an intervention focusing on real life problems. There will be group tasks from one lesson to the next throughout the course. A final group presentation of a project design and evaluation based on evidence will be asked at the end of the course.

Description

Short description

This course has been designed to provide skills and competences for future leaders, entrepreneurs, and policy makers to understand the need and basic procedures to adopt an evidence-based approach to program and policy design, implementation and evaluation.

The course takes a policy-oriented approach towards how to measure economic and social impact of public and private projects. We will focus on why and how to identify our action's impact in society and how to determine whether a program is successful following development economics' methodology.

The course is relevant for future policy-makers, social entrepreneurs and impact investors that will need to either implement or understand the methodologies relevant for these kinds of activities. Evidence-based strategies are necessary for the public policy sphere and social impact is fast becoming a key issue today's global business environment.

The classes will follow the structure of a policy/intervention cycle. First

focusing on the definition of evidence-based decision making, how to incorporate it in the development of useful diagnosis and decide between alternative interventions and approaches. Then focusing on the framework for the design, implementation and evaluation of different sorts of interventions, we will learn how to use a theory of change. As for the evaluation we will overview rigorous causal inference techniques such as randomised experiments (RCTs), different semi-experimental evaluation methodologies and economic evaluations, such as cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis. Finally, we will also introduce concepts of behavioural economics to be applied for social impact, presenting cutting edge research in psychology and economics used to in innovative solutions to significant social challenges.

The seminar has a highly practical approach. Students will participate in the design of a specific intervention in groups, gradually introducing the concepts learned in class to their subject.

Bibliography

Gertler, Paul J.; Martinez, Sebastian; Premand, Patrick; Rawlings, Laura B.; Vermeersch, Christel M. J., Impact Evaluation in Practice, Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank (Book)
Banerjee, A. V., & Duflo, E., Poor economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty., PublicAffairs (Book)

Activities

Teamwork
The students are expected to participate and to be able to gradually incorporate the concepts to a proposal for an intervention focusing on real life problems. A final group presentation on how evidence can be obtained and used will be asked at the end of

Group presentations
The students are expected to participate and to be able to gradually incorporate the concepts to a proposal for an intervention focusing on real life problems. A final group presentation on how evidence can be obtained and used will be asked at the end of

Project development and presentation
The course consists of a combination of interactive lectures and development of a group project. The lectures are interactive and filled with real life examples on every topic. The students are expected to participate and to be able to gradually incorpora

Research work and projects

Content

#	Topic
1	Evidence-based policy and project design
2	The theory of change and the difference between results and impact

#	Topic
3	Evaluating impact I: experimental methods
4	Evaluating impact II: quasi-experimental methods
5	Behavioural economics for social impact
6	Group presentations

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Participation in program activities		Retake and ordinary round	55.00%
Group project		Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
Peer evaluation		Retake and ordinary round	5.00%

PROGRAMS

B13-Exchange Program Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
- B13 Year 1 (Optative)

B13S-Exchange Program Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
- B13S Year 1 (Optative)

BBA20-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
- BBA20 Year 4 (Optative)
- BBA20 Year 2 (Optative)
- BBA20 Year 3 (Optative)

BBA23-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
- BBA23 Year 4 (Optative)
- BBA23 Year 2 (Optative)
- BBA23 Year 3 (Optative)

BBA25-Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Undergraduates: Business)
- BBA25 Year 3 (Optative)
- BBA25 Year 1 (Optative)
- BBA25 Year 2 (Optative)

DBAI23-Double Degree in Business Administration and Artificial Intelligence for Business (Undergraduates: Business)
- DBAI23 Year 4 (Optative)
- DBAI23 Year 1 (Optative)
- DBAI23 Year 3 (Optative)
- DBAI23 Year 2 (Optative)

DBAI25-Double Degree in Business Administration and Business and Artificial Intelligence (Undergraduates: Business)
- DBAI25 Year 3 (Optative)
- DBAI25 Year 4 (Optative)
- DBAI25 Year 2 (Optative)

GEL19-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL19 Year 3 (Optative)
- GEL19 Year 1 (Optative)
- GEL19 Year 4 (Optative)
- GEL19 Year 2 (Optative)

GEL23-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL23 Year 1 (Optative)
- GEL23 Year 4 (Optative)
- GEL23 Year 2 (Optative)
- GEL23 Year 3 (Optative)