

Department of Economics
Illinois State University

Undergraduate Program Learning Objectives

At the time of graduation, candidates must have completed one or more activities for each of the five learning objectives. Examples of appropriate activities are listed for each learning objective.

I. Gaining access to existing knowledge

- I-1 Locate published research in economics and related fields;
- I-2 Locate information on particular topics and issues in economics;
- I-3 Search out economic data as well as information about the meaning of the data and how they are derived.

II. Displaying command of existing knowledge

- II-1 Summarize (in a 2-minute monologue or a 300-word written statement) what is known about the current condition of the economy;
- II-2 Summarize the ideas of an eminent living economist;
- II-3 Summarize a current controversy in the economics literature;
- II-4 State succinctly the dimensions of a current economic policy issue;
- II-5 Explain key economic concepts and describe how they can be used.

III. Displaying ability to draw out existing knowledge

- III-1 Write a précis of a published journal article;
- III-2 Read and interpret a theoretical analysis, including simple mathematical derivations, reported in an economics journal article
- III-3 Read and interpret a quantitative analysis, including regression results, reported in an economics journal article;
- III-4 Show what economic concepts and principles are used in economic analyses published in articles from daily newspapers and weekly news magazines.

IV. Utilizing existing knowledge to explore issues

- IV-1 Prepare a written analysis (of say, 5 pages) of a current economic problem;
- IV-2 Prepare a decision memorandum (of say, 2 pages) for a superior that recommends some action on an economic decision faced by the organization.

V. Creating new knowledge

- V-1 Identify and formulate a question or series of questions about some economic issue that will facilitate investigation of the issue;
- V-2 Prepare a 5-page proposal for a research project;
- V-3 Complete a research study whose results are contained in a polished 20-page paper.

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Undergraduate Program Assessment: Phase 1

Learning Objectives

At the time of graduation, candidates must have completed one or more activities for each of the five learning objectives. Examples of appropriate activities are listed for each learning objective.

- I. *Gaining access to existing knowledge*
 - I-1 Locate published research in economics and related fields;
 - I-2 Locate information on particular topics and issues in economics;
 - I-3 Search out economic data as well as information about the meaning of the data and how they are derived.

- II. *Displaying command of existing knowledge*
 - II-1 Summarize (in a 2-minute monologue or a 300-word written statement) what is known about the current condition of the economy;
 - II-2 Summarize the ideas of an eminent living economist;
 - II-3 Summarize a current controversy in the economics literature;
 - II-4 State succinctly the dimensions of a current economic policy issue;
 - II-5 Explain key economic concepts and describe how they can be used.

- III. *Displaying ability to draw out existing knowledge*
 - III-1 Write a précis of a published journal article;
 - III-2 Read and interpret a theoretical analysis, including simple mathematical derivations, reported in an economics journal article;
 - III-3 Read and interpret a quantitative analysis, including regression results, reported in an economics journal article;
 - III-4 Show what economic concepts and principles are used in economic analyses published in articles from daily newspapers and weekly news magazines.

- IV. *Utilizing existing knowledge to explore issues*
 - IV-1 Prepare a written analysis (of say, 5 pages) of a current economic problem;
 - IV-2 Prepare a decision memorandum (of say, 2 pages) for a superior that recommends some action on an economic decision faced by the organization.

- V. *Creating new knowledge*
 - V-1 Identify and formulate a question or series of questions about some economic issue that will facilitate investigation of the issue;
 - V-2 Prepare a 5-page proposal for a research project;
 - V-3 Complete a research study whose results are contained in a polished 20-page paper.

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Undergraduate Program Assessment: Phase 2a

Table 1: Planning for Learning and Assessment: Economics Undergraduate Program

1. What general outcomes are you seeking?	2. How would you know it (the outcome) if you saw it? (What will the student know or be able to do?)	3. How will you help the students learn it? (in class or out of class?)	4. How could you measure each of the desired behaviors listed in #2?
<p>When a student has completed the undergraduate major in economics, we expect that he/she will be able to do the following:</p>	<p>We identified specific activities that correspond to each of the outcomes listed in the previous column. Ability to complete the tasks specified is evidence the student has achieved the corresponding outcome.</p>	<p>Students are expected to master a number of different tools that enable them to complete the activities listed in the previous column. Tools corresponding to each of the activities are listed below.</p>	<p>The various skills and corresponding tools identified in columns 2 and 3 have been grouped according to different course levels (see attached table 2). The expectation is that instructors will provide students with a variety of assessments, including homework, quizzes, exams and writing assignments designed to help students master the skills and tools.</p>
<p>I. Gain access to existing knowledge</p>	<p>Locate published research in economics and related fields.</p> <p>Locate information on particular topics and issues in economics.</p> <p>Search out economic data as well as information about the meaning of the data and how they are derived.</p>	<p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems</p> <p>Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage & retrieval systems</p> <p>Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage & retrieval systems</p>	<p>Ultimately, every student in the major is required to complete ECO 300, which is designed to provide the students with a capstone experience. ECO 300 is taken in conjunction with a 300-level economics elective. To receive credit, the student must prepare and present a substantial paper on an issue related to the material being covered in the 300-level elective. The student then presents his/her results to the class.</p>
<p>II. Display command of existing knowledge</p>	<p>Summarize (in a 2-minute monologue or a 300-word written statement) what is known about the current condition of the economy.</p> <p>Summarize a current controversy in the economics literature.</p> <p>State succinctly the dimensions of a current economic policy issue.</p> <p>Explain key economic concepts and describe how they can be used.</p>	<p>Economic theory Quantitative methods Written or oral communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Written communication</p>	<p>The Department Chair and Undergraduate Program Director also attend all presentations. Department faculty involved in teaching ECO 300 also meet periodically to assess the effectiveness of the capstone experience and identify opportunities for improvement.</p>

