

GPPN Conference 2011: Application

The 2011 GPPN Conference, to be held at the London School of Economics from December 9th to December 11th, is now accepting applications from students at participating schools.

Conference Theme:

What is the state of our times? The changing shape of the nation-state in the 21st century

Faced with the most significant economic crisis of the post-war era, global institutions are failing to solve the problems they were designed to prevent. Economic growth has faltered across the developed world. States face ballooning debt burdens and inhospitable capital markets that restrict their policy options, while confidence in the ability of international institutions to stabilise markets is declining.

This profound crisis has yielded a paradox: increasingly, we rely on the nation-state at a time when states' capacity to act is increasingly limited. We therefore motivate the GPPN Conference 2011 by asking: Can the state, in regaining ground lost to globalised institutions, provide the necessary solutions? How must the state adapt its policy responses to these radically altered circumstances? In answering these questions, we aim to address the changing role of the state in the central areas of financial regulation, innovation in public service provision, strategic delivery of foreign aid, and fostering economic dynamism in a context of fiscal austerity.

GPPN 2011 will inform and invigorate participants by bringing together academics, policy-makers and public policy students to discuss cutting-edge research and debate innovative solutions to the complex problems that confront policy practitioners in the 21st century. We hope to see you there.

Conference format

We believe that the main purpose of GPPN is to provide a forum for dialogue: between students, academics, policy-makers and business leaders. To foster that dialogue, the 2011 conference will follow an innovative format that will facilitate increased interaction between conference participants. Our program also aims to test and demonstrate the specific skills and expertise of public policy students. This year, delegates will have the option of participating in two distinct components: Policy Challenges and Policy Research Presentations.

I. Policy Challenges

Delegates will work in teams to prepare responses to one of four policy challenges. At the conference, teams will deliver 15-20 minute policy presentations, pitting their solutions against those of other teams. Judges drawn from relevant public policy organizations will comment on proposed solutions, offer their personal perspectives, and choose a winning team.

A good Policy Challenge presentation will:

- Develop a comprehensive and innovative policy strategy that tackles the problems outlined in the challenge prompt.
- Incorporate empirical findings and theory from recent and innovative academic and policy research.
- Provide convincing evidence that justifies the chosen policy approach.
- Engage the audience with a compelling and persuasive presentation.

II. Policy Research Presentations

Individuals with well-developed research interests that are relevant to the conference theme can apply to deliver one of the Policy Presentations to conference delegates and a panel of academics and policymakers. These 15-20 minute presentations should tackle a complex policy problem with close links to the conference theme, offering an in-depth perspective on an important and topical issue.



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Application Guidelines:

Policy Challenges

- Applicants should form a team of 3-4 members, and apply as a team.
- Teams should choose one of the Policy Challenges set out below, and describe in no more than 400 words their strategy for addressing the challenge prompt.
- Teams should attach their CVs/resumes as one combined PDF.
- Teams may apply to an additional policy challenges. In the event that a team's first-choice challenge is oversubscribed, a secondary application to an alternative challenge will be considered. Secondary applications that include a 400-word strategy summary will be viewed more favorably than those that do not.

Policy Presentations

- Applicants should write a summary describing their policy research in 600-800 words. This summary should outline the contemporary policy issue that the conference presentation will discuss, and the policy implications of the analysis. The summary should also clearly demonstrate the presentation's relevance to the conference theme.
- Along with the research summary, applicants should provide a CV in PDF format.
- Participants in the challenges may apply to give a presentation. However, in choosing between two presentations of similar quality, priority will be given to applicants who do not already have a conference place.



POLICY CHALLENGES

International Development Policy Challenge:

A key precondition for economic development is the emergence of a strong state that is capable of effective governance. Most of the world's poorest countries suffer from chronically weak or even 'failed' states that cannot fulfill the basic functions of modern statehood. Therefore, entrenched poverty is often found within states that lack the capacity to take action against it. Additionally, the structures of accountability that aid donors demand are often absent in weak states. This leaves donors with a troublesome dilemma: in order to tackle poverty in the poorest countries they must either engage with corrupt and ineffective states, or bypass state institutions – further undermining the government's limited authority. How should foreign aid be administered in such contexts? How should the immediate need for effective poverty alleviation be weighed against the long-run importance of building state capacity in order to achieve sustainable economic growth? Teams should develop a strategy for aid delivery in weak states which addresses the conflicting priorities at stake. Presentations might be targeted at an international or national aid agency.

Financial Regulation: Too important to fail?

In an attempt to avoid a repeat of the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the Basel III agreement requires banks to increase their capital:asset ratios substantially. The accord aims to create a buffer that would protect banks from insolvency in the event of another financial crisis, thus avoiding another round of costly bailouts. However, some argue that higher capital requirements take money out of the economy just when the economy is perilously close to re-entering recession. Others contend that the capital requirements introduced in Basel III do not provide sufficient protection from systemic risk. Will these new regulations restrict the credit supply, hampering the private sector's return to growth, or should they be strengthened even further? How should the question of financial regulation be treated in order to balance a healthy supply of credit with the need to protect the larger economy from another economic catastrophe?

Social Policy: Doing more with less?

In the pursuit of innovative and more fiscally feasible public services, should the state experiment with new forms of public service delivery? What role should partnerships with the private or non-profit sectors or even with the public itself play? Can the private or non-profit sectors be relied upon to fill the gaps left by a receding state? Teams should

present a proposal that develops an innovative vehicle for public service delivery in one of the following areas: Education, Health, Welfare, or Criminal Justice.

Economic Policy: Can policy spur a return to dynamism?

Effective policies to stimulate economic growth are at a premium in the G20 economies. How should G20 governments prioritize public spending and investment to generate and capitalize upon the growth opportunities of the 21st century? What reforms might spark a return to a dynamic growth trajectory? Teams should present a policy that they believe to be critical to the mid- to long-term economic health of developed economies.

