

Swiss Leading House VPET-ECON

A Research Center on the Economics of Education, Firm Behavior, and Training Policies



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

Co-Director
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Uschi Backes-Gellner

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UNIVERSITÄT
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Co-Director
Prof. Dr. Stefan C. Wolter

Fall Term 2025

Leading House Ph.D. Course

“Handling Administrative Data in Education Economics: State of the Art Applications, Topics and Research Innovations”

- Syllabus -

Preliminary version

Lecturer:	Prof. Dr. Aline Bütikofer, Norwegian School of Economics
Workshop dates:	November 10-14, 2025
Location:	University of Zurich, Room tba
Preliminary Schedule:	The lectures take place in the form of an intensive 5-day course. Monday, November 10: 14:00-17:30 Tuesday, November 11: 09:00-17:30 Wednesday, November 12: 09:00-17:30 Thursday, November 13: 09:00-17:30 Friday, November 14: 09:00-12:00

Module Number; ECTS: tba; 3 ECTS

Course overview

The use of administrative data in the economics of education has grown increasingly popular. As data storage and analytical capacity have expanded, governments, universities, and schools around the world have developed large-scale, comprehensive data sets covering tax systems, labor market information, and education. Although originally collected for administrative purposes, these data offer remarkable new opportunities to advance our understanding of education systems.

www.economics-of-education.ch

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A Research Program of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation

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This course focuses on conducting research using administrative records in the field of economics of education. We will explore both the benefits and challenges of working with administrative data in educational research. Topics include how to leverage these data sets in conjunction with causal identification strategies, how administrative data can support the implementation of field experiments, and how they can be integrated with survey or experimental data to address key research questions.

The course will draw on specific case studies showcasing different types of administrative data in education research. Additionally, we will develop a practical framework for using administrative records, covering topics such as GDPR compliance, data protection, data handling and documentation, and ensuring research replicability.

Overall, the course will provide participants with the foundational tools and knowledge needed to conduct high-quality educational research using administrative data and to contribute to research innovation in the field.

Key topics

This course will cover, among others, the topics as follows:

- Availability, benefits, and challenges of working with administrative data
 - Study population-level data
 - Rare events
 - Heterogeneous and distributional effects
 - Costs of conducting research
- Types of administrative data
- Combining administrative data sets with
 - causal identification strategies
 - field experiments
 - survey or experimental data
- Framework for using administrative records
 - GDPR processing
 - data protection impact assessments
 - handling and documenting of records
 - replicability
- Case studies of educational research
 - Peers, school selectivity and school quality
 - Teachers
 - Cell phones, tables, PCs

Key literature

Atila Abdulkadiroğlu, Josh Angrist, and Parag Pathak. The Elite Illusion: Achievement Effects at Boston and New York Exam Schools. *Econometrica*, 82, 2014, 137-196.

Adam Altmejd, Andrés Barrios-Fernández, Marin Drlje, Joshua Goodman, Michael Hurwitz, Dejan Kovac, Christine Mulhern, Christopher Neilson, Jonathan Smith. O Brother, Where Start Thou? Sibling Spillovers on College and Major Choice in Four Countries. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(3), 2021, 1831–1886.

Massimo Anelli, The Returns to Elite University Education: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 18(6), 2020, 2824–2868.

Massimo Anelli, Kevin Shih, and Kevin Williams. Foreign Students in College and the Supply of STEM, *Journal of Labor Economics*, 41(2), 2023, 511-563

Francesco Avvisati, Marc Gurgand, Nina Guyon, Eric Maurin. Getting Parents Involved: A Field Experiment in Deprived Schools. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 81(1), 2014, 57–83.

