

John Fallon

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<https://john-fallon-econ.com>

Research Interests

I am a labor economist, focusing on policies relating to education and labor regulation. My research focuses on labor economics and education policy, with particular interest in occupational licensing and teacher labor markets. I enjoy working on projects that can directly inform policy.

Academic History

Boston University

PhD in Economics

Boston, MA

Expected, 2026

Committee members: Kevin Lang, Marcus Winters, James Feigenbaum, and Josh Goodman

Northeastern University

MA in Applied Economics

Boston, MA

June, 2019

The University of Chicago

BA in Economics and Political Science

Chicago, IL

June 2014

Papers

Job Market Paper

Competitive Occupational Licensure: Doctors Versus Chiropractors

This paper provides the first analysis of competitive occupational licensure, where substitute professions maintain separate licensing boards. While existing work assumes monopolistic regulation within industries, many related professions such as architects and structural engineers, or social workers and psychologists, operate competing boards that set entry requirements strategically.

I develop a model where professional organizations choose licensing stringency to maximize industry profits, accounting for competitive responses. Workers with different abilities choose occupations based on expected returns. Consumers observe only average quality within each profession, creating information problems that board competition can mitigate through a separating equilibrium.

I test this theory using the historical competition between medical doctors and chiropractors from 1907-1960. Exploiting digitized American Medical Association records and state-by-year variation in chiropractic board adoption, I find that medical boards strategically responded by increasing college requirements (10 percentage points), mandating internships (10+ percentage points), and reducing pass rates (5 percentage points).

These regulatory changes generated substantial economic effects. Doctors experienced 26% higher home values while their numbers declined by 17-40 practitioners per 100,000 population. Chiropractors saw 44% higher home values with increased market presence.

Works in Progress

[Fewer Licenses, Similar Teachers: Changing Licensing Tests in Indiana](#) (with Marcus A. Winters, PhD)

We use longitudinal administrative data from Indiana to examine changes in teacher quality following the state's shift to a more stringent licensure test. Despite a significant drop in new licenses issued following the change in the licensure test standard, the overall quality of incoming teachers and the relative quality of licensed teachers compared to unlicensed teachers remained largely unchanged. We find some heterogeneity by subject and school setting, with urban schools experiencing a modest decline in teacher quality, particularly in math. Our findings raise questions about the value of requiring prospective teachers to pass licensure tests to obtain a license.

[Learning by Doing \(Together\): Collaboration and Teacher Skill Formation](#)

How do workplace collaborations affect individual worker productivity once the partnership ends? I study co-teaching in schools to measure whether teachers genuinely learn from collaboration or simply benefit from immediate assistance. Using administrative data on all teachers in a state from 2012-2019, I exploit plausibly exogenous variation in co-teaching assignment driven by special education enrollment and scheduling constraints rather than teacher quality. Teachers experience persistent improvement in student achievement after returning to solo teaching, with gains averaging 0.04 SD and reaching 0.10 SD when paired with highly experienced partners (16+ years). These lasting productivity gains demonstrate that strategic workplace collaboration can accelerate skill development, with important implications for team formation and mentorship design across industries.

Teaching Experience

Harvard University

Instructor, Debates in Labor Economics

Cambridge, MA

Fall 2024, Fall 2025

Boston University

Teaching Assistant to Bjorn Persson, Elementary Mathematical Economics

Boston, MA

Spring 2025

Teaching Assistant to Bjorn Persson, Economics of Information

Spring 2025

Teaching Assistant to Regina Cati, Economic Development of Latin America

Spring 2025

Teaching Assistant to Steven White, Intermediate Macroeconomic Analysis

Fall 2021

Northeastern University

Teaching Assistant to Mohammad Shahid Alam, History of the Global Economy

Boston, MA

Fall 2018

Research Experience

Boston University

Research Assistant to Marcus Winters

Boston, MA

Sep. 2023 – Jun. 2024

Research Assistant to Andrew Bacher-Hicks

Jan. 2022 – Jun. 2023

Northeastern University

Research Assistant to Alicia Sasser Modestino

Boston, MA

May 2019 – Aug. 2020

Research Assistant to William Dickens

Sep. 2019 – Dec. 2019

Research Assistant to Silvia Prina

Jan. 2019 – Apr. 2019

Other Professional Experience

Public Consulting Group

Consultant, Health

Business Analyst, Health

Boston, MA

Jul. 2017 – Jul. 2018

Sep. 2015 – Jun. 2017

Sg2 Health Intelligence

Analytics Associate, Data Operations

Skokie, IL

Jul. 2014 – Aug. 2015

Academic Activities

American Economic Association/Allied Social Science Associations Conference *2026 (Accepted)*

Association of Education Finance and Policy Conference *2025*

Brown PhD Student Conference *2025*

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Conference *2025 (Accepted)*

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Conference *2024*

Association of Education Finance and Policy Conference *Mar. 2024*

Boston University Graduate Economic Association Member *Aug. 2022 – Jun. 2023*

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Conference *Nov. 2019*

(First Place in Poster Session)

Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab Research Staff Training Participant *Oct. 2019*