NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025 - Cover Letter

Andrew Funck

+393383844163 · andrew.funck@hec.edu

Dear application committee,

I am writing to express my keen interest in the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025. As a fourth-year PhD student in Economics at HEC Paris, my research explores the psychological determinants of economic behavior, with applications in entrepreneurship, education, and labor markets. The boot camp presents a unique opportunity to deepen my knowledge of innovation economics and engage with leading scholars in the field.

I have pursued coursework in econometrics, microeconomics, and decision theory to develop a rigorous methodological foundation for my research. My ongoing projects align closely with the themes of the boot camp. For example, my work on venture evaluation examines how judges at a venture accelerator assess startups using a mix of structured and intuitive decision-making. Additionally, I am exploring the integration of large language models (LLMs) in startup evaluation, investigating how AI-driven assessments can complement human decision-making in the selection process.

Another project focuses on entrepreneurial training, where I design and test an experimental online program aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among job seekers. By leveraging AI-driven tools such as chatbots and behavioral nudges, I aim to identify scalable strategies for increasing entrepreneurial success rates. Additionally, my research on role models and gender stereotypes investigates how exposure to successful professionals influences educational and career choices. These projects contribute to understanding innovation drivers and barriers, making the boot camp an ideal setting for refining my research agenda.

Attending the boot camp would provide valuable exposure to frontier topics in innovation economics, helping me to produce new research ideas and improve my existing research projects, and an opportunity to interact with peers and mentors who share my research interests.

Attached you can find my resume and a list of completed coursework for your review. My current PhD advisor and recommendation letter writer is Prof. Thomas Astebro. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Andrew Funck

Andrew Henry Aurelio Funck
+ 39.338.3844163 (IT)
andrew.funck@hec.edu

Education

- **HEC Paris 2021 –**
  PhD Candidate in Economics

- **Department of Economics, Bocconi University, 2019**
  M.Sc. in Economics and Social Sciences; Graduation: 110/110
  Thesis: *«Trumpism». Understanding, measuring and evaluating American political rhetoric in Congress with Natural Language Processing*

- **Department of Economics, Bocconi University, 2016**
  B.Sc. in Economics and Social Sciences; Graduation: 110/110 cum laude
  Thesis: *Spread and politics. The impact of Italian government communication on sovereign rate, an empirical analysis.*

- **Department of Economics, NYU College of Arts and Sciences, 2016**
  Spring 2016, Exchange Program (GPA 3.9).
  Courses: International Economics, Labour Economics, Political Economy

Publications

- Katay, G., Funck, A., Grigoletto, M., Vollbracht, I. 2020. Quantitative analysis of the costs and benefits of delegating certain tasks regarding the implementation of Union Programmes 2021-2027 to the Executive Agencies. JRC Technical Report. (restricted access)

Work in progress

- Funck, Andrew. Digital Privacy and users' engagement online
- Astebro, T, Funck, A., Giordano, F.. Judging venturesAstebro, T., Crepon, B., Funck, A., Mensman, M., Shulte, M. Employment Creation through Psychological-oriented Entrepreneurship Training.
- Altmejd, A., Astebro, T., Funck, A., Mensman, M., Mohammadi, A., Wennberg, K. . 2022. The impact of role models on gender stereotypical beliefs about educational choices. AEA RCT Registry. November 18. https://doi.org/10.1257/rct.10411-1.0
- Astebro, T., Crepon, B., Funck, A., Mensman, M., Shulte, M. Employment Creation through Psychological-oriented Entrepreneurship Training.

Teaching

- **HEC Paris, France, 09/2022 – 10/2024**
  Lecturer – Microeconomics (Grand Ecole) 09/2022 – 12/2022
  Teaching Assistant– Microeconomics (Grand Ecole) 09/2023 – 10/2023

- **Polytechnic University of Milan, 09/2020 – 06/2021**
  Teaching Assistant – International Economics (Management Engineering MSc)
  Teaching Assistant – Microeconomics (Management Engineering BA)

Grants

- HEC Paris Foundation Scholarship for Excellence (2021–), 24.000/year
- HEC PhD Special Fellowship "The economic Impact of Entrepreneurship Training" (2021-), 10.000/year

Referees

- **Prof. Thomas Astebro**
  HEC Paris, Department of Economics and Decision Sciences
  astebro@hec.fr

- **Prof. Guido Tabellini**
  Bocconi University, Department of Economics
  guido.tabellini@unibocconi.it

- **Prof. Marco Tabellini**
  Harvard Business School, Government and International Economy Unit,
  mtabellini@hbs.edu

Work Experience

- **Harvard Business School, 09/2019 – 12/2022**
  Research assistant. Supervisor: M. Tabellini.
  Research projects: "Immigration Group size and Integration", "Political Coalitions and Social Hierarchy: Evidence from the First Great Migration" ,"Faith and Assimilation: Italian Immigrants in the US".
  Main Task: data pre-processing, regression analysis, results visualization.