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- Simone Balestra, Beatrix Eugster, and Helge Liebert; Peers with Special Needs: Effects and Policies. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 104 (3), 2022, 602–618.
- Sandra E. Black, Paul J. Devereux, and Kjell G. Salvanes. Why the Apple Doesn't Fall Far: Understanding Intergenerational Transmission of Human Capital. *American Economic Review*, 95 (1), 2005, 437-449.
- Aline Bütikofer, Rita Ginja, Fanny Landaud and Katrine V. Løken. Higher Achievement Schools, Peers, and Mental Health, *The Economic Journal*, 133(655), 2023, 2580-2613.
- Sara Cattan, Kjell G. Salvanes, and Emma Tominey, First Generation Elite: The Role of School Social Networks, CEPR Discussion Paper No. 20004, 2025.
- Chetty, Raj, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff. Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104 (9), 2014, 2633-79.
- Michael Dinerstein, Rigissa Megalokonomou, and Constantine Yannelis. Human Capital Depreciation and Returns to Experience. *American Economic Review*, 112(11), 2022, 3725-3762.
- Avraham Ebenstein, Victor Lavy, and Sefi Roth. The Long-Run Economic Consequences of High-Stakes Examinations: Evidence from Transitory Variation in Pollution. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8 (4), 2016. 36-65.
- Ranveig Falch and Fanny Landaud, Peer Perceptions and Students' Investments in Schoolwork, mimeo, 2025.
- David Figlio, Krzysztof Karbownik, and Kjell G. Salvanes. Education research and administrative data *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, 2016, 5, 75-13.
- Peter Fredriksson, Björn Öckert, and Hessel Oosterbeek. Long-Term Effects of Class Size. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(1), 2013, 249–85.
- Sofoklis Goulas and Rigissa Megalokonomou. Knowing who you actually are: The effect of feedback on short- and longer-term outcomes. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 183, 2021, 589-615.
- Tatiana Homonoff, Barton Willage, and Alexander Willén. Rebates as incentives: The effects of a gym membership reimbursement program. *Journal of Health Economics*, 70, 2020, 102285.
- Kirabo C. Jackson. Do Students Benefit from Attending Better Schools? Evidence from Rule-based Student Assignments in Trinidad and Tobago. *The Economic Journal*, 120, 2010, 1399-1429.
- Fanny Landaud, Son Thierry Ly, Éric Maurin. Competitive Schools and the Gender Gap in the Choice of Field of Study. *Journal of Human Resources*, 55(1), 2020, 278-308.
- Victor Lavy and Analia Schlosser. *Mechanisms and Impacts of Gender Peer Effects at School*. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3 (2), 2011, 1-33.
- Cristian Pop-Eleches and Miguel Urquiola. Going to a Better School: Effects and Behavioral Responses. *American Economic Review*, 103(4), 2013, 1289–1324.

Target audience and preconditions for participation

The course is particularly designed for doctoral students in economics of education. Doctoral students in economics or business economics with a strong interest in conducting research on large administrative datasets are welcome as well. The seminar will take place en bloc in order to enable external Ph.D. students to attend.

Credit requirements and grading

1. Full course attendance. Students are expected to come prepared to class. It will facilitate discussion and improve overall learning.
2. Presentation in class.
3. Individual take-home exam.

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Application

The number of participants is limited. Please send your application including a short CV to Chiara Zisler (chiara.zisler@business.uzh.ch) at the latest by **October 3, 2025**.

WWF Statutory Course Policies

According to WWF study regulations, all exam dates are final as published in the VVZ and syllabus. This means that final exam dates are not negotiable. It will not be possible to take any exams on different dates.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating or engaging in unethical behavior will be reported to the Dean's office according to the guidelines on academic dishonesty set forth by the University of Zurich.

The information in this syllabus supports the official information in the electronic university registration tool (*VVZ-Vorlesungsverzeichnis*). In cases of doubt, the official information in the VVZ is decisive. For UZH students: Don't forget to officially register using the registration tool of the University of Zurich.

Any work presented by students only uses aids that are declared. Students accept full liability for the scientific integrity of their texts, irrespective of potential use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or other. All instances of direct quotes or paraphrasing from published or unpublished sources have to be properly attributed. You confirm that all work, in its current form or any similar version, has not been previously submitted, in whole or in part, as part of any other examination.