

## The Gerald O'Connell Essay Competition in Economics 2025

Fitzwilliam College is pleased to announce its annual Gerald O'Connell Essay Competition in Economics. This competition is open to all home students in Year 12 (or equivalent) attending a State School in the UK. We invite applicants to send in essays of **no more than** 1,000 words discussing the following question:

"Think of a recent decision that you needed to make. Discuss how insights and tools from economic theory and analysis might have been helpful in making the decision."

### Gerald O'Connell

Gerald O'Connell (Fitzwilliam, Economics, 1970) was a teacher, musician, artist, businessman and blogger who inspired generations of talented students to come and study at Cambridge. Gerald taught economics at Leyton Senior High School for Girls, which later became Leytonstone School. His pupils include Sonita Alleyne OBE (Fitzwilliam, Philosophy, 1985), Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Dame Sharon White (Fitzwilliam, Economics, 1985), Chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, and Helen Sinclair (Newnham, Economics, 1984), venture capitalist.

Gerald described himself as "A working class boy from the east end of London". After a career in music, teaching and business he became an artist - painting, drawing and devising unique acrylic ink techniques for abstract and figurative work. He was also an independent blogger, writing on political economy and current affairs. Gerald encouraged large numbers of students from a wide range of backgrounds to aspire to study at Cambridge. This essay competition was established by some of Gerald's former pupils who went onto Cambridge; it is hoped that it will continue his legacy.

### Competition Rules

This essay competition is for Home State School students in the UK in their penultimate year of education - Year 12 (Eng + Wales), S5 (Scotland), Y13 (NI).

Applicants will be required to enter their details online using the form linked on the essay competitions webpage, and to upload one PDF copy of their essay, formatted

using the template provided, electronically **or** post a hard copy of the formatted essay to:

Schools Liaison Officer  
Fitzwilliam College  
Cambridge  
CB3 0DG

by **6pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2025**. If the PDF file is too large to submit to the online form, please email your submission to [essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk). Further submission information can be found on the essay competition website: <https://www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/event/fitzwilliam-college-competitions>

Your submission must be entirely your own work. When submitting your essay, you will need to provide contact information for one of your teachers and if necessary we may contact them to verify that your submission is entirely your own work. Students are only permitted to enter one competition and may only submit one entry to their chosen competition. There is a strict limit of five submissions per school for each essay competition. If more than five students from the same school enter the same competition, a teacher from that school will be contacted and asked to select the five entries; failure to do so will result in all submissions from the school to that competition being disqualified.

Essays should be no more than 1,000 words long and contain a list of works consulted and cited at the end. This bibliography is excluded from the word limit, but any footnotes are included. Please provide a word count at the end of the essay. If you include any diagrams or tables in the essay, they each count as 100 words. Guidance on referencing is available on the website. Applicants must ensure that pages are numbered and that their full name is on each page.

Alongside your essay you must provide a completed research log. Your research log will detail how you approached and thought about the question and will give the markers an understanding of why you chose to answer the question in the way that you did.

Your essay and research log should be submitted together using the template linked on our website. Any submissions not using the template provided will not be counted in the competition.

**Prizes:**

The prize fund (per competition) is £300 with a first prize of £200 and highly commended applicants being awarded a £25 book voucher. A prizegiving ceremony will be held in April 2025.

**For further information about the competition please contact:**

[essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk).

**For questions about the Economics course, please contact:**

[admissions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@fitz.cam.ac.uk).