

Mira Fischer

Contact Information

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Primary Research Fields

Economics of education, political economy

Research Methods

Applied econometrics (esp. causal inference with administrative and survey data), design of randomized controlled trials, lab and representative survey experiments, semi-structured interviews

Employment

09/2018 –	WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Postdoctoral Research Associate
07/2023 – 02/2024	Maternity Leave
02/2022 – 01/2023, 10 – 12/2024	Hertie School of Governance, Lecturer in the Master of Public Policy program
04/2012 – 08/2018	University of Cologne, Chairs of Personnel Economics and Business Ethics, Research and Teaching Assistant
09/2011 – 09/2012	Cologne Institute for Economic Research, Education, Migration and Innovation Research Unit, Junior Economist (policy advice)

Education

04/2012 – 03/2018	Ph.D. in Economics (awarded summa cum laude), University of Cologne, thesis title: “Essays in Behavioral Economics of Education”, supervisor: Dirk Sliwka, committee: Bernd Irlenbusch, Matthias Heinz
10/2013 – 05/2014	Ph.D. Course Program in Economics of Education, University of Zurich
10/2008 – 03/2011	Master in International Economics, University of Konstanz, grade: 1.4, top <5%, thesis title: “Subjects Studied and Students’ Political Ideology”
09/2010 – 12/2010	Exchange Semester, Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU), Moscow, Russia: courses in political science and Russian language
10/2005 – 07/2008	Bachelor in Philosophy (major) and Political Science (minor), University of Konstanz, grade: 1.3, top <5%, thesis title: “Political Liberalism from the Perspective of Richard Rorty’s Pragmatist Philosophy”
10/2004 – 06/2005	Two semesters of intensive Polish language course, Wroclaw University of Science and Technology
09/2002 – 06/2004	International Baccalaureate Diploma (in English), International School Maastricht

Academic Visits

12/2022	Ifo Institute, Munich, host: Ludger Wössmann
10–12/2021	UC San Diego, host: Sally Sadoff
05/2019	Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, host: Topi Miettinen
01/2019	Ifo Institute, Munich, host: Ludger Wössmann
12/2017	University of Chicago, host: John List
11/2017	University College London and NIESR, host: Alex Bryson
03 –04/2017	NHH Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen, hosts: Bertil Tungodden and Alexander Cappelen
09 –11/2014	University of Chicago, host: John List
11/2013	NIESR, London, host: Alex Bryson

Affiliations and Memberships

10/2018 –	IAB-UCL Anglo-German Early Career Quantitative Education Researchers Network, Member
09/2018 –	Collaborative Research Center Transregio (Berlin and Munich) “Rationality and Competition”, Member of Project Area “Educational Choices, Market Design and Student Outcomes”
02/2018 –	IZA Institute of Labor Economics, Bonn, Research Affiliate
07/2015 – 08/2018	Cologne Center for Social and Economic Behavior, Member

Mentoring and Training Programs

09/2023 –	Leibniz Mentoring Program for highly qualified female researchers
09/2022 – 06/2023	Facilitation Academy Berlin, Facilitator Training (to enable groups to collaborate in self-directed processes)
06/2020 – 06/2022	Economic Science Association Female Mentoring Program

Journal Articles

- Fischer, M., Grewenig, E., Lergetporer, P., Werner, K., Zeidler, H. (2024) The E-Word - On the Public Acceptance of Experiments, **Economics Letters**, 235, 111558
- Fischer, M., Rilke, R. M., Yurtoglu, B. B. (2023) When, and Why, do Teams Benefit from Self-Selection?, **Experimental Economics**
- Fischer, M., Wagner, V. (2023) Effects of Timing and Reference Frame of Feedback: Evidence from a Field Experiment, **Economics of Education Review**, 94, 102379
- Fischer, M., Sliwka, D. (2018) Confidence in Knowledge or Confidence in the Ability to Learn: An Experiment on the Causal Effects of Beliefs on Motivation, **Games and Economic Behavior**, 111, 122-142
- Fischer, M., Kauder, B., Potrafke, N., Ursprung, H.W. (2017) Support for Free-market Policies and Reforms: Does the Field of Study Influence Students’ Political Attitudes?, **European Journal of Political Economy**, 48, 180-197
- Fischer, M., Kampkötter, P. (2017) Effects of German Universities’ Excellence Initiative on Ability Sorting of Students and perceptions of Educational Quality, **Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics**, 173(4), 662-687
- Fischer, M., Lotz, S. (2014) Ist sanfter Paternalismus ethisch vertretbar? Eine differenzierende Betrachtung aus Sicht der Freiheit, **Sozialer Fortschritt/German Review of Social Policy**, 63(3), 52-

58 -- English version -- : Is Soft Paternalism Ethically Legitimate? - The Relevance of Psychological Processes for the Assessment of Nudge-Based Policies, Cologne Graduate School Working Paper, 5(2), 2014

