

# Application for Lecturer Microeconomics Position

Amsterdam School of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business

Peter Courtney

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**Peter Courtney**

Joint PhD Candidate in Economics

Stellenbosch University & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

[petercourtney.co.za](http://petercourtney.co.za)

Dear Prof. Schram,

I am writing to apply for the Lecturer Microeconomics position at the Amsterdam School of Economics. As a joint PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam with a strong foundation in microeconomics and demonstrated commitment to teaching excellence, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to ASE's world-class microeconomics education programme whilst continuing to develop my teaching expertise.

## Academic Background and Microeconomic Foundations

My doctoral research in development economics is fundamentally grounded in microeconomic theory. My work examines how individuals, households, and public institutions make decisions under resource constraints—from educational investment choices in resource-poor settings to land allocation decisions, to the behavioural responses of school principals facing non-pecuniary incentive structures. These research questions require rigorous application of microeconomic principles including utility maximisation, constrained optimisation, and public economics frameworks.

During my MSc at Wageningen University (Cum Laude) and my current PhD programme through the Tinbergen Institute, I completed advanced coursework in microeconomics, econometrics, and applied economic analysis. My training encompasses both theoretical microeconomics and applied microeconometrics—skills that directly inform my ability to teach microeconomic concepts at both intuitive and rigorous levels. My research on property taxation and land markets, for instance, draws heavily on concepts of tax incidence, deadweight loss, and market efficiency—core microeconomic topics that I regularly engage with in my work and would be well-equipped to teach.

## Teaching Experience and Philosophy

I am passionate about making economics accessible, rigorous, and relevant. As a Teaching Assistant for Economics of Education at Stellenbosch University, I designed and taught Stata-based practical assignments that helped students connect theoretical concepts to empirical applications (although my preferred language is R). This experience taught me the importance of scaffolding learning—breaking complex material into manageable components whilst maintaining intellectual rigour—and providing timely, constructive feedback that helps students build confidence and competence.

I understand that teaching microeconomics effectively requires more than technical mastery; it demands the ability to motivate students, illustrate abstract concepts through relevant examples, and create an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel supported. In tutorial settings, I prioritise active learning: asking questions that prompt students to think critically, working through problems collaboratively, and encouraging students to articulate their reasoning. I believe economics is best learned by doing—whether that’s solving problem sets, engaging with real-world applications, or discussing policy implications of theoretical models.

## Alignment with the Microeconomics Section

The Microeconomics section’s focus on experimental economics, applied microeconometrics, and markets & organisations aligns well with my research profile. My work applies microeconomic theory to understand real-world phenomena, and I am particularly interested in how experimental methods and behavioural insights can enrich our understanding of economic decision-making. The opportunity to work alongside CREED is particularly exciting, as it would expose me to cutting-edge methodologies and research questions that could inform my teaching.

I am eager to contribute to ASE’s bachelor’s and master’s programmes by:

- **Leading microeconomics tutorials** with energy and clarity, helping students master both theoretical frameworks and problem-solving techniques
- **Supervising bachelor’s and master’s theses** on topics related to microeconomic theory, development economics, applied microeconometrics, and public policy
- **Collaborating with colleagues** in the Microeconomics section to ensure curriculum coherence and pedagogical innovation
- **Growing as an educator** by seeking feedback, attending teaching development workshops, and continuously refining my teaching practice

## Commitment to Teaching Excellence

Whilst my PhD training has emphasised research, I am genuinely motivated by teaching and view this lectureship as an opportunity to, in part, specialise in academic education. I am committed to achieving strong course evaluations through preparation, responsiveness to student needs, and a genuine enthusiasm for helping students succeed. I understand that effective teaching requires

ongoing reflection and adaptation, and I am eager to learn from the experienced teaching team in the Microeconomics section.

## **Practical Considerations**

I am currently based in Amsterdam through my affiliation with VU Amsterdam and the Tinbergen Institute, which makes this position particularly feasible. I am fluent in English and, whilst my Dutch is currently basic, I am committed to learning Dutch to the level required for teaching purposes. Given Amsterdam's multilingual environment and the support provided by the UvA, I am confident that I can develop the necessary language proficiency within a reasonable timeframe.

I am available to commence on 1 January 2026 as specified and am fully committed to a one-year appointment with the prospect of a permanent position. The 50% appointment (19 hours per week) aligns well with my PhD completion timeline, allowing me to balance teaching responsibilities with finalising my doctoral research whilst dedicating substantial energy to becoming an effective microeconomics lecturer.

## **Contribution to the Microeconomics Section's Collaborative Culture**

The Microeconomics section's commitment to a collaborative, respectful, and diverse working environment resonates strongly with me. I am a team player who values open communication, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving. Having worked in diverse academic and professional environments—from J-PAL Africa to the FAO, from South African universities to Dutch universities—I bring a collaborative mindset and an appreciation for diverse perspectives. I look forward to contributing to both the intellectual life of the section through research discussions and the social life through informal gatherings.

## **Conclusion**

I am excited by the prospect of helping students develop their understanding of microeconomics—a discipline that offers powerful tools for analysing pressing social and economic challenges. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my microeconomic training, teaching experience, and genuine passion for education can contribute to the Amsterdam School of Economics' commitment to excellent teaching and student development.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of joining the Microeconomics section.

Yours sincerely,

**Peter Courtney**