

Public Finance

Code: 104651
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Business Administration and Management	OT	4
Economics	OB	3
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OT	3
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OT	4

Contact

Name: Miguel Angel Lopez Garcia

Email: miguelangel.lopez@uab.cat

Teachers

Maria Cervini

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

A basic microeconomic theory course, e.g, Microeconomics I, is a prerequisite to register for this course.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The course provides an introduction to the economic analysis of the financing side of the government budget. The objective is to provide a toolbox with which to approach in a rigorous way a variety of issues related to the design and evaluation of public policy.

Competences

Business Administration and Management

- Capacity for adapting to changing environments.
- Capacity for independent learning in the future, gaining more profound knowledge of previous areas or learning new topics.

- Capacity for oral and written communication in Catalan, Spanish and English, which enables synthesis and oral and written presentation of the work carried out.
- Demonstrate initiative and work individually when the situation requires it.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the structure of institutions and the state, their evolution and the consequences of possible changes, to be able to make a positive contribution to the debate about the role they play in current society.
- Organise the work in terms of good time management, organisation and planning.
- Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and take decisions based on that information.
- Work well in a team, being able to argue proposals and validate or reject the arguments of others in a reasoned manner.

Economics

- Capacity for adapting to changing environments.
- Demonstrate initiative and work individually when the situation requires it.
- Demonstrate understanding of the concepts related to welfare economics and the role of the public sector.
- Lead multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, implementing new projects and coordinating, negotiating and managing conflicts.
- Organise the work in terms of good time management, organisation and planning.
- Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and take decisions based on that information.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills in order to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
- Understand the motivation for and the sense of public policies.
- Use of the available information technology and adaptation to new technological environments.

Contemporary History, Politics and Economics

- Recognise institutional and regulatory design and the main economic policies implemented in current economies on different scales to manage economic growth and its cyclical oscillations.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Work cooperatively in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams implementing new projects.

Learning Outcomes

1. A capacity of oral and written communication in Catalan, Spanish and English, which allows them to summarise and present the work conducted both orally and in writing.
2. Analyse economic facts and decisions about efficiency and equity.
3. Analyse public policies.
4. Analyse the incidence of taxation.
5. Analyse the role of international institutions in the economy.
6. Assess the main social expenditure programmes and their effects on economic growth.
7. Capacity to adapt to changing environments.

8. Capacity to continue future learning independently, acquiring further knowledge and exploring new areas of knowledge.
9. Communicating in oral and written form in Catalan, Spanish and English, in order to be able to summarise and present the carried out project in both forms.
10. Demonstrate capacity to adapt to changing environments.
11. Demonstrate initiative and work independently when required.
12. Develop strategies for autonomous learning.
13. Examine the influence and the role of Spanish public institutions in the economy.
14. Identify the institutions and organisms through which public intervention and regulation of the economy take place.
15. Identify the role of the public sector in the Spanish economy.
16. Interpret the functions of public funds.
17. Lead multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, implement new projects, coordinate, negotiate and manage conflicts.
18. Make decisions in situations of uncertainty and show an enterprising and innovative spirit.
19. Organise work in relation to good time management and planning.
20. Organise work, in terms of good time management and organisation and planning.
21. Recognise the institutions and organisms through which public intervention and regulation of the economy take place.
22. Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
23. Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and take decisions based on that information.
24. Select and generate the information needed for each problem, analyse it and make decisions based on this information.
25. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
26. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
27. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
28. Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
29. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.
30. Students must develop the necessary learning skills in order to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
31. Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
32. Use available information technology and be able to adapt to new technological settings.
33. Use of the available information technology and adaptation to new technological environments.
34. Work as part of a team and be able to argue own proposals and validate or refuse the arguments of others in a reasonable manner.

Content

1. INTRODUCTION

The public sector as an economic agent. The nature of the economic effects of public policy: allocation, distribution and stabilization. Positive versus normative analysis. Criteria for evaluating public policy: economic efficiency, equity, paternalism and individual freedom. Trade-offs among objectives.

2. THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SPAIN

Agents and activities of the public sector. Indices of the dimension of the public sector. The budget of the public sector in Spain: Presupuestos Generales del Estado. Budget concepts and budgetary processes. Indices of budget policy.

3. INTRODUCTION TO TAX ANALYSIS

The budget constraint of the public sector. A classification of government sources of revenue. Elements of a tax. Types of taxes. Desirable characteristics of a tax system: economic efficiency, fiscal justice, administrative simplicity, flexibility, accountability. Proportionality, progressivity and regressivity. Measures of progression.

