

ECONOMICS, B.A. (LIBERAL ARTS)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park, World Campus

Program Description

This major is designed for those who seek a broad understanding of the operation of the economic system and training in the methods and uses of economic analysis. Graduates are equipped for employment in many areas of business operations, labor unions, and agencies of government at all levels; and to undertake the graduate work necessary to become professional economists.

Students may choose either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science program. An honors program is also offered.

What is Economics?

Economics is the study of how individuals, firms, and governments allocate their scarce resources. This major is designed for those who seek a broad understanding of the operation of the economic system and training in the methods and uses of economic analysis. Graduates are equipped for employment in many areas of business operations, banking, risk assessment, and agencies of government at all levels; and to undertake the graduate work necessary to become professional economists.

You Might Like This Program If...

You have an interest in decisions made by individuals and firms, policies made by governments, and their effects. Economists advise presidents, make forecasts about unemployment and the stock market, and create Federal Reserve Bank policies. But economists also study health care, crime, environmental issues, inequality, and more. Perhaps most importantly, Economics provides knowledge and logic for making everyday decisions, big and small. This includes everything from where to eat lunch to what career you choose.

Entrance to Major

To be eligible for entrance into the Economics (ECLBA) major, a degree candidate must satisfy requirements for entrance to the major.

Specific entrance requirements include:

The degree candidate must have completed the following entrance-to-major requirements with a grade of C or better: ECON 102 and ECON 104.

In addition, students also must satisfy the following requirements:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	15
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ECON 102	Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy	3
ECON 104	Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy	3
ECON 106	Statistical Foundations for Econometrics	3
ECON 302	Intermediate Microeconomic Analysis	3
ECON 304	Intermediate Macroeconomic Analysis	3
ECON 306	Introduction to Econometrics	3

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better
 Select 18 credits in Economics 300 or 400 level with department approval, including at least 9 credits at the 400 level 18

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Integrated B.A. in Economics and M.A. in Economics

Undergraduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park, World Campus

Graduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park

Requirements for the Integrated B.A. in Economics and M.A. in Economics can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/economics/#integratedundergradgradprogramstext>).

Program Learning Objectives

- **Applied Economics Fields:** Students will be knowledgeable about at least two applied fields in economics.
- **Economic Analysis:** Students will be able to apply the tools of economic analysis, and most notably the basic supply and demand model, to various issues and phenomena, dealing with individuals, firms, markets, and public policy.
- **Economic Data Analysis:** Students will be able to carry out quantitative analyses of economic data.
- **Economics Writing:** Students will be able to write a paper in economics that includes economic analysis and that is coherent, cogent, and grammatically correct.
- **Intermediate Theory:** Students will be familiar with intermediate microeconomic theory and intermediate macroeconomic theory.
- **Quantitative Economic Analysis:** Students will be able to carry out quantitative analyses of economic data.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

World Campus

Undergraduate Academic Advising

100 Innovation Blvd

Suite 225

University Park, PA 16803

814-863-3283

advising@worldcampus.psu.edu

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Economics, B.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
ECON 102 or 104 ^{*#}	3	ECON 102 or 104 ^{*#}	3
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15 (GWS) [‡]	3	General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3
LA 83	1.5	General Education Course (IL or US Cultures)	3
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3	General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3

World Language Level 1	4	World Language Level 2	4
14.5		16	

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
ECON 302 or 304 [*]	3	ECON 302 or 304 [*]	3
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C (GWS) [‡]	3	LA 283	1.5
ECON 106 [*]	3	300 Level ECON Course [*]	3
General Education Course (IL or US Cultures)	3	General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3
World Language Level 3	4	General Education Course	3
		General Education Course	3
16		16.5	

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
300/400 Level ECON Course [*]	3	300/400 Level ECON Course [*]	3
ECON 306 [*]	3	400 Level ECON Course [*]	3
General Education Course (Writing Across the Curriculum)	3	BA Requirement: World Cultures	3
BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification or World Language	3	BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification or World Language	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
15		15	

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
400 Level ECON Course [*]	3	400 Level ECON Course [*]	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS) [‡]	3	BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification, or World Language	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	Elective	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
13.5		13.5	

Total Credits 120

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

Economics, B.A. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ECON 102 or 104 ^{*#}	3 ECON 102 or 104 ^{*#}	3
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15 (GWS) [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course (First Year Seminar)	3 General Education Course (IL or US Cultures)	3
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3 General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3
World Language Level 1	4 World Language Level 2	4
	16	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C (GWS) [‡]	3 BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification, or World Language	3
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course (IL or US Cultures)	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 3	4 General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	16	15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ECON 302 or 304 [*]	3 ECON 302 or 304 [*]	3
ECON 106 [*]	3 ECON 306 [*]	3
LA 283	1.5 300/400 Level ECON Course [*]	3
General Education Course (Writing Across the Curriculum)	3 BA Requirement: World Cultures	3
BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification or World Language	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	16.5	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
300/400 Level ECON Course [*]	3 400 Level ECON Course [*]	3

300/400 Level ECON Course [*]	3 400 Level ECON Course [*]	3
400 Level ECON Course [*]	3 BA Requirement: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Quantification, or World Language	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS) [‡]	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 Elective	3
	13.5	13.5

Total Credits 121.5

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

Career Paths

The economics major leads to several exciting and well-paying career opportunities in the corporate sector, the public sector, and in the nonprofit sector. This is the case because of the important skills acquired

in an economics major including qualitative and quantitative analytical skills, critical-thinking skills, as well as communication skills.

Careers

In the corporate sector, economics majors help managers and decisionmakers understand the impact of economic conditions on their businesses. Economics majors analyze issues such as prices and consumer demand, which helps businesses to maximize profit.

In the public sector, economics majors can be found at the federal level as well as at the state and local levels of government. Economics graduates collect and analyze data on employment, prices, productivity, wages, and many other types of data. They also help project revenues and spending needs that help policymakers understand the impact of laws and regulations. Some economics graduates are employed in international agencies, research firms, think tanks, and other nonprofit organizations.

A recent publication by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists economics as one of the top well-paying majors overall and top among the arts and social sciences.

Economics graduates may work in various occupations including:

- Actuaries or actuarial assistants where they use mathematics and statistics to analyze financial costs of risk and uncertainty.
- Financial Analysts where they use qualitative and quantitative tools to provide guidance to businesses and individual investment decisions.
- Market research analysts where they analyze market conditions and project potential sales for a particular product or service.
- Budget analysts where they help private and public agencies plan their finances more efficiently and effectively.
- Research assistants: economics majors may help design surveys, collect data, analyze the data, prepare reports, and give presentations on a wide range of areas including health issues, labor market issues, environment, social issues, etc.
- Operations research analysts where they employ various mathematical and analytical tools to help private and public agencies solve complicated operations problems.
- Urban and Regional Planners where they help to develop land use plans to create better communities and accommodate changes in population.
- Policy analysts where they use both qualitative and quantitative analytical skills to identify a problem, analyze the issue, provide a solution, and evaluate competing potential solutions to the problem. Policy analysts may also be tasked with identifying the effects of proposed or implemented policies on various categories of people.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE ECONOMICS PROGRAM (<https://econ.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/prospective-students/>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

A bachelor's degree in Economics from Penn State will also prepare students for post-graduate studies in pursuit of a Master's degree or Ph.D. in Economics.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MATH PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://econ.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/care/care-quantitative-requirements/>)

Contact

University Park

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
403 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-1457
prd138@psu.edu

<https://econ.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/>

World Campus

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
403 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-1457
prd138@psu.edu

<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-economics-bachelor-of-arts-degree> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-economics-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)