



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 very 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 in order to advance. It is becoming increasingly uncommon for students to go directly from undergrad studies to a PhD program and many students secure terminal 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 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** - Introduction to the Theory of Probability
- **Math 521** - Analysis I
- **Math 522** - Analysis II
- **Math 632** - Introduction to 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

Targeted and Exploration 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.
- [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](#).
- [The Sadie Collective](#) offers a variety of programs focused on the success of Black women in economics.
- Learn about and find predoctoral roles at [PREDOC](#)

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
- [Twitter econRA](#) (exclusively retweets entry-level econ data research roles)
- [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) (NBER)
- [List of Undergraduate Research Opportunities](#)

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](#)