

## Public Finance (F000205)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0**                      **Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026**

A (semester 1)                      Dutch                      Gent                      lecture

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Smolders, Carine                      EB25                      lecturer-in-charge  
Defloor, Bart                      EB21                      co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

	crdts	offering
<a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Business Economics</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Economics</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Economics (Double Degree)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Science in Complementary Studies in Economics</a>	5	A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

Public Finance, Government, Budget

**Position of the course**

The aim of the course "Public Finance" is to make students familiar with the theory and practice of public finance. The course starts with a discussion of public finance within a welfare economics framework. Public goods, externalities, non-market failure and redistribution are the main themes discussed in the first part. Next, the course offers an analysis of the expenditures and the revenues side of the budget. Given the specific Belgian context, special attention is given to the advantages and disadvantages of fiscal federalism. Students get informed on how this worked out in the Belgian context and how this evolved given the different phases in the reform of the state. Finally, the focus is on how the budget is constructed each political year, what are the main indicators of the soundness of the budget and how deficits interact with the public debt. All this is framed within the EU- budgetary framework.

**Contents**

- The course consists of 5 consecutive parts:
- 1 public finance situated within a welfare economics framework
  - 2 public expenditures: types, magnitude and efficiency
  - 3 fiscal federalism
  - 4 taxes
  - 5 budget balance indicators and the public debt

**Initial competences**

Micro- and macroeconomics.

**Final competences**

- 1 to be able to argue under which conditions the market yields socially desirable outcomes in terms of efficiency and equity and why government is needed in a context of public goods, externalities, and the need for redistribution
- 2 to be able to defend the choice between different taxes, given the criteria of optimal taxes
- 3 to be able to discuss the Belgian fiscal federal structure of the state

4 to be familiar with budgetary policies, the evolution of public debt and the issues related to the social security

5 to be able to explain how the Flemish budget is constructed, by whom it is controlled and what the different budget balance indicators and determinants are

#### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

#### **Teaching methods**

Lecture

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

specific details about the didactic approach are available on ufora

#### **Study material**

Type: Handbook

Name: Public Finance

Indicative price: € 60

Optional: no

Author : Harvey Rosen, Ted Gayer

Additional information: hoofdstukken: 1. Welvaartstheoretisch kader (RG Part I & II) RG 1-6,12 2. Uitgaven (RG Part III) (RG 11) 3. Begrotingsfederalisme (RG Part VI) RG 22 4. Inkomsten (Belastingen) (RG Part IV & V) RG 14-16

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

#### **References**

- Rosen and Gayer (2014), Public Finance
- Stiglitz & Rosengard (2015), Economics of the Public Sector, Norton, 4th ed.
- Gruber J. (2019), Public Finance and Public Policy, Worth Publishers, 4th ed.
- Hindriks and Myles (2006), Intermediate Public Economics, MIT Press
- Tresch (2008), Public Finance – A Normative Theory, Academic Press, 3rd ed.
- Atkinson and Stiglitz (1980), Lectures on Public Economics

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

the lecturers are available for questions before, during and after the on campus courses; questions can also be addressed by e-mail

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

#### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

#### **Extra information on the examination methods**

Written examination.

Students are tested on whether they understand the different theories studied, on whether they can link different parts of the course and on their knowledge of current issues in public finance.

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

end-of-term evaluation (100%)

