

# LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS, B.A.

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** University Park, World Campus

## Program Description

This major permits students to undertake a study of work and the employment relationship in the context of a liberal arts education. A broad foundation of theoretical and professional knowledge is provided through a multidisciplinary approach. The B.A. and B.S. degrees draw on the perspectives of disciplines such as industrial relations, economics, history, law, sociology, and psychology. This focus includes the nature and functions of the institutions involved in the employment relationship. The B.S. degree requires more course work in quantification than the B.A. degree.

Graduates of Labor and Employment Relations are equipped for employment in business, government, and labor organizations as labor relations specialists, personnel and human resource specialists, researchers, organizers, consultants, and professionals in mediation and arbitration. The degree is also appropriate preparation for graduate study and law school.

## What is Labor and Employment Relations?

Every day, 135 million Americans go to work and surprising stuff happens. Welcome to the world of human resources and labor relations! Labor and Employment Relations focuses on subjects ranging from globalization and talent management, to unions and social justice, to gender equity and workers' rights. It encompasses a variety of growing career areas, all of which address the complex social, cultural, and professional issues one is likely to encounter in modern workplaces. You will learn in a highly student-centered program with great faculty, wonderful resources, and an in-house career counselor for help as you approach completion.

## You Might Like This Program If...

You want to earn a first-rate liberal arts education and a ticket to a satisfying, remunerative, and fascinating career. Our students receive tons of support! Recent courses have taken students to globally reputed workplaces in Silicon Valley, Ireland, China, and Sweden. Our students also land summer internships around the country and globe. Our great student groups are fun, encourage student professional development, and explore issues like voting rights, student debt, immigration reform.

## Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification ([http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/semester\\_classification.cfm](http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/semester_classification.cfm)).

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

## Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Labor and Employment Relations, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	21
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	39

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 Recommended Academic Plan for your intended program.

## 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 (<http://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.)

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

## Knowledge Domains

- **Arts (GA):** 6 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 6 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 6 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 9 credits

## Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)

- **Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses:** 6 credits

6 of these 45 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major.

## 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 (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**Foreign Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/#advisingandplanningadegreeprogramtext>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

**Other 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 General Education US/IL requirement.

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

### Requirements for the Major

This includes 6 credits of GS General Education courses.

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 (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ECON 102	Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy	3
ECON 315	Labor Economics	3
LER 100	Introduction to Labor and Human Resources	3
PSYCH 281	Introduction to Industrial-Organizational Psychology	3
LER 312	Employment Relations to Research Methods in Labor and Employment Relations	3
LER 458Y or HIST 458Y	History of Work in America	3
LER 460	Ethics in the Workplace	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
LER 201 or LER 401	Employment Relationship: Law and Policy The Law of Labor-Management Relations	3
LER/WMNST 136 or LER 400	Race, Gender, and Employment Comparative Employment Relations Systems	3
LER 488 & LER 489	Career Development Seminar I and Career Development Seminar II (or 3 credits in consultation with your adviser)	3
<b>Supporting Courses and Related Areas</b>		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 9 credits of LER courses, at least 6 at the 400 level <sup>1</sup>		9

<sup>1</sup> Only 3 credits of LER 495 and 3 credits of LER 496 may be used to satisfy this requirement.

## Program Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of their studies, LER undergraduates will be able to:

1. Summarize and explain the interrelationships among fundamental theories, concepts, facts, and issues involving labor, ER, and HR topics related to workplaces, workers, and their communities.
2. Analyze alternative approaches, solutions, and conclusions related to practical and legal challenges involving labor, ER, and HR by:
  - a. Comparing and contrasting options.
  - b. Identifying relative strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
  - c. Recognizing the interests and perspectives of different stakeholders including employees, employers, the public, and the organizations that represent them.
  - d. Summarizing different disciplinary perspectives, such as those of sociology, psychology, political science, and economics.
  - e. Evaluating and synthesizing relevant research and theories.
3. Demonstrate effective communication skills in two-way interactions with individuals and groups involving labor, ER, and HR facts, concepts, and principles in order to interact effectively with other stakeholders (referred to below as "communications skills").

4. Solve multi-faceted problems in labor, ER, and HR by selecting, adapting (when necessary), and applying relevant knowledge and skills to help develop, implement, and enforce organizational policies and strategies in domestic and global workplaces.
5. Respond to practical, legal, and ethical challenges in domestic and global workplaces in accordance with societal norms, values, mores, as well as professional and ethical standards. Be able to address ethical issues with appropriate recognition of human rights, social responsibility and sustainability principles.
6. Summarize the interactive impact of numerous cultural and international factors on work, workers, employers, and industries by synthesizing information about:
  - a. National and transnational cultures and institutions.
  - b. International businesses, global trade, foreign investments, and global business strategies.
  - c. Global workers' rights.
  - d. Workplace diversity.
  - e. Work-family and work-life dilemmas.
  - f. Immigration.

