



Economics Career Development Office

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Economics Research Career Guide

About Economics Research

Economics researchers use mathematics and economics models to understand and predict the world around us. Economics research is a collaborative field with opportunities to discuss research and research ideas with colleagues at conferences and seminars. In addition to conducting your own research, economics researchers read a lot and are quite familiar with the seminal research papers and with cutting edge research papers from journals in their field. Most economics researchers will need to pursue a PhD or advanced degree in economics at some point in their career to advance. It is becoming increasingly uncommon for students to go directly from undergrad studies to a PhD program and many students secure full-time jobs in economics research (lasting 1-3 years) as a predoctoral fellow (Pre-Doc) or Research Assistant (RA) before applying to grad programs. This guide will provide insight into starting your career with a predoc or RA role.

Recommended Courses to Explore Economics Research

Core Electives in the major

- **Economics Option B: Mathematical Emphasis**
- **Econ 310** – Statistics: Measurement in Economics
- **Econ 410** – Introductory Econometrics
- **Econ 460** – Economic Forecasting
- **Econ 570** – Fundamentals of Data Analytics for Economists
- **Econ 695** – Data Analysis and Big Data
- **Econ 580** – Tutorial in Economics Research Project Design (for Honors-track students)

Applied Electives in the major

- Explore classes that align with your research interests. For example, Econ 371 (Energy, Resources and Economics) if you have an interest in environmental economics.

Suggested Courses Outside of the Department of Economics

- **Math 431** - Intro to Theory of Probability
- **Math 522** - Analysis II
- **Math 521** - Analysis I
- **Math 632** - Introto Stochastic Processes

*If you took Math 221-222-234, consider taking Math 421 (The Theory of Single-Variable Calculus) to gain experience with mathematical proofs before taking the above courses.

Relevant Majors & Certificates

- **Mathematics** ([Major](#) or [Certificate](#))
- **Statistics** ([Major](#) or [Certificate](#))

Relevant Student Organizations

- [Equilibrium: Undergraduate Journal of Economics](#)
- [Federal Reserve Challenge](#)
- [Global Economic Forum](#)
- [Women in Economics](#)

Search <https://win.wisc.edu/organizations> for additional student organizations.

Sample Job Titles

- Research Assistant
- Research Associate
- Predoctoral Fellow
- Economic Consultant

Exploratory and Diversity Programs:

- [Undergraduate Research Scholars](#): dedicated to helping first- and second-year undergraduates get hands-on experience in research working with UW faculty and research staff.
- Econ PhD Mentorship Opportunity for UW Econ Students: [fill out this form](#) to get connected with a Econ PhD student at UW.
- [McNair Scholars Program](#): a research and PhD training program at UW for underrepresented, first-generation, and/or low-income students. Must have 45 credits to apply – applications typically due Oct 1.
- [Expanding Diversity in Economics Summer Institute](#) through University of Chicago: 3-week summer program with all costs covered for continuing Bachelor's level students includes training and networking focused on quantitative skill-building and graduate school exploration.
- [American Economic Association Summer Training and Scholarship Program](#): A unique opportunity for students to gain technical skills in Economics and conduct research with prominent faculty.
 - AEA programming and opportunities for undergraduates can be found [here](#).
- [PREDOC](#) (Pathways to Research and Doctoral Careers) offers workshops, a summer research course, sample data tasks, resources, and promotes RA and PreDoc roles.
 - Sign-up for the PREDOC newsletter [HERE](#)
- [Economics Mentoring Program – PhD Application Resources](#): TONS of useful resources when exploring or preparing applications for PhD programs. They also have a [mentoring program](#) that opens applications in early summer (June) for summer/fall mentorship.
- [The Sadie Collective](#) offers a variety of programs focused on the success of Black women in economics.

Job and Internship Search Resources

- [Handshake](#) - Find internships and jobs, as well as info sessions
- [UW Student Job Center](#) - Search for part-time UW student research jobs during the school year
- [Resources & Tips for Research with UW Faculty](#) – created by SuccessWorks
- [PREDOC Opportunities](#) - Sign-up for the PREDOC newsletter [HERE](#)
 - Sample data tasks for interview preparation are available [HERE](#)
- [Twitter econRA](#) - Exclusively retweets entry-level econ data research roles)
- [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) (NBER)

- [Board of Governors Research Assistants](#) and [Federal Reserve System](#) (Search for Research Assistants/Associates or Internship) and learn more at <https://www.fedeconjobs.org/>
- [List of Undergraduate Research Opportunities](#) from the American Economic Association

Gain Technical Skills

- [DoIt Software Training for Students](#) : Free workshops including Microsoft Excel, Python and more!
- [LinkedIn Learning](#): Free access to professional development trainings
- [SSCC Training Classes](#): Free workshops on various software including Stata and R

Conducting Your Own Economics Research

- [Writing Economics Research Papers](#)
- [Sources of Economic Data by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#)
- [75 Sources of Economic Data by the Yale Law School Library](#)
- [Economics Data Sources from University of California, Davis](#)
- [Economic Data Sources from Western Washington University](#)