4. TAX INCIDENCE

Tax incidence as the effects of taxes on income distribution. Balanced-budget incidence and differential incidence. Tax incidence in partial equilibrium. Unit taxes and ad-valorem taxes. The role of elasticities. Tax incidence in general equilibrium models. Tax capitalization. Public financing and public debt. Differential incidence of public debt and taxes: the Ricardian equivalence theorem. Public debt, burden on future generations and neutrality.

5. TAXATION AND EFFICIENCY

Excess burden of taxes as an efficiency loss. Lump-sum taxes, distortionary taxes and excess burden. Income effects, substitution effects and excess burden. Consumer surplus and producer surplus. Analysis of excess burden with demand and supply curves. The excess burden of differential taxation of inputs.

6. OPTIMAL TAXATION

Efficiency, equity and optimal taxation. Optimal commodity taxation. Public pricing as a problem of optimal commodity taxation. Optimal income taxation. The optimal mix of commodity and income taxation. Politics and optimal taxation. Administration and compliance costs. Tax design and tax reform.

7. THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX

Definition of income. Conceptual issues. Exclusions, deductions and credits. Taxes and inflation. Progressivity. Taxation and marriage. The Negative Income Tax and other welfare programs. Effects on the supply of labour. Effects on savings. Effects on housing decisions. Effects on risk taking and portfolio composition. Tax evasion and tax avoidance. The personal income tax in Spain.

8. THE CORPORATION INCOME TAX

The case for and against taxing corporate income. Structure of the corporation tax. Different views of the incidence and excess burden of the corporation income tax: a tax on corporate capital or a tax on economic profits? Corporate taxes and financial decisions. The reform of the corporate income tax. The corporation income tax in Spain.

9. TAXES ON CONSUMPTION

Sales and excise taxes. Monophasic and multiphasic taxes. Excise taxes as an externality-corrective device. General sales taxation. The regressivity of sales taxation. The Value Added Tax. Personal Consumption Taxes. The taxation of consumer expenditure in Spain.

10. TAXES ON WEALTH

The case for and against taxing wealth. A classification of wealth taxes. The property tax. Different views of the incidence of the property tax: a profits tax or an excise tax? Inheritance and gift taxes. The taxation of wealth in Spain.

11. FINANCING SOCIAL SECURITY

The payroll tax for social security. Employer share and employee share. The role of the relationship between taxes paid and benefits received. Incidence in partial equilibrium and in general equilibrium. General funds and value added taxation as sources of revenue. Goals, instruments and institutional design of a social security system.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL TAXATION

Types of environmental externalities. Considerations on the intergenerational allocation of property rights on natural resources. The management of natural resources. Technological options. Limits to the tax solution.

13. PUBLIC FINANCE IN A FEDERAL SYSTEM

The case for and against a decentralized system of government. Decentralization, efficiency, equity and stabilization. Community formation and the optimal size of jurisdictions. The Tiebout model and "voting with the feet". The financing of decentralized levels of government. Subcentral financing through taxes, transfers and debt. Intergovernmental grants. Fiscal decentralization in Spain.

14. INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCE

Public financing in an international setting. Tax-induced international economic distortions. Mobility of tax bases and "fiscal externalities". Direct taxes and the principles of source and residence. Indirect taxes and the principles of destination and origin. National taxes and international competitiveness. Tax coordination and tax competition. Direct and indirect tax harmonization in the European Union.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	32.5	1.3	2, 14, 16, 17, 20, 32
Practice sessions	17	0.68	2, 14, 16, 17, 20, 32
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials and essays supervision	12	0.48	2, 4, 6, 3, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 34, 32
Type: Autonomous			
Study and information collection	88.5	3.54	2, 7, 14, 16, 20, 34, 32

Teaching will be offered on campus.

The purpose of the distribution and combination of the formative activities between the headings Autonomous, Directed and Supervised is to optimize the result of each one.

The proposed teaching methodology may undergo some modifications according to the restrictions imposed by the health authorities on on-campus courses.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
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Written exams (midterm and final), case studies and class attendance	40%, 40%, 20%	0	0	5, 2, 4, 6, 26, 3, 22, 7, 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 29, 15, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 18, 31, 30, 28, 25, 27, 21, 24, 23, 9, 34, 32, 33
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Calendar of evaluation activities

The dates of the evaluation activities (midterm exams, exercises in the classroom, assignments, ...) will be announced well in advance during the semester.

The date of the final exam is scheduled in the assessment calendar of the Faculty.

"The dates of evaluation activities cannot be modified, unless there is an exceptional and duly justified reason why an evaluation activity cannot be carried out. In this case, the degree coordinator will contact both the teaching staff and the affected student, and a new date will be scheduled within the same academic period to make up for the missed evaluation activity." Section 1 of Article 264. Calendar of evaluation activities (Academic Regulations UAB).

