

Citation read out at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 24 March 2005 upon the election of Professor Orley Ashenfelter to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Professor Orley Ashenfelter is the Joseph Douglas Green 1895 Professor of Economics at Princeton University. He is the world's leading researcher in the field of labour economics, and has also made major contributions to research in the field of econometrics and law and economics.

As Director of the Office of Evaluation of the US Department of Labour in 1972, Professor Ashenfelter began the work that is now widely recognized as the field of "quantitative social program evaluation." His influential work on the econometric evaluation of government retraining programs led to the systematic development of rigorous methods for the evaluation of many social programs. Professor Ashenfelter is also regarded as the originator of the use of so-called "natural experiments" to infer causality about economic relationships. This approach, now becoming universal in all the social sciences, is associated with Princeton University's Industrial Relations Section, of which Professor Ashenfelter was Director.

He edited the *Handbook of Labour Economics*, and is currently Editor of the *American Law and Economics Review*. His current research includes the evaluation of the effect of schooling on earnings, the cross-country measurement of wage rates, and many other issues related to the economics of labour markets. His further interests include the market for fine wine. Several of his contributions to the economics research literature have been motivated by and reflect this interest.

Professor Ashenfelter is a frequent visitor to the UK, and has been visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and the University of Bristol. He is a Guggenheim Fellow.

It is for his innovative contributions, spanning a broad array of topics in the economic analysis of labour markets, that the Society awards him a Corresponding Fellowship today.