



Department of Economics 2022 Assessment Report

All areas shaded in gray are to be completed by the department/program.
This document will be posted online and must be [accessible electronically](#) (including appendices).

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Economics is to teach economics, provide knowledge through research, and serve the local community and society at large. The Economics program seeks to make available to students, the public, and governments, the factual, theoretical, and critical tools in the discipline of economics. The program strives to be critical in the best sense of the word, providing insights and alternative ways of thinking about problems, from everyday personal decisions to critical global concerns. Economics training is intended to instill breadth of intellectual interest, critical habits of thought, a problem-solving attitude and facility of expression. We endeavor to develop strong analytical, mathematical, writing, logic and presentation skills in our students because those skills are critical to today's and tomorrow's careers.

DEPARTMENT ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

After listing each departmental objective, indicate which of the five [Priorities for Action](#) the objective supports. In this section, you may also briefly describe any innovative or noteworthy programs/initiatives that support the Priorities for Action.

1. Develop students' abilities to use economic concepts, models, and statistical tools in their lives and careers. (Priority 1: Student Centered, Priority 3: Mission First, People Always, and Priority 4: Partner with Place)
2. Educate students who can synthesize, accurately interpret, and appropriately analyze data. (Priority 1: Student Centered, Priority 2: Excellence and Innovation, and Priority 4: Partner with Place)
3. Prepare students to interpret and communicate economic information effectively. (Priority 1: Student Centered, Priority 3: Mission First, People Always, and Priority 4: Partner with Place)
4. Produce research that expands the frontiers of knowledge and benefits our community and society at large. (Priority 2: Excellence and Innovation, Priority 4: Partner with Place, and Priority 5: UM story)
5. Inform the public through research and outreach about important economic issues and policies. (Priority 2: Excellence and Innovation and Priority 4: Partner with Place)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Student Learning Outcomes	Exams and Quizzes	Homework Assignments and Labs	Writing Assignments
1. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of micro- and macroeconomics.	x	x	
2. Students should be able to apply appropriate economic models to real-world situations.	x	x	

Student Learning Outcomes	Exams and Quizzes	Homework Assignments and Labs	Writing Assignments
3. Students should articulate the advantages and limitations of government intervention in markets.	x		x
4. Students should be able to interpret regression analysis results.	x	x	
5. Students should demonstrate they know how to access the professional economics literature.	x		x
6. Students know how to find and interpret economic data.		x	
7. Students should express themselves in a clear and articulate way both orally and in writing.			x
8. Students should demonstrate critical thinking and logical reasoning.	x		x

RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
<p>* We defined proficiency in this section as the percentage of students who scored 70% or better on a Measurement Tool question or assignment.</p> <p>LG1: For principles of macroeconomics, batteries of questions from two different sections provide us with two measures. Proficiency ranges from 79% to 90%</p>	
<p>LG 2: We have seven measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 49% to 94%.</p>	<p>The median proficiency score for this LG is 77%. The lowest score (49%) occurred on a battery of three questions in an ECNS 202 exam that asks students to relate specific real-world policies to the models they learned in the class. Students clearly struggled doing this, so we will place a greater emphasis on real-world examples in the future.</p>
<p>LG 3: We have three measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 65% to 85%.</p> <p>LG 4: We have three measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 89% to 100%.</p>	<p>Students performed least well on a quiz in an upper-division course that tested their understanding of optimal taxation. However, this quiz is a good example of pandemic influence because it was adapted to the Zoom format. This might have decreased the</p>

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
	effectiveness of the instrument and underestimated students' proficiency.
LG 5: We have four measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 69% to 86%.	
LG 6: We have four measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 92% to 100%.	The students who select in to Economics as a major tend to have strong empirical skills and our students' performance on this learning goal and LG 4 confirm this.
LG 7: We have six measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 71% to 97%.	
LG 8: We have four measures of proficiency for this LG, which range from 60% to 93%.	Students did well on this learning goal, but a large share struggled with a question which asked them to apply course concepts in an unfamiliar context.

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

- The external reviewer for the department's recent program review concluded, "The department's efforts with respect to assessment are admirable and appear to be very significant."
- Maintain current assessment metrics and improve the mapping of courses and measurement tools to learning goals and improve the data collection process. We made some progress applying our assessment process to the General Education (GE) Rolling Review, but the GE learning objectives are sufficiently different that our efforts there were stymied. We think this assessment is heavily impacted by the pandemic, and some of the results may be idiosyncratic or specific to the modality changes we put in place temporarily. We will be interested to see how our students' proficiency changes in our next assessment cycle.
- Our students are more successful with problems that align with examples they have seen in class. They are less able to apply what they've learned to real-world examples and problems that deviate from a standard set-up, and the share of students who could not demonstrate this proficiency was somewhat surprising. We are considering ways to build our students' flexibility and critical thinking skills using multimodal approaches. Given that our classes already provide numerous opportunities for students to problem-solve using novel scenarios, we are focusing on alternative methods of building these skills. These may include incorporating more small-group discussions at the introductory level and encouraging textbook reading and/or providing additional outside reading.