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
General Education course	3 ECON 102 <sup>**†</sup>	3
ENGL 15, 30, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H <sup>‡</sup>	3 General Education course	3
World Language level 1	4 General Education course	3
General Quantification (GQ) <sup>‡</sup>	3 World Language level 2	4
General Education course	3 General Education course	3
16		16

**Second Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Elective course	3 PSYCH 281 <sup>**†</sup>	3
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C <sup>‡</sup>	3 General Education course	3
Elective course	3 LER 136 or 400 <sup>*</sup>	3
World Language level 3	4 Bachelor of Arts requirement	3
General Education course	3	
LER 100 <sup>*</sup>		3
16		15

**Third Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
LER 488 <sup>*</sup>	1.5 LER 4XX <sup>*</sup>	3
LER 201 or 401 <sup>*</sup>	3 LER 312 <sup>*</sup>	3
General Education	3 Bachelor of Arts requirement	
Bachelor of Arts requirement	3 Elective course	3
ECON 315 <sup>**†</sup>	3 General Quantification (GQ) <sup>‡</sup>	3
Bachelor of Arts requirement	3	
16.5		12

**Fourth Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D <sup>‡</sup>	3 LER 458Y <sup>*</sup>	3
LER 489 <sup>*</sup>	1.5 LER 4XX <sup>*</sup>	3
Elective course	3 Elective course	3
General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5 General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5
LER 460 <sup>*</sup>	3 LER 4XX <sup>*</sup>	3
LER 4XX <sup>*</sup>	3	
15		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 University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

## 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 need to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

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

### University Park

**Liberal Arts Academic Advising**

814-865-2545

<http://starfish.psu.edu>

<http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/education/majors-and-minors>

### World Campus

**Undergraduate Academic Advising**

301 Outreach Building

University Park, PA 16802

814-863-3283

[advising@outreach.psu.edu](mailto:advising@outreach.psu.edu)

## Suggested Academic Plan

### 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**

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.

GWS, GQ, GHW, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL/CAS 137 in the fall semester and ENGL/CAS 138 in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 30 and CAS 100. 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 (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information>) of this Bulletin.

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

#### **Advising Note:**

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

## **Career Paths**

Statistics. Others have gone on to work as labor union organizers, labor arbitrators, and professionals in non-profit careers. Virtually every employer—multinational corporations, small companies, hospitals, non-profit agencies, universities, and federal, state, and local governments—employ HRER professionals. LER majors have gone on to graduate school earning advanced degrees in Human Resource Management, Law, Business, and Sociology.

## **Careers**

LER majors do exceedingly well in the job market, and have been hired by a long list of companies (link below). For students interested in social and economic justice at work, a career with a union provides an opportunity to put your beliefs into actions. LER alums have gone on to work for national and international labor organizations and unions such as the AFL-CIO, United Steelworkers, and the American Federation of Teachers to name a few. Government agencies such as the National

Labor Relations Board and the U.S. and state Departments of Labor regularly hire Penn State LER School grads.

MORE INFORMATION (<http://lser.la.psu.edu/careers/where-our-grads-get-jobs>)

## **Opportunities for Graduate Studies**

Along with three top Masters programs (M.S. and M.P.S. degrees in Human Resources and Employment Relations and an M.P.S. in Labor and Global Workers Rights, we offer a five-year Integrated Undergraduate Graduate (IUG) program through which you can earn your Bachelors and Masters degrees in a total of five years, instead of six years as can otherwise be needed. Students with a Masters degree land better paying jobs in coveted positions. Many of our top performing IUG students receive assistantships that helps to pay their tuition.

MORE INFORMATION (<http://lser.la.psu.edu/graduates>)

## **Professional Resources**

- Society for Human Resource Management (<https://www.shrm.org/pages/default.aspx>)
- Penn State World Campus (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/organizational-leadership-bachelors/overview>)
- The LABOR School at Penn State (<http://lser.la.psu.edu/ler-outreach-programs>)
- Academy of Human Capital Development (<http://lser.la.psu.edu/ler-outreach-programs>)
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters (<https://teamster.org/international-brotherhood-teamsters>)
- American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) (<https://aflcio.org>)

## **Contact**

### **University Park**

SCHOOL OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS  
506 Keller Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-865-5425  
[lerpsu@psu.edu](mailto:lerpsu@psu.edu)

<http://lser.la.psu.edu/>

### **World Campus**

SCHOOL OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS  
506 Keller Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-865-5425  
[pxm205@psu.edu](mailto:pxm205@psu.edu)

<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/labor-and-employment-relations-bachelors/overview>