- **Bocconi University, 09/2019 – 12/2022**
  Research assistant. Supervisor: G. Tabellini.
  Research projects: "Online Political Debates"
  Main Task: Big Data pre-processing, sparse data regression analysis, results visualization, Natural Language Processing Algorithms estimation.

- **European Commission, Joint Research Center, 01/2019 – 09/2019**
  Trainee, scientific expert. Supervisors: Gábor Kátay.
  Research projects: "Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) for identification of optimal EU funds management externalization level"
  Main Task: identification of relevant output and productivity measures; data collection, merge, pre-processing, cleaning; estimation model's specification; exploratory statistical analysis and visualization of preliminary results; microsimulation model definition for evaluation of competitive externalization scenarios.

Conferences and workshops

Organized

- **HEC Economics PhD Conference, Paris, France, 2024**
- **HEC Economics PhD Conference, Paris, France, 2023**
- **CREST-HEC PhD Day, Paris, France, 2024**
- **Natural Language in Economics Online Seminar, 2024**

Attended

- **Foundations of Utility and Risk Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 2024 (Forthcoming)**
  Title: Judging Ventures
- **Workshop on Field Experiments in Economics and Business, Heilbron, Germany, 2022**
  Title: Gender stereotypes and educational choices. The impact of role models in Sweeden.

Languages

- English (proficient), French (intermediate), Italian (native)

Computing

- Python, R, STATA, Qualtrics

Grade Report

Jouy-en-Josas, 02/02/2025

GPA : 3.91 / 4



75388 - FUNCK, Andrew Henry Aurelio

(Average : .00 / 4)

Subject	Course	Offer	Label	Cc	Gr	Re	Ce
2024-2025DOC							
Electives							
	DOCCE00019	2425	FINANCIAL ECONOMICS OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY **	4	X		0
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	4			0
			Period Average : 0 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	4			0
			Total credits 4				
			Total credits earned 0				

A: Excellent, B: Very good, C: Good, D: Satisfactory, E: Adequate, Fx: Unsatisfactory, F: Very Unsatisfactory --- Gr: Grade, Re: Re-take grade, Cc: Course Credit, Ce: Credits earned

Waiting for grade or grade not approved ** : Grade not included in average

Grade Report

Jouy-en-Josas, 02/02/2025

GPA : 3.91 / 4



75388 - FUNCK, Andrew Henry Aurelio

(Average : .00 / 4)

Subject	Course	Offer	Label	Cc	Gr	Re	Ce
2023-2024DOC							
Thematics							
	DOCTTHE004	2324	PEDAGOGY **	4	P		4
	DOCTTHE009	2324	WRITING WORKSHOP: CRAFTING ACADEMIC PAPERS **	3	P		3
			Number of courses : 2 Sub total ECTS	7			7
			Period Average : 0 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	7			7
			Total credits 7				
			Total credits earned 7				

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Grade Report

GPA : 3.91 / 4

Jouy-en-Josas, 02/02/2025

75388 - FUNCK, Andrew Henry Aurelio

(Average : 3.90 / 4)

Subject	Course	Offer	Label	Cc	Gr	Re	Ce
2022-2023DOC							
Language Courses							
	DOTCCFR116	2223	FRENCH LEVEL 2 **	0	P		0
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	0			0
Methodology							
	DOCTMET029	2223	INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE	2	B		2
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	2			2
Other							
	DOCCTHE016	2223	MASTER OF RESEARCH THESIS DEFENSE	30	A		30
	DOCCTHE017	2223	RESEARCH SEMINARS **	5	P		5
			Number of courses : 2 Sub total ECTS	35			35
Thematics							
	DOCTTHE008	2223	PUBLISHING WORKSHOP **	1	P		1
	DOCTTHE010	2223	RESEARCH ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: HOW TO SURVIVE IN ACADEMIA WITHOUT GIVING UP ON YOUR SIENTIFIC DREAMS **	1	P		1
	DOCTTHE011	2223	RESEARCH REPRODUCIBILITY	1	P		1
			Number of courses : 3 Sub total ECTS	3			3
			Period Average : 3.97 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	40			40
2022-2023GE							
Institut Polytechnique de Paris							
	IPM2QEFSME0	2223-A1-EN02	Statistical Methods of Econometrics	3	A		3
	IPM2QEFAEP0	2223-S1-EN02	Advanced Econometrics: Panel Data and Duration Models	4	A		4
	IPM2QEFAMR0	2223-S1-EN02	Advanced Macroeconomics: Recursive methods	4	C		4
	IPM2QEFIDP01	2223-S2-EN02	Information Design, Persuasion and Strategic Communication	4	A		4
			Number of courses : 4 Sub total ECTS	15			15
			Period Average : 3.73 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	15			15
			Total credits 55				
			Total credits earned 55				