<p>III. Display ability to draw out existing knowledge</p>	<p>Write a précis of a published journal article.</p> <p>Read and interpret a theoretical analysis, including simple mathematical derivations, reported in an economics journal article.</p> <p>Read and interpret a quantitative analysis, including regression results, reported in an economics journal article.</p> <p>Show what economic concepts and principles are used in economic analyses published in articles from daily newspapers and weekly news magazines.</p>	<p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p>	
<p>IV. Utilize existing knowledge to explore issues</p>	<p>Prepare a written analysis (of say, 5 pages) of a current economic problem.</p> <p>Prepare a decision memorandum (of say, 2 pages) for a superior that recommends some action on an economic decision faced by the organization.</p>	<p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p>	
<p>V. Create new knowledge</p>	<p>Identify and formulate a question or series of questions about some economic issue that will facilitate investigation of the issue.</p> <p>Prepare a 5-page proposal for a research project.</p> <p>Complete a research study whose results are contained in a polished 20-page paper.</p>	<p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication</p> <p>Economic theory Information storage & retrieval systems Written communication Oral communication</p>	

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Undergraduate Program Assessment: Phase 2b

Table 2: Connecting Tasks and Tools to specific course levels

<i>Course Level/Activities</i>	<i>Minimum Tools</i>
100-level courses	
I-2 Locate information on particular topics and issues in economics	Information storage and retrieval
I-3 Search out economic data as well as information about the meaning of the data and how they are derived.	Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage and retrieval
II-1 Summarize (in a 2-minute monologue or a 300-word written statement) what is known about the current condition of the economy	Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage and retrieval Written communication or oral communication
II-4 State succinctly the dimensions of a current economic policy issue	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
II-5 Explain key economic concepts and describe how they can be used	Economic theory Written communication
III-3 Read and interpret a quantitative analysis, including regression results, reported in an economics journal article	Economic theory Quantitative methods Information storage and retrieval Written communication
IV-2 Prepare a decision memorandum (of say, 2 pages) for a superior that recommends some action on an economic decision faced by the organization	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
200-level courses	
I-1 Locate published research in economics and related fields	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval
II-3 Summarize a current controversy in the economics literature	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
IV-1 Prepare a written analysis (of say, 5 pages) of a current economic problem	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication

Table 2 (continued)

300-level courses	
III-1 Write a précis of a published journal article	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
III-2 Read and interpret a theoretical analysis, including simple mathematical derivations, reported in an economics journal article	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
Capstone Course	
V-1 Identify and formulate a question or series of questions about some economic issue that will facilitate investigation of the issue	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
V-2 Prepare a 5-page proposal for a research project	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication
V-3 Complete a research study whose results are contained in a polished 20-page paper	Economic theory Information storage and retrieval Written communication Oral communication

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Undergraduate Program Assessment: Phase 3

The Department of Economics will use the results of the assessment system that has been put in place in both the undergraduate and Master's programs offered by the Department to improve each program by implementing the following actions.

- 1) The extent to which faculty are working to achieve the objectives of each program is addressed, in part, through the ASPT process. To be specific, evaluation of each faculty member's performance includes an assessment of the faculty member's in-class teaching and considers such factors as establishment and attainment of the faculty member's goals, evaluation and feedback, and use of appropriate expectations and standards. Each of these items can in turn be connected to the various outcomes, activities and tools identified in stages 1 and 2 of the university inventory of student learning outcomes.
- 2) The Department has already convened a graduate curriculum committee to review the structure and content of the Master's program and identify opportunities for improvements, including possible new course offerings and the development of guidelines for redesigning courses to better achieve each program's objectives. The Department will convene a committee in the Spring, 2004 to conduct a thorough review of the undergraduate program with the same objectives as those being pursued by the graduate curriculum committee.
- 3) Faculty members involved in the capstone components of the undergraduate and Master's programs currently meet each spring to discuss the respective capstone experiences. Work has already begun working on developing a common set of materials all capstone instructors should use to enhance the consistency of the experience among students across different sections. These materials address such issues as deadlines for completing each phase of the capstone project, content guidelines for preparation of the final product, guidelines for oral presentation of the results, and a set of rubrics that can be used to assess the student's performance.
- 4) The Department currently conducts an exit survey of all graduating undergraduate majors and Masters's students. The survey focuses on student perceptions of the relevant program and an evaluation of the quality/perceived usefulness of specific courses in the program. The results of these surveys will be used to help guide the Department in identifying those elements of the program that are "working" as well as those items that need to be improved.
- 5) The Department also plans to use surveys of alumni to assess the effectiveness of each program as indicated by the career experiences of our graduates and their satisfaction with education they received at Illinois State.
- 6) The Department is going to explore the possibility of requiring each undergraduate major and each student enrolled in the Master's program to maintain a portfolio of assessment items he/she has completed in each course that can be reviewed to assess the extent to which the objectives of the program are being achieved.