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# Undergraduate Policy Competition 2025

## Information Pack



**Organised by the LSESU Economics Society  
In Collaboration with the  
LSE Department of Economics**

# Section 1. Problem Statement and Task

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Many developed (and some developing) nations are currently facing the economic pressures of ageing populations, including rising healthcare costs, shrinking workforces and struggling pension systems. If these challenges are not addressed many major economies may face economic stagnation and worsening quality of life in the future.

Select a country of your choice that has a rapidly ageing population and faces potential economic stagnation and a shrinking labour force.

In this year's policy competition, we would like you to design a set of policies to address the effects of ageing demographics. Please consider labour markets, pension systems and encouraging productivity.

## 1.2 Initial Readings

To help you with your task, the following readings and research papers are suggested. You may use them as part of your analysis.

The readings here are optional. Past participants have won the competition without referring to recommended readings or the important notes. We have deliberately chosen a blend of academic studies and accessible readings from various sources. You are free to agree or disagree with these opinions depending on the evidence you have found.

We advise you thoroughly research your country of choice, and use the readings to supplement your proposal by applying it to the contexts of your chosen country.

| Resource   | Description   |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (n.d.). Ageing. OECD.</a>  | The OECD's summary on the challenges posed by rapidly ageing populations. This includes reforms in pensions, employment, and long-term care systems to ensure financial sustainability and social adequacy. |
| <a href="#">Tang, B., Li, Z., Hu, S., &amp; Xiong, J. (2022). Economic Implications of Health Care Burden for Elderly Population. <i>Inquiry : a journal of medical care organization, provision and financing</i>. 59. 469580221121511.</a> | The paper examines the impact of the increased healthcare burden associated with aging populations (focused in the US)  |
| <a href="#">Van Der Gaag, N. and de Beer, J. (2015). From Demographic Dividend to Demographic Burden. <i>Tijdschr Econ Soc Geogr</i>, 106, 94-109.</a>   | An exploration of the impact of aging population on economic growth and employment rates in EU countries, alongside analysis of outcomes for rural vs urban regions.  |

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|---|--|
| <p><a href="#">Walker, Alan. (2003). <i>The Policy Challenges of Population Ageing</i>. McMaster University, <i>Social and Economic Dimensions of an Aging Population Research Papers</i>.</a></p>                    | <p>Identifies and discusses five key policy challenges, including ensuring economic security in old age and providing long term care, and proposing a new policy direction focusing on active ageing.</p>  |
| <p><a href="#">Jackson W. A. (1992). <i>Population ageing and intergenerational conflict: a post-Keynesian view</i>. <i>Journal of economic studies (Glasgow, Scotland)</i>, 19(2), 26–37.</a></p>                    | <p>An analysis of the connections between demographic ageing, dependency burdens, and intergenerational conflict within developed economies, viewed through a post-Keynesian framework.</p>  |
| <p><a href="#">Emerson, P.M., Knabb, S.D. and Sirbu, A. (2019). <i>Institutional Responses to Aging Populations and Economic Growth: A Panel Data Approach</i>. <i>IZA Discussion Paper Series</i>, 12561.</a></p>    | <p>An analysis of how aging populations affect economic growth, focusing on life expectancy, savings, and resource allocation in OECD countries.</p>   |
| <p><a href="#">Andor, M.A., Schmidt, C.M. and Sommer, S. (2018). <i>Climate Change, Population Ageing and Public Spending: Evidence on Individual Preferences</i>. <i>Ecological Economics</i>, 151, 173–183.</a></p> | <p>An analysis of how aging influences attitudes toward climate change and public spending preferences, highlighting reduced support for climate policies among older populations.</p>   |
| <p><a href="#">Harper, S. (n.d.). <i>The positive impacts of an ageing population</i>. <i>Age International</i>.</a></p>  | <p>An article highlighting the often-overlooked benefits of an ageing population, emphasizing older adults' significant contributions to economies, communities, and families. It showcases how seniors remain active in the workforce, support family structures, and play vital roles in community development, challenging prevalent ageist stereotypes</p> |

### 1.3 Task

Based on the problem statement and resources above, as well as your own research, each participant is tasked to suggest policies to mitigate the impact of such a shock on a commodity-dependent economy of your choice.

