

Assessment Plan

Department/Program: Economics (ECON)

1. Learning Goals

- Knowledge of basic economic principles, important economic issues, and major economic institutions
- The capability to read and understand the scholarly literature
- The capability to engage in theoretical and empirical analysis of economic problems.

2. Published: Departmental web page

3. Method of Assessment

Performance in sequential curriculum

The curricula for ECON have three stages, each stage presuming a certain level of economic literacy and competency. To enter either major, students must pass ECON 110, an introductory course that requires completion of 2 semesters of college calculus. This course or ECON 101, the non-calculus introductory course, is a prerequisite for all 200-level electives in the major. Majors in both programs must then take the “core” method and theory courses, ECON 300 (Quantitative Methods in Economics), 301 (Microeconomic Analysis), and 302 (Macroeconomic Analysis). ECON 300 and at least one of the other core courses are prerequisites for all 300-level electives. These upper-level electives require students to undertake term research projects using the analytical methods acquired in the core courses. ECON majors must take at least three 300-level electives.

Responses to annual senior survey

Several questions on the annual senior survey speak directly to the learning goals listed in part 1 of the assessment plan. Senior responses can be distinguished by major, providing data on our seniors’ self-assessments of the developments in their knowledge and skills.

Senior essays and honors theses

In addition to the research projects assigned in their 300-level electives, ECON majors may elect to undertake intensive independent research projects in their senior year. Honors theses generally involve a year-long research project, while essays may be written during a single semester tutorial. Honors theses in ECON are evaluated by two faculty readers in addition to the tutor.