The USC Department of Economics Masters in Economics Degrees

The University of Southern California (USC) Economics Department is a vibrant intellectual community located in one of the world’s greatest cities.

USC Economics offers a rigorous graduate education taught by world-class faculty who are experts in areas such as behavioral economics, macroeconomics and finance, and environmental economics, among many others. Meanwhile, the unique analytical strengths of the USC Economics graduate student body allow the faculty to offer a rigorous and comprehensive program unlike that of any other U.S. college or university.

The University of Southern California is a globally renowned institution that is perennially ranked among the top research universities in the world. The Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Education ranked USC 17th among more than 1,000 public and private universities in 2018.

Degree Programs

The USC Department of Economics offers three distinct master’s degrees:

- The Master of Arts in Economics
- The Master of Science in Spatial Economics and Data Analysis
- The Master of Arts in Economic Development

To allow for even more individual freedom within the course of study, our MS in Economics students may also obtain optional certificates in the following areas of study:

- Graduate Certificate in Antitrust Economics
- Graduate Certificate in Market Design
- Graduate Certificate in Applied Econometrics
- Graduate Certificate in Behavioral and Experimental Economics
- Graduate Certificate in Financial Economics

These graduate certificates, each with their own required course of study, allow our students to further differentiate their skills to employers in the industries they wish to enter. For some exceptional masters students who are interested in pursuing a doctoral education and/or careers within academia, there are also opportunities to work as Research Assistants in the Behavioral and Experimental Economics Lab at USC.

The MA in Economics is a STEM-designated program.
The MA in Economics

Our core MA Degree in economics focuses on teaching our students microeconomics, econometrics, and macroeconomics. Students use these skills to work on real world economic problems. Our degree fosters skill development that allows our students to have the freedom to enter several different careers including; pursuing a PHD in economics, economic consulting, Big Data econometrics analysis, and policy work.

The MS in Spatial Economics and Data Science

In fall 2018, the USC Economics Department and the USC Spatial Sciences Institute launched a new MS in Spatial Economics and Data Science. This new Master’s degree trains students in microeconomics, real estate economics, and statistics while simultaneously teaching students how to use spatial data techniques to map data and to observe and explain spatial data patterns.

This degree is intended for students who seek to enter the real estate sector and to work with "Big Data" that has a spatial dimension. For more information see https://spatial.usc.edu/m-s-in-spatial-economics-and-data-analysis/

Career Placement

USC Economics Master’s students are extremely competitive in the private sector job market due to our programs’ twin focus on technical and communication skills. We work with students who seek to obtain private sector jobs by providing career and professional development workshops as well as one-on-one counseling to prepare job applications. The Department also fosters networking opportunities with industry thought leaders to provide our Master’s students with exposure to current industry trends, as well as opportunities to learn directly from experts.

Our Master’s alumni currently hold positions at the World Bank, the U.S. Federal Reserve Board of Governors, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Caesars Casino in Las Vegas, City of Beverly