ECONOMICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. To combat global climate change, many economists, including 27 Nobel Laureates, signed a statement recommending a carbon tax, starting at $40 a ton and increasing every year until emissions reductions goals are met with revenue returned directly to citizens through equal lump-sum rebates, to replace cumbersome regulations (*Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 2019). Is such a policy adequate?

2. What, if anything, should the government do to reduce the high price of housing in the UK?

3. Is there an economic case for limiting the highest pay in an organization to twenty times the lowest pay?

4. 'Trickle-down economics is a myth' (JOSEPH STIGLITZ). Is it?

5. Is the concept of equilibrium useful for understanding real-world economic behaviour?

6. Is a shortage of good instruments preventing us from answering economic questions with econometric methods?

7. 'My advice . . . could not be more simple: put 10% of the cash in short-term government bonds and 90% in a very low-cost S&P 500 index fund' (WARREN BUFFETT). Is this good investment advice?

8. Is there an economic basis for conglomerates?

9. What does the evidence on the gender pay gap in an organization tell us about its causes?

10. Five years after graduation, Oxford Economics graduates have the highest mean annual earnings of graduates from all UK degrees, including Cambridge Economics. Why?

ECONOMICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1.   Has globalization affected the marriage market?

2.   How can countries get out of the middle income trap?

3.   Can a trade war be won?

4.   Has the economics profession failed society?

5.   Is China a currency manipulator?

6.   Has development economics been providing more and more precise answers to less and less important questions?

7.   Should governments try to pick winners?

8.   What is an appropriate methodology for evaluating whether the UK has gained economically from being a member of the EU?

9.   Should central banks increase interest rates now in order to have more flexibility to lower them in the event of another financial crisis?

10.   Should firms be prevented from charging loyal customers more than other customers?

ECONOMICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is studying infinite horizon problems in game theory useful?

2. Can welfare economics cope with endogenous preferences?

3. Is the current economics curriculum fit for purpose?

4. Is time-inconsistent decision making necessarily a mistake?

5. What if anything is wrong with targeted advertising?

6. Should insurance companies be allowed to price on the basis of gender?

7. Does it matter that university bosses are paid a lot?

8. How important is replicability in experimental social science?

9. Should Uber and Airbnb face the same regulations as more traditional operators?

10. Does the median voter remain a relevant concept?

ECONOMICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is there a natural rate of unemployment?

2. Has the time come to bring privatized companies back into state ownership?

3. Do recent developments in information processing technology mean that 'central planning' is now more realistic?

4. Why does price dispersion for identical products persist?

5. Are there good reasons to believe that the long-run real interest rate is negative?

6. 'Perhaps one day earthquakes, hurricanes and financial crashes will all be predictable. But we don't have to wait until then for seismology, meteorology and economics to become sciences; they already are' (ERIC MASKIN, 2013). Discuss.

7. How should the long-term care of the elderly be financed?

8. Will big data allow econometrics to be 'theory free'?

9. Has quantitative easing had undesirable distributional effects?

10. Should central banks regulate crypto-currencies?

11. Are import tariffs any worse than other forms of taxation?

ECONOMICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. How should roads be priced?

2. Do robots reduce wages?

3. Is there a case for subsidizing child care?

4. Should governments tax unhealthy foods?

5. Does repeated interaction increase human cooperation?

6. Can evidence from the lab be useful in informing economic policy decisions?

7. Should we give priority to educating girls rather than boys in developing countries?

8. Can there be too much labour market flexibility?

9. How should government policies support small and medium sized enterprises?

10. Is there a case for a universal basic income?

ECONOMICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is there any evidence of secular stagnation?

2. Does the experience of China undermine the proposition that democracy is good for economic growth?

3. Who will gain from Brexit?

4. Is there a tension between global and national equality?

5. Do aggregate fluctuations have micro-economic origins?

6. Should government policy support better access to mobile broadband?

7. Can a price be put on human life?

8. It is only a matter of time before the Eurozone falls apart?

9. Is there a case for supporting agricultural production in advanced economies?

10. Will big data transform econometrics?

ECONOMICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is reference-dependence with loss aversion a mistake for a decision-maker?

2. 'The inference from the unpredictability of stock prices to their rationality is a remarkable error.' Comment.

3. Why did Google pay Apple $1 billion dollars in 2014 to be iOS's default search engine, when Apple users were free to switch manually to any other search engine?

4. Does competition ensure that firms that innovate will do so in ways that increase product value, rather than in ways that better enable them to exploit naïve consumers?

5. Is there a way to make a currency like Bitcoin credible as a store of value or means of payment, without impinging on the privacy of the currency creators or holders?

6. Do markets make people behave more selfishly than they would in a non-market setting?

7. Do financial markets need more than the prevention of fraud to work well?

8. Is pay discrimination a sign of a non-competitive labour market?

9. Are repeated 'black swan' events more likely to be a sign of randomness than a sign that the model is wrong?

10. Can public policy serve freedom of choice better by compelling people to make *some* choice, rather than by setting a default but allowing people to opt out?

ECONOMICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1.   Is price stickiness the root of all macroeconomic evil?

2.   Given the difficulties experienced in financing infrastructural investment, is talk of a global savings glut mistaken?

3.   Are negative interest rates the right way to tackle persistent unemployment and low inflation?

4.   Under what conditions, if any, are capital controls desirable?

5.   Has economics become excessively empirical?

6.   Are the causes of economic growth, or its absence, really to be found in the distant past?

7.   Is the *General Theory* the ultimate proof that economic theory needs maths?

8.   Economists teach their students that labour demand curves slope down. At the same time, many economists deny that immigration lowers wages. Are they simply confused?

9.   Is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership desirable?

10.   Is the Kaldor-Hicks welfare criterion defensible; and if not, do economists have anything to say about welfare comparisons?

ECONOMICS I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Does the Nobel Prize for economics serve an economic purpose?

2. Should usury laws be more common?

3. Does myopia have its advantages?

4. What's wrong with health service providers being for-profit?

5. Should high pay be regulated?

6. Should tobacco companies be allowed to form a cartel?

7. Are 'nudges' preferable to taxation as a means to influence consumer choice?

8. Online retailing enables sellers to gather more information about consumers. Is this likely to harm consumers?

9. Do you expect family-run firms to be efficiently managed?

10. Are there natural experiments in economics?

ECONOMICS II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Do too many people get a university education?

2. Do fiscal rules make economic sense?

3. What if any conditions should be attached to foreign aid?

4. Does corruption make less developed economies more efficient?

5. How can we explain the lack of success in recent multilateral trade negotiations?

6. How should we measure a nation's well-being?

7. Should poor countries be forced to respect intellectual property rights?

8. How can one obtain a causal estimate of the effect of trade on economic growth?

9. Why do countries strive to attract foreign direct investment?

10. What should happen to all the money created by quantitative easing?