A: Excellent, B: Very good, C: Good, D: Satisfactory, E: Adequate, Fx: Unsatisfactory, F: Very Unsatisfactory --- Gr: Grade, Re: Re-take grade, Cc: Course Credit, Ce: Credits earned

Waiting for grade or grade not approved ** : Grade not included in average

Grade Report

Jouy-en-Josas, 02/02/2025

GPA : 3.91 / 4



75388 - FUNCK, Andrew Henry Aurelio

Research Master in Management Science

(Average : 3.93 / 4)

Subject	Course	Offer	Label	Cc	Gr	Re	Ce
2021-2022DOC							
Core Courses							
	DOCTC00001	2122	MICROECONOMICS	5	A		5
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	5			5
Language Courses							
	DOTCCFR116	2122	FRENCH LEVEL 2 **	0	P		0
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	0			0
Methodology							
	DOCTMET027	2122	RESEARCH METHODS	5	B		5
			Number of courses : 1 Sub total ECTS	5			5
Other							
	DOCCTHE014	2122	RESEARCH TUTORIAL **	5	P		5
	DOCCTHE015	2122	SUMMER PAPER	10	A		10
			Number of courses : 2 Sub total ECTS	15			15
Specialization							
	DOSPDS005	2122	ADVANCED DECISION SCIENCES	4	A		4
	DOSPDS009	2122	DECISION MAKING UNDER UNCERTAINTY	4	A		4
	DOSPDS015	2122	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3	A		3
	DOSPDS019	2122	RANDOMIZED METHODS AND POLICY EVALUATION	4	A		4
	DOSPDS129	2122	MACHINE LEARNING FOR ECONOMETRICS	4	B		4
			Number of courses : 5 Sub total ECTS	19			19
Thematics							
	DOCTTHE001	2122	REVERSE-ENGINEERING AN ACADEMIC CAREER **	0,5	P		0,5
	DOCTTHE007	2122	LIBRARY LITERACY **	0,5	P		0,5
			Number of courses : 2 Sub total ECTS	1			1
			Period Average : 3.88 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	45			45
2021-2022GE							
Quantitative Economics Major							
	GEM2QEFECO	2122-S1-EN01	Advanced Econometrics I	6	A		6
	GEM2QEFECO	2122-S2-EN01	Advanced Econometrics II	8	A		8
	GEM2QEFMIC0	2122-S2-EN01	Microeconomics II	8	A		8
			Number of courses : 3 Sub total ECTS	22			22
			Period Average : 4 / 4 **Credits earned ECTS**	22			22
			Total credits 67				
			Total credits earned 67				

A: Excellent, B: Very good, C: Good, D: Satisfactory, E: Adequate, Fx: Unsatisfactory, F: Very Unsatisfactory --- Gr: Grade, Re: Re-take grade, Cc: Course Credit, Ce: Credits earned

Waiting for grade or grade not approved ** : Grade not included in average

NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2025 - Application Essay

Andrew Funck

+393383844163 · andrew.funck@hec.edu

My research focuses on the intersection of behavioral economics and innovation, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, decision-making, and labor markets.

In one of my current projects I explore how evaluators at a leading venture accelerator make selection decisions. Using Bayesian models, I analyze whether judges systematically incorporate available information or exhibit biases in their assessments. Additionally, I am investigating how large language models (LLMs) can be integrated into the evaluation process, assessing their ability to augment human judgment in venture selection. Understanding how expert decision-making and AI-driven evaluations influence venture success has direct implications for innovation policy and startup funding mechanisms.

In another project, I design a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship training, in collaboration with the French employment governmental agency. This study examines whether online psychological-oriented training can enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business creation among job seekers. By testing different encouragement narratives and incorporating an AI-driven chatbot for learner support, I aim to identify scalable strategies for fostering entrepreneurial activity.

Additionally, my work on gender stereotypes and role models investigates the impact of exposure to successful professionals on students' career choices. This project contributes to the literature on innovation by examining how information interventions can mitigate gender gaps in STEM and entrepreneurship.

