

# Laurence O'Brien

Curriculum Vitae updated January 2026

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## PERSONAL

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## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

### **Institute for Fiscal Studies**

- Senior Research Economist (April 2025-)
- Research Economist (October 2020-March 2025)

## PAST EMPLOYMENT

### **The University of Chicago Booth School of Business**

- Research Professional for Prof. Eric Zwick (2019-2020)

## EDUCATION

MPhil/PhD in Economics, University College London (2023-)

MRes in Economics, University College London (2021-2023)

MPhil in Economic Research (Distinction), University of Cambridge (2018-2019)

BA(Hons) in Economics (1st Class), University of Cambridge (2015-2018)

## WORKING PAPERS

“Ethnic differences in retirement wealth accumulation in the UK”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb and David Sturrock. IFS WP 25/02.

“Why does raising the early retirement age affect employment?”. 2025. With Courtney Coile, Jonathan Cribb and Carl Emmerson. IFS WP 25/01. *Reject and resubmit, Journal of Public Economics*

“The effect of tax incentives on retirement saving”. 2024. IFS WP 24/45.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

“The effect of the Great Wealth Transfer on inequalities in wealth, consumption and welfare”. With Wouter Leenders, Arjan Lejour, Bluebery Planterose, Kate Smith and David Sturrock.

“Challenges for the private pension system in the UK and policy proposals to address them”. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and Heidi Karjalainen.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2025: IIPF Annual Congress, Nairobi; London Public Economics Workshop, London.

2024: Netspar International Pensions Workshop, Leiden; Work, Pensions and Labour Economics (WPEG) Conference, Sheffield.

2023: Family Finance Surveys User Conference, online.

2022: Netspar International Pensions Workshop, online; Royal Economic Society Annual Conference, online; EEA-ESEM Annual Congress, Milan.

## POLICY PUBLICATIONS

“The Pensions Review: final recommendations”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS Report.

“Scottish public sector employment and pay”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb and Magdalena Domínguez. IFS Report.

“Small pension pots: problems and potential policy responses”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

“Policies to improve employees’ retirement resources”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

“Adequacy of future retirement incomes: new evidence for private sector employees”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

“Private pensions for the self-employed: challenges and options for reform”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

“Pensions: five key decisions for the next government”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS Report.

“Recent trends in public sector pay”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS Report.

“Challenges for the UK pension system: the case for a pensions review”. 2023. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS Report.

“Data on private pension saving in UK surveys”. 2023. IFS Report.

“The gender gap in pension saving” 2023. With Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS Report

“When and why do employees change their pension saving?”. 2023. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS Report.

“Public spending, pay and pensions”. 2022. With Bee Boileau and Ben Zaranko. In IFS Green Budget 2022.

“How did increasing the state pension age from 65 to 66 affect household incomes?”. 2022. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS Report.

“Changing patterns of work at older ages”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford, Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS Report.

“Life-cycle patterns in pension saving”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford. IFS Report.

“When should individuals save for retirement? Predictions from an economic model of household saving behaviour”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

## TEACHING

Public Economics guest lecturer (2023-)

- Undergraduate courses at University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, University College London.

## AWARDS

2019: Stevenson Prize for outstanding performance in the MPhil in Economic Research (1st out of 44 students)

2018: Economic and Social Research Council studentship for MPhil/PhD study

2018: Adam Smith Prize for best final year undergraduate performance in Economics (1st out of 151 students)

2017: Turner Prize for Labour Economics in second year of undergraduate degree

2016: Pigou Prize for best first year undergraduate performance in Economics