

Individual Project – Guidelines

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Data Analysis for Economics – Fall 2025

The individual project is **optional**. It consists of an essay where you report the results from a data analysis on an *economics-related* topic of your choice. For those who choose to do it, the project counts for **50% of the final grade**.

If you decide to carry out the project, you should follow **all of these steps**:

1. Submit (by email) a short note (a few lines) describing your topic and the dataset you plan to use.
2. Present the project at an intermediate/advanced stage to receive feedback.
3. Submit a 5–10 page essay and the corresponding scripts/codes to reproduce figures and tables.

Dates

- **Deadline to submit the proposal:** October 8th
- **Presentations (intermediate stage):** November 3rd and 4th
- **Deadline to submit final project:** November 15th

Project Structure

Your essay (5–10 pages) should follow this structure:

1. Abstract (the whole story in 150 words)
2. Research question (and why it matters)
3. Brief review of literature (what we know)
4. Data description (which data, why, and how they look)
5. Results: 3–4 objects to summarize findings (+ your comments)
6. Scripts (and source files) to **reproduce** figures, tables, analyses

Recommendations

- **Be specific:** Avoid overly broad questions. Narrow the focus to one specific topic you can really address. For example, avoid very general questions such as:
 - The relationship between unemployment and GDP
 - How technological progress impacts growth

In general, the guideline is: it is better to answer a narrow question well than a broad one superficially.

- **Think in terms of mechanisms:** Identify the theoretically plausible channels linking your variables, and try to test (or provide evidence for) some of them.
- **Check data availability:** You can either look at traditional data sources (Eurostat, ISTAT, OECD...) or try to find/collect novel or less-used data (this second option is encouraged).
 - In either case, verify sources and variables *before* committing to the topic. Make sure the data you plan to use are available and contain the level of detail you need.
- **Be transparent:** You must understand every line of your code. Avoid shortcuts you cannot explain. You are free to use AI, but you are solely responsible for what you submit.

Examples from previous years

Here are some topics from earlier student projects:

- From Italian Cuisine to the Global Marketplace: Eating Habits and Obesity.
- Impact of the Pandemic on Italian Universities: Evolution in Enrollments and Graduates.
- How does economic support (like AUU) influence birth rates in Italy when combined with family support services such as early childhood education and care (ECEC)?
- Social media engagement: exploring possible impacts on mental health and work impairment.
- Migration Flows and Economic Impacts: An Analysis between Countries of Origin and Destination.
- Can we increase the number of female STEM graduates?