APPENDICIES

1. Assessment matrix data
2. Curriculum map

Table 1 Assessment Matrix Data

Learning Goal 1	Learning Goal 2	Learning Goal 3	Learning Goal 4	Learning Goal 5	Learning Goal 6	Learning Goal 7	Learning Goal 8
Students should demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of micro-and macroeconomics.	Students should be able to apply appropriate economic models to real-world situations.	Students should articulate the advantages and limitations of government intervention in markets.	Students should be able to interpret regression analysis results.	Students should demonstrate they know how to access the professional economics literature.	Students should demonstrate they know how to find and interpret economic data.	Students should express themselves in a clear and articulate way both orally and in writing.	Students should demonstrate critical thinking and logical reasoning.
ECNS 202, Fall 2020: 5 questions similar to 4 of the old Assessment questions: 85.3% correct	ECNS 202, Fall 2020: 3 questions about real-world situations: 49.3% correct	ECNS 433, Fall 2020, Policy Memo, 85% of students demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 403, Fall 2020, Final Exam, 91% of students demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 451, Fall 2020, Literature Review: 85.7% demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 450, Spring 2022, Assignment Dev. Data, 92% of students demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 451, Fall 2020, Final Proposal: 92.9% demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 451, Fall 2020, Final Proposal: 92.9% demonstrated proficiency
ECNS 202, Spring 2021: 13 questions similar to 4 of the old Assessment questions: 92%	ECNS 202, Spring 2021: 3 questions about real-world situations: 64.2%	ECNS 320, Fall 2020, Health Care Quiz: 80% demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 403 Fall 2021, Final Exam, 89% of students demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 491 (ST: Health Economics), Fall 2021, Quizzes on journal articles: 69% proficiency	ECNS 450, Spring 2022, Assignment Poverty Data, 100% of students demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 325, Spring 2021, Writing Assignment 1, 94% demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 433, Fall 2020, Policy Memo, 85% of students demonstrated proficiency
ECNS 202, Fall 2020: Exam 2: 84% of students demonstrated proficiency on this exam.	ECNS 313, Fall 2021: Exam 2, 3 questions; combined 80% proficiency	ECNS 320, Fall 2020: Optimal Taxation Quiz, 65% demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 391 ST Math ECNS, HW 4, 100% of students demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 406 (Industrial Organization), Fall 2021, Quizzes on journal articles: 82% demonstrate proficiency	ECNS 403, Fall 2021, Homework 8, 100% demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 325, Spring 2021, Writing Assignment 2, 97% demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 391 ST Math ECNS, Spring 2022, Quiz 5, problem 6, 60% of students demonstrated proficiency.
ECNS 202, Spring 2021: Exam 3: 90% of students demonstrated proficiency on this exam.	ECNS 313: Fall 2021: Final exam, question 17: 79% proficiency			ECNS 481, Spring 2021 and 2022, On Assignment #3, 84% proficient accessing and presenting papers from academic lit	ECNS 403, Fall 2021, Lab 8, 100% demonstrated proficiency.	ECNS 450, Fall 2022, Education essay, 92% demonstrated proficiency	ECNS 391 ST Math ECNS, Spring 2022, Quiz 5, problem 7, 87% of students demonstrated proficiency.
ECNS 201, Fall 2020: 79% of students demonstrated proficiency on this exam.	ECNS 301, Fall 2020 Homework 2, 92% demonstrated proficiency.					ECNS 481, Spring 2021 and 2022, 84% demonstrated proficiency with an oral presentation on Assignment #3 and 71% proficient on final Assignment #9 written paper.	
ECNS 201, Fall 2021: Exam 1: 80% of students demonstrated proficiency on this exam.	ECNS 301, Fall 2020 Final Exam Question 1, 77% demonstrated proficiency.						

Table 2 Curriculum Map

	Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of micro- and macroeconomics	Apply appropriate economic models to real world situations	Articulate the advantages and limitations of government intervention in markets	Interpret regression analysis results	Know how to access the professional economics literature	Know how to find and interpret economic data	Express themselves in a clear and articulate way both orally and in writing	Critical thinking and logical reasoning
Principles of Microeconomics (ECNS 201)	I,A	I,A	I			I		I,D
Principles of Macroeconomics (ECNS 202)	I,A	I,A	I			I		I,D
Intermediate Microeconomics (ECNS 301)	D	D,A	D		I	D	I	D
Intermediate Macroeconomics (ECNS 302)	D	D	D		I	D	I	D
Electives (6 Required)	D	D,A	D,M,A	I,D,A	D,A	D,A	D,A	M,A
Econometrics (ECNS 403)		M		I,D,M,A		M,A	D	M
Capstone class (ECNS 481)	D	D		D	M, A	D	M,A	D

Key: "I"=Introduced; "D"= developed/reinforced, with opportunities to practice; "M"=mastery that is demonstrated (often at the senior or exit level); "A"=assessment evidence collected