Preface to Microeconomics

This book should be seen as an accessible introduction to intermediate microeconomics. It can be used for both second and third year microeconomics courses, and may also be relevant for joint honours students — for example, in business studies, sociology and social policy — who do not specialise in economics but would like to learn about its fundamentals in an interesting and evaluative way.

The material in Microeconomics is drawn from an Open University course, D319 Understanding Economic Behaviour, that assumes a basic knowledge of economics such as that provided in a first year introductory economics course. In particular, it follows on from the Open University’s introductory economics course, D216 Economics and Changing Economies. The text of the D216 course is also available from Thomson Learning as Economics and Changing Economies by Mackintosh et al., 1996 (ISBN 0 412 62846 6). Throughout Microeconomics the links back to Mackintosh et al. are shown as (Changing Economies, Chapter number).

We have a number of grateful acknowledgements to make for the help, both official and unofficial, that we received for the writing of this book. First we have received a wealth of incisive comments from our external assessors Paul Auerbach, Ben Fine, Ben Knight and Nancy Folbre, who each commented on many drafts of several chapters of the book. Shaun Hargreaves-Heap, the overall assessor for the project, was also extremely helpful with structural as well as detailed suggestions. Invaluable advice was also provided by John Clarke, Paul Du Gay, Peter Hamilton, Chris Jones, J.S. Metcalfe, Simon Mohun, Ram Mudambi, Bruce Philip, Janette Rutterford, John Sutton, Jeremy Smith, Mike Waterson and Marc Wuyts.

Great credit is due to everyone at Thomson Learning for their superb production and design of the book, with particular thanks to Fiona Freel and Maggie Smith. And finally, we would like to thank all the production and teaching staff at the Open University, including Giles Clark for arranging the contract; Avis Lexton, for excellent secretarial support; and our editor Penny Bennett, whose patience and support has been invaluable. The academic editors are responsible for any remaining errors.