Handbook Articles

Fischer, M., Khadjavi, M. (2020) Präferenzen, In Heidbrink, L., Lorch, A., Rauen, V. (Eds.): **Springer Handbuch Praktische Wirtschaftsphilosophie** (1-13), Wiesbaden: Springer VS

Working Papers

How Psychological Narratives Influence Public Approval of Behavioral Policies, with Philipp Lergetporer and Katharina Werner (2024)

Keep Calm and Carry On: The Short- vs. Long-Run Effects of Mindfulness Meditation on (Academic) Performance (2022), with Lea Cassar and Vanessa Valero (*R&R at JEEA*)

Understanding the Response to High Stakes Incentives in Primary Education (2020) with Maximilian Bach

Salience of Ability Grouping and Biased Belief Formation (2017)

Work in Progress

The impact of a mental health app on students' mental health and performance

The impact of AI assistance on students' performance, with Rainer Rilke and Holger Rau

Effects of a mindfulness meditation training on social preferences and beliefs

The effect of failure in a high-stakes application procedure on perceived procedural efficiency, with Dorothea Kübler and Robert Stüber

Effects of failure in a high-stakes application procedure on confidence in abilities and willingness to compete, with Dorothea Kübler and Robert Stüber

Invited Presentations and Research Seminars

- 2021 University of Stavanger (online), UC San Diego
- 2020 Economic Science Association Junior Faculty Webinar (online) ([link to video](#))
- 2019 Ifo Institute, Hanken School of Economics, University of Trier
- 2018 Hanken School of Economics, IZA Institute of Labor Economics, WZB Berlin, Bristol Workshop on Assessment and Feedback
- 2017 NHH Norwegian School of Economics, University of Maastricht, University of Chicago, NIESR
- 2016 University of Düsseldorf
- 2014 University of Chicago

Conference Presentations

- 2024 Advances with Field Experiments, London; Economic Science Association European Meeting, Helsinki
- 2023 International Meeting on Experimental and Behavioral Social Sciences, Lisbon; SABE-IAREP Conference, Nice
- 2021 International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education; XXIX Meeting of the Economics of Education Association, European Association of Labour Economists Annual

- Conference; German Economic Association Annual Conference (all online)
- 2019 IAB-UCL Anglo-German Early Career Quantitative Education Researchers Meeting, Nuremberg
- 2018 European Economic Association Annual Congress, Cologne; Advances with Field Experiments, Boston University; Lisbon Meeting on Economics and Political Science
- 2017 Workshop on Equity in Education, University of Leuven; Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago; IZA Workshop on the Economics of Education; Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium
- 2016 Economic Science Association World Meeting, Jerusalem; Incentives and Behavior Change Conference, Tel Aviv University; Cologne Social Cognition Meeting; Workshop on Education, Skills and Labor Market Outcomes, University of Trondheim; TIER Workshop on Education Economics, University of Maastricht; Ifo Workshop on Labor Economics and Social Policy, Dresden
- 2015 Mini-School by the Research Center for Rationality in the Light of Experimental Economics, Düsseldorf; Colloquium on Personnel Economics, Vienna; LEER Workshop on Education Economics, University of Leuven; Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium; TIBER Symposium on Psychology and Economics, University of Tilburg; Workshop on the Economics of Education and Self-Regulation, University of Mainz
- 2014 World Congress of the International Economic Association, Dead Sea, Jordan; Workshop on Applied Economics of Education, Catanzaro
- 2013 Workshop on University Management, University of Duisburg; Colloquium on Personnel Economics, Tübingen
- 2012 TIBER Symposium on Psychology and Economics, University of Tilburg; Economic Science Association European Conference, Cologne

Summer Schools

- 2016 HCEO Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality, University of Bonn
- 2015 Summer School in Economics of Education and Self-Regulation, University of Mainz
- 2012 Cologne Summer School in Philosophy

Awards, Scholarships and Grants

Sponsorship by Techniker Krankenkasse health insurance for field experiment on meditation and academic performance (~ 10,000 euros, primary applicant), 2019

Shared sponsorship by University of Chicago (Prof. John List) and Cologne Center for Social and Economic Behavior for research stay at University of Chicago, 2017

Sponsorship by Nuffield Foundation for research stay at University College London and NIESR, 2017

Travel grant from Cologne Center for Social and Economic Behavior for research stay at NHH Norwegian School of Economics, 2017

Best paper award (with Patrick Kampkötter) for “Effects of German Universities' Excellence Initiative on Ability Sorting of Students and perceptions of Educational Quality” from the German Academic Association for Business Research, 2013

Travel grant from German Academic Exchange Service for exchange semester in Moscow, 2010

Tuition fee waivers for being among the top 5% of graduates of my Bachelor's program in Philosophy in 2008 and my Master's program in International Economics in 2011

