1. Approximately what percentage of Economics applicants are invited for interview?
   **Answer:** There is always variation across years and Colleges, but 60 per cent is fairly typical.

2. Are we expected to know concepts that are outside the AS level curriculum (especially for the interview)?

   **Answer:** The aim of the interview is to test your ability to think through unfamiliar topics. It is not a test of knowledge, and you are not expected to ‘know’ concepts for the purpose of reciting them back. It is possible you will be asked questions that make use of topics that have come up in, say, your maths A-Level – but this should not be in a way that will give advantages to students who happen to have been taught some topics over others.

3. Can you get an offer if you do good in ECCA and interview, but your predicted grade is A*A*B?

   **Answer:** It is common practice in most Colleges not to interview candidates whose predicted grades do not meet the entry requirements, unless there are good mitigating circumstances.

4. For the economics admissions test, is the style of the essay similar to an A-level standard?

   **Answer:** In the sense that an A-level essay and the admissions essay reveal your understanding of economics, the ability to write and structure an essay with evidence, then they are similar. However, the admissions essay is set up in very particular form that involves reading a specified article and utilising the information to produce an evidence-based response to particular questions. In that sense you need to be able to respond to the specific questions in the admissions test and not to work with the idea that one style of essay can be used to respond to all questions.

5. How is Section 2 of the ECAA marked?

   **Answer:** Taking 2020 as a guide, the text reads: “Read the article ‘Should America want a strong dollar? It’s complicated’ taken from The Economist (February 9th 2017). Based on this text, complete the task below.

   **TASK**
   - Explain why in some circumstances a rise in the value of the US dollar might benefit American residents, while in other circumstances it would be harmful to them.
   - Suggest possible reasons why the US dollar might be persistently overvalued.

   Your answer will be assessed taking into account your ability to construct a reasoned, insightful and logically consistent argument with clarity and precision.”

   The guidance, taken as a whole, suggests that your answer must utilise the article. Clearly your ability to use your economics to understand the article and think about the arguments made and the evidence considered will be evaluated. In addition, the final two lines of the guidance is clear in that you will be evaluated for your ability “to construct a reasoned, insightful and logically consistent argument with clarity and precision.” This can be achieved in a number of ways, but you need to develop this skill.
6. How should you structure the essay question of the ECAA?

**Answer:** The comments to the previous question offer some guidance to this question. The only extra point to stress is that you must respond to all aspects of the question. The example from 2020 has two questions. The structure you develop must be able to respond to both questions. Although the two questions are related in topic area, they are asking you two very different questions.

7. How many students on average apply for economics on average every year?

**Answer:** Last year saw around 1600 applicants, for around 160 places. There has been a significant increase in applicants over the last five years.

8. How much of the economics courses are dedicated to learning about sustainable growth, environmental issues and income equality?

**Answer:** We don’t have a separate option in environmental economics (we used to) but these issues feature in the papers in macroeconomics, development economics and microeconomics to an extent.

9. How quantitative in nature is the economics course offered at Cambridge? Do students have the choice to adjust their modules to learn more about the quantitative aspects of economics?

**Answer:** The economics course is highly quantitative. We tend to start teaching intuitions (which we see as essential) and then move the quantitative side of things, but the course overall is highly quantitative. In addition, you may choose the more quantitative optional modules in years 2 and 3, but overall, you will find that economics as a field is highly quantitative.

10. I’m considering taking a gap year and reapply to the Economics course. Will the chance of getting an offer decrease compared to the normal applicants if I take a gap year?

**Answer:** It depends on what the purpose of the gap year is. So long as the gap year does not suggest little interest in pursuing the economics course, it should not decrease your likelihood of getting an offer. For example, if the gap year includes a valuable experience for your degree (such as an internship in a relevant area), you would likely be as competitive as other candidates.

11. Is it preferable to study business studies A level if considering a business studies / economics degree?

**Answer:** If you are considering a business degree, then yes. If you are considering an economics degree, not necessarily. Economics is a rich area with fields ranging from game theory to economic history and political economy. We aim for our economics course to touch on all these dimensions. So, the preferable A levels, besides including maths, could include economics, history, stats, sociology, among others.

12. Name 5 preferred A-Levels subjects and rank them. (I know you only need 3 A-Levels but just for options)

**Answer:** Perhaps the most preferred one is mathematics followed by statistics or economics. Aside from those, it is not easy to rank A-level subjects, as many can provide you with the tools to better understand different modules. Examples of these subjects (in alphabetical order) are history, politics, pure mathematics, quantitative methods, and sociology.
13. To what extent does the Economics course focus on the political side of things?

**Answer:** You study political and social aspects of economics in year 1 and can also do an option paper in political economics in year 3. One can also take politics options from other faculties in year 3.

14. What are the subject requirements for the economics course and is AS level mathematics sufficient.

**Answer:** A-Level mathematics is an essential requirement – not just AS-Level. A-Level Further Mathematics is not necessary for admission, but the concepts it covers can be very useful for the course. A-Level Economics (or equivalent) is not essential. Most successful UK applicants tend to have it, but a sizeable minority each year do not – and do not find it a significant handicap.

15. What are the teachings hours like, is it mainly lectures, self-study or both?

**Answer:** Lectures will be about 14 hours a week and you will have about 5 supervisions every fortnight in Year 1 in all the papers (Micro, Macro, Maths and Stats, Political aspects, Economic History).

16. What areas of maths are most heavily involved in this course?

**Answer:** Algebra, statistics, calculus.

17. What is the difference between MPhil Economics and MSc Economics?

**Answer:** We do not offer an MSc in economics but rather MPhil in Economics and MPhil in Economic Research. The general difference between an MSc and an MPhil, if both are available for a given subject, is that while MSc’s tend to be theoretical, MPhil’s tend to be research based. Often, the only master’s level degree for economics is an MPhil. This has to do with the fact that MSc stands for Master of Science and is typically reserved for (natural) sciences.

18. What kinds of extra economics related knowledge and backgrounds the applicants need to gain for our uni application and interviews?

**Answer:** Reading economics related material that is not explicitly part of the A-level syllabus will help you develop your interest in economics. Read popular journals such as The Economist and newspapers, such as the Financial Times to develop this interest. If you have a particular interest pursue it via the web or read a book to build your knowledge.

A small proportion of our students are not taking A-level economics. For this group this wider reading is essential so that you can develop your interest and knowledge of the subject.

19. What part of the economics course do you really like? Has the fact that there were no optional modules in year 1 become a hinderance?

**Answer:** The fact that it provides an all-round economics education in quantitative methods as well as politics and economic history. No, it is good to have everyone doing the same 5 papers in year 1 because they all come from different educational systems and the first year provides a solid base upon which to build in subsequent years.