Students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, who in accordance with the previous paragraph need to change an evaluation activity date must process the request by filling out an Application for exams' reschedule: [e-Formulari per a la reprogramació de proves](#).

A student who does not perform any evaluative task is considered "not evaluable", therefore, a student who performs a continuous assessment component can no longer be qualified with a "not evaluable".

In this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is not allowed in any of its phases. Any work that includes fragments generated with AI will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total penalty in the grade of the activity, or greater sanctions in serious cases.

Grade revision process

After all grading activities have ended, students will be informed of the date and way in which the course grades will be published. Students will be also be informed of the procedure, place, date and time of grade revision following University regulations.

Retake Process

"To be eligible to participate in the retake process, it is required for students to have been previously been evaluated for at least two thirds of the total evaluation activities of the subject." Section 2 of Article 261. The recovery (UAB Academic Regulations). Additionally, it is required that the student to have achieved an average grade of the subject greater than or equal to 3.5 and less than 5.

The date of the retake exam will be posted in the calendar of evaluation activities of the Faculty. Students who take this exam and pass, will get a grade of 5 for the subject. If the student does not pass the retake, the grade will remain unchanged, and hence, student will fail the course.

Irregularities in evaluation activities

In spite of other disciplinary measures deemed appropriate, and in accordance with current academic regulations, "in the case that the student makes any irregularity that could lead to a significant variation in the grade of an evaluation activity, it will be graded with a 0, regardless of the disciplinary process that can be instructed. In case of various irregularities occur in the evaluation of the same subject, the final grade of this subject will be 0". Section 11 of Article 266. Results of the evaluation. (UAB Academic Regulations).

Comprehensive evaluation (Art. 265 of the UAB Academic Regulations)

By requesting the comprehensive evaluation the student waives the option of continuous evaluation.

The comprehensive evaluation must be requested at the Academic Management (Gestió acadèmica) of the Campus where the degree/master's degree is taught. The request must be filed according to the procedure and the deadline established by the administrative calendar of the Faculty of Economics and Business.

- Attendance :

- Student attendance is mandatory on the day of the comprehensive assessment. The date will be the same as that of the final exam of the semester as per the evaluation calendar published by the Faculty of Economics and Business and approved by the Faculty's Teaching and Academic Affairs Committee. The duration of the comprehensive assessment must be specified in the characteristics of such activity.
- 100% of the evaluation evidences must be handed in by the student on the day of the comprehensive assessment.
- The evaluation evidences carried out in person by the student on the same day of the comprehensive assessment must have a minimum weight of 70%.

- Characteristics of the comprehensive assessment:

Evidence Type (1)	Weight in the final assessment (%) (2)	Duration of the activity	Is the activity that corresponds to this evaluation evidence to be carried out in person on the date scheduled for the comprehensive evaluation? (YES/NO) (3)
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written exam on the contents of the subject	80%	two hours	Yes
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short essay on one of the topics of the syllabus, to be jointly chosen with the instructor	10%		Yes
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oral presentation of the above-mentioned essay	10%	10 minutes	Yes
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TOTAL	100%
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(1) Descriptive title of each piece of evidence (exam, problem sets solving, case analysis, activity carried out using specific software that the student is expected to know,...)

(2) Weight of the evidence in the final mark of the subject (specify the percentages of each evaluation evidence that the student must undertake)

(3) For each piece of evidence: Is the activity that corresponds to this evaluation evidence to be carried out in person on the date scheduled for the comprehensive evaluation? (YES/NO)

- Retake procedure:

"For the retake procedure, no distinction is made between students who have followed the continuous evaluation and those who have opted for the comprehensive evaluation. All will be re-assessed using the same test or evaluation evidence."

- Review of the Final Qualification:

"The review of the final qualification will follow the same procedure as for the continuous evaluation".

The proposed evaluation activities may undergo some changes according to the restrictions imposed by the health authorities on on-campus courses.

Bibliography

GRUBER, J. (2016), *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 5th ed., New York: Worth Publishers.

HINDRIKS, J. and MYLES, G.D. (2013), *Intermediate Public Economics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge and London: The MIT Press.

ROSEN, H.S. and GAYER, T. (2014), *Public Finance*, 10th ed., New York: McGraw Hill.

STIGLITZ, J.E. and ROSENGARD, J.K. (2015), *Economics of the Public Sector*, 4th, New York and London: Norton & Company.

Software

Not applicable.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	8	English	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	14	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	8	English	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	14	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon