

Trade Policy, Foreign Direct Investment, and the Green Economy: Implications for the UK and its regions

Department: College of Business and Social Sciences

Contract Type: Fixed Term

Basis: Full Time

Closing Date: Thursday 24th April 2025 23.59 (UK time)

Supervisor: Dr Agelos Delis & Dr Tasos Kitsos

Applications are invited for a three-year PhD studentship, supported by the College of Business and Social Sciences to be undertaken within the Centre for Business Prosperity, Aston Business School at Aston University.

The position is available to start in October 2025.

Financial Support

This studentship includes a bursary to cover the tuition fees and an annual maintenance allowance for living costs.

Background to the Project

This project examines how 'green' trade policies recently introduced by the EU influence MNEs' decisions to engage into brownfield investment to UK regions. The climate emergency has spurred a new band of industrial policies that promote domestic production and discourage trade to reduce carbon emissions. This fundamentally alters the cost of maintaining GVCs for multinational companies with significant and unknown repercussions for firms, local and national economies. Employing quantitative panel data econometric analysis, this project will analyse firm-level data on UK and foreign multinationals and their UK and overseas subsidiaries to identify Inward Brownfield Investment trends to UK regions. It will examine subsidiary locations and financial performance to map the spatial footprint of Inward Brownfield Investment across UK regions and industries.

The project addresses four key research questions:

- 1) Do environment-related trade policies affect Inward Brownfield Investment to the UK?
- 2) What is the role of firm green-orientation in shaping investments?
- 3) What are the determinants of the regional distribution for Inward Brownfield Investment to the UK?

4) What are the economic effects of environment-related trade policies for UK regions and how place and industry-based policies can enhance regional performance?

The research is central to the Centre for Business Prosperity research agenda where the chosen PhD student will be embedded, part of a thriving centre of research excellence with state-of-the-art data and research capabilities. With extensive expertise on the topic, Dr Delis will guide the project while Dr Kitsos will complement the regional insights and the professional development activities of the PhD student.. The project's focus and outputs align with the main aims and beneficiaries of Aston University's 2030 Strategy to which the student will be an active ambassador.

Person Specification

The successful candidate should hold a Masters degree in the social sciences (or related disciplines) with a Merit overall (or equivalent) with a dissertation/research element, PLUS a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree (or an equivalent qualification from an overseas institution). Suitable candidates will have strong quantitative skills and an interest in international trade, environmental policy, FDI, and its national and local impacts.

Contact information

For enquiries about this project please contact Dr Agelos Delis a.delis@aston.ac.uk

Submitting an application

Your application must include:

1. English language copies of the **transcripts and certificates** for all your higher education degrees, including any Bachelor degrees.
2. A **Research Statement** detailing your understanding of the research area, how you would approach the project, and a brief review of relevant literature. Be sure to use the title of the research project you are applying for. There is no set format or word count.
3. A **personal statement** which outlines any further information which you think is relevant to your application, such as your personal suitability for research, career aspirations, possible future research interests, and further description of relevant employment experience.
4. **Two academic referees** who can discuss your suitability for independent research. References must be on headed paper, signed and dated no more than 2 years old. At least one reference should be from your most recent University. You can submit your references at a later date if necessary.
5. Evidence that you meet the **English Language requirements**. If you do not currently meet the language requirements, you can submit this at a later stage.
6. A copy of your **passport**. Where relevant, include evidence of settled or pre-settled status.

Apply for this position here

Alternatively, apply **here**

If you require further information about the application process, please contact the Postgraduate Admissions team at pgr_admissions@aston.ac.uk