Workshop Organization

Co-organizer of the “Innovations in Field and Survey Experiments” Workshop, 5-6 June, 2025, Berlin

Refereeing

Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics, Economic Journal, Management Science, European Economic Review, Labour Economics, Education Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Educational Researcher

Other Service

08/2020 – 09/2024 Member of research ethics board, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
06/2020 – 03/2022 Co-organizer of Berlin Behavioral Economics Research Seminar Series
04/2019 – 05/2021 Member of academic council, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Media Coverage (selected)

Tagesspiegel, May 12, 2023: „Meditieren im Studium: Weniger Stress, bessere Leistungen“ [“Meditating during your studies: Less stress, better performance“]

Deutschlandfunk, Campus und Karriere, March 23, 2023: radio interview „Achtsamkeitsübungen verbessern Noten von Studierenden“ [“Mindfulness training improves students’ grades“] ([link to audio](#))

MDR Jump, Themen des Tages, February 3, 2023: radio interview „Effekte von Gymnasialempfehlungen“ [“Effects of grammar school recommendations”]

Süddeutsche Zeitung, July 1, 2021: “Mehr Kompetenz, aber auch mehr Stress” [“More skills but also more stress”]

WirtschaftsWoche, August 15, 2019: “Warum der Abschluss einer Exzellenzuni keine Karrieregarantie ist“ [“Why graduating from a university of excellence does not guarantee a career“]

Times Higher Education, April 24, 2018: “Research prestige boosts students’ satisfaction, study finds“

Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, August 21, 2016: “Du bist, was du studierst” [“You are what you study“]

Public Speaking

Panelist for “Junge Wissenschaft trifft Politik” with German Federal Minister of Education and Research Bettina Stark-Watzinger, February 28, 2023 ([link to video](#))

Introduction of Ernst Fehr’s WZB Distinguished Lecture in Social Sciences, online, October 29, 2020 ([link to video](#))

Presentation on “Policy Experiments and Behaviorally informed Policies: Some Clarifications” at 1st Behaviour Change Science & Policy Symposium, Helsinki, May 15, 2019

Panelist for expert talks on “Corporate Behavior and Human Rights” at German Institute for Human Rights, Berlin, November 8, 2018

Panelist for discussion on “Nudging and Persuasive Design” at Berlin Design Week, September 20, 2018

Policy Contributions

Bach, M., Fischer, M. (2021) Mit verbindlichen Grundschulempfehlungen erreichen Grundschüler/innen bessere Leistungen, empfinden aber auch mehr Stress [When primary school recommendations are binding, primary school students achieve better performance but also experience more stress], ZEW Policy Brief Nr. 21-01

Fischer, M. (2020) Delayed policy responses to COVID-19: The role of the WHO’s structural problem, Coronavirus and its Societal Impact - Highlights from WZB Research, WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Fischer, M., Geis, W. (2013) Bestimmungsgrößen der Bildungsmobilität in Deutschland [Determinants of Educational Mobility in Germany], IW-Trends, 1/13

Anger, C., Fischer, M., Geis, W., Lotz, S., Plünnecke, A., Schmidt, J. (2012) Gesamtwirtschaftliche Effekte einer Ganztagsbetreuung von Kindern von Alleinerziehenden [Macroeconomic Effects of Day Care for Children of Single Parents] (with), Report for the Federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the German Red Cross

Anger, C., Fischer, M., Esselmann, I., Plünnecke, A. (2012) Bildungsmonitor 2012. Infrastruktur verbessern – Teilhabe sichern – Wachstumskräfte stärken [Education Monitor 2012. Improving the infrastructure – securing participation – strengthening growth], Report by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Teaching

(some in cooperation with other lecturers)

Master level classes

- at the Technical University of Berlin:

Experimental Economics: summer '24

- at the Hertie School of Governance, Berlin:

Statistics II: Causal Inference: fall '24

Field Experiments and Policy Evaluation in Education (Course): spring '22, fall '22

- at the University of Cologne:

Moral and Social Norms (Seminar): winter '16/'17, winter '17/'18

Advanced Business Ethics (Course): summer '16, summer '17

Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy (Tutorial): winter '15/'16, winter '16/'17, winter '17/'18, summer 18

Economics of Incentives in Organizations (Tutorial): summer '15

Empirical Studies in Human Resource Management (Seminar): summer '13

Strategic Human Resource Management (Tutorial): winter '12/'13, winter '13/'14, winter '14/'15

Bachelor level classes

- at the University of Cologne:

Experimental Studies in Personnel Economics (Seminar): winter '14/'15

Experimental Studies in Personnel and Education Economics (Seminar): winter '13/'14

Human Resource Management (Tutorial): summer '13, summer '14

Theses Supervision

- in Berlin

1 Master's thesis in education economics and 1 Bachelor's thesis in behavioral economics

- at University of Cologne

16 Master's and 29 Bachelor's theses in personnel, labor, education and behavioral economics, and ethics