Beyond these projects, I have also conducted research on digital privacy regulation and user engagement on online platforms. My analysis explores how privacy policies influence business models and the trade-offs between data protection and digital innovation.

Attending the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp will be instrumental in refining my theoretical and empirical approaches. Engaging with leading scholars and fellow researchers will provide new perspectives and methodologies to advance my work on innovation and decision-making. I am particularly interested in discussions on how AI can drive innovation, the role of public policy in fostering entrepreneurship, and the role of psychological biases as barriers to innovation. I am excited about the opportunity to participate in the boot camp and contribute to the vibrant discussions on innovation economics.

Paris
February 6, 2025

Re: Recommendation letter for Andrew Funck to the 2025 NBER Innovation Research bootcamp

To the admissions committee for the bootcamp

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is with pleasure that I would like to **recommend Andrew Funck**'s admittance to the **2025 NBER Innovation Research bootcamp**.

In this recommendation letter I would like to comment on **Andrew Funck**'s intellectual potential, commitment, interest, maturity, and creativity. I would also like to describe his performance and accomplishments in three research projects that he has participated with me in.

Andrew has provided his grades in the Economics PhD program at HEC, with 6 A's and two B's. His grades from Bocconi are equally impressive, straight A's. Andrew is a 4th year PhD student in the Department of Economics and Decision Sciences at HEC Paris.

Let me explain my association with Andrew. I am his advisor. Together with Andrew and a group of other researchers, I am conducting two randomized controlled experiments at scale in Sweden and France. In the Swedish project we are asking whether one can impact young people's educational choices to pursue STEM careers by having them interact with a role model with a STEM career for one hour through a classroom visit. In the experiment we ask whether there is an interaction effect between the gender of the role model and the gender of the student on educational choices, and whether meeting a role model in person can be substituted with objective information that is provided by the study councilor. We randomly assign school classes to either male or female role models, a meeting with the study councilor of the same length and providing the same objective information about STEM careers as that provided by the role model, or control. Andrew has performed the power analysis, and described and submitted the experimental design to the AEAs pre-registry. He has also been helpful in designing the online questionnaire and the randomization machine. I know that Ina Ganguli has been working on similar projects.

In the French project we are interested in seeing whether taking an online course to build intra- and inter-personal skills will help job seekers to either get a job or to start a business. Andrew has taken a leading role, being responsible for experimental design, randomization, power calculations, and pre-registration, database construction, and IRB application. He here also functions as a bridge between our partner, the Public Employment Service (PES), the funding agencies, data providers, and the research team. The project is very ambitious in merging job seeker data from the PES, data on course performance on the learning platform, and data on job seeking outcomes from two public

sources, describing either employment (the LEED) or entrepreneurship (a new firm creation registry) and Andrew is taking a lead on this coordination. Andrew has inserted two randomizations that he is interested in exploring. I will only describe the first here, which goes back to Spence's model of whether education is primarily human capital accumulation or signaling. The two mechanisms have been hard to disentangle. In this project we will randomly assign participants to either obtain or not obtain a certification of completion from HEC Paris. We can then test whether signaling (obtaining the training and the certificate) or human capital accumulation (obtaining the training without the certificate) compared to a control group obtaining no training and no certificate leads to getting more job offers, higher salaries, or potentially, starting more successful firms.

As you may understand, Andrew is a true academic scholar with a deep interest in innovation.

Andrew is also interested in digitization and his solo paper for his second year is looking at how the abundance of internet backbone access to the home is affecting the attention span of youth, and how that in extension can have potentially serious effects on their future careers and earnings capabilities.

My assessment is that Andrew is a very suitable candidate for the **2025 NBER Innovation bootcamp**. He has strong social skills, but he also pays great attention to detail. He manages his time well, a very important skill for Ph.D. studies. He is intellectually curious, and a good listener. He is a very mature person who is excellent at handling people we must convince of doing various things for us in the RCTs.

Based on what I have observed I would strongly recommend N.B.E.R. to admit Andrew.

Short brief for those who do not know me. I am Chaired Professor of Entrepreneurship at the Department of Economics at HEC Paris. I received my Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University 30 years ago, and have worked at University of Waterloo, University of Toronto, KU Leuven, and HEC Paris. My publication count currently stands at 47 peer reviewed articles. I am an active participant at NBERs entrepreneurship and innovation workshops. You can find a brief description of me here.

Sincerely,



Thomas Åstebro
L'Oreal Professor of Entrepreneurship
Department of Economics and Decision Sciences
HEC Paris

astebro@hec.fr