Participants are asked to focus on a specific country or region. Judging will be based on their ideas and justification, as specified in the judging criteria section.

Policy proposals should have a clear economic basis, so whilst it is fair to make political suggestions, arguments should be justified by economic reasoning and participants should not venture too far into, for instance, the technicalities of the geography and agricultural aspects of the export.

When making your recommendations, consider both the economic and social costs, and benefits of the proposed policies. You may draw on examples and evidence from different countries and their policy responses as relevant.

## Section 2. Competition Format, Eligibility, Judging Criteria and Prize

### 2.1 Competition Format

All participants will be required to:

- Submit a written essay (max. 1500 words) by **2359 BST Sunday 5th October**.

This will be given to a review committee prior to the start of the competition. A shortlist of a top few finalists will be announced by Sunday 12th October.

The finalists will then be required to:

- Submit slides for their final presentation by **2359 GMT Sunday 2nd November**.

All submissions will be through an official form posted on LSESU Economics Society's official social media accounts.

The finalists will then present their proposal to a panel of judges, comprised of notable academics experienced in the field of economic policy.

- Reporting date and time: **Monday 10th November at 11:00AM (GMT)**.
- Reporting Venue: **LSE Campus** (more information will be sent to participants closer to the date)

Each participant will be given 10 minutes to present their Research Presentation on display to a team of judges. Each participant will have a 5 minute Q&A slot for judges to ask questions.

The order of presentations will be determined by drawing lots.

### 2.2 Eligibility

The competition will be open to all individuals enrolled in undergraduate studies or equivalent in the academic year 2024–25.

### 2.3 Judging Criteria

| Component                        | Overall Weightage |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Research and Presentation Slides | 40%               |
| Oral Presentation                | 40%               |
| Q&A                              | 20%               |

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100%</b> |
|--------------|-------------|

| <b>Research and Presentation Slides (40%)</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Criterion</b>                              | <b>Explanation</b>   |
| Policy  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feasibility</li> <li>- Originality</li> <li>- Effectiveness</li> </ul>  |
| Analysis and Evaluation                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depth and breadth of analysis</li> <li>- Usage of real-world examples</li> </ul>  |
| Research Presentation                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarity of ideas presented</li> <li>- Clean and organised layout</li> <li>- Effective use of graphics, colours and fonts</li> </ul> |

| <b>Presentation (40%)</b>           |  |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Criterion</b>                    | <b>Band 2:2</b>                              | <b>Band 2:1</b>   | <b>Band 1</b>                                       |
| Effectiveness of group presentation | Presentation lacks cohesion and organisation | Generally effective with some degree of cohesion and organisation | Highly effective, coherent and well organised       |
| Fluency and Clarity of speech       | Mumbles and difficult to understand at times | Speaks clearly and intelligibly most of the time                  | Speaks coherently, structured and fluent throughout |
| Awareness of the audience           | Little to no awareness                       | Some awareness of the audience                                    | Shows strong personal engagement with the audience  |

| <b>Q&amp;A (20%)</b>  |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Criterion</b>      | <b>Band 2:2</b>                                     | <b>Band 2:1</b>   | <b>Band 1</b>   |
| Response to questions | Answers are limited with no attempts at elaboration | Answers are relevant and contain some elaboration and explanation | Answers are well thought out, relevant and explained well |

## **2.4 Prizes**

All participants will receive a Certificate of Participation, endorsed by the Department of Economics. Cash prize will be awarded to the Top 3 participants:

- 1st Place: £500
- 2nd Place: £200
- 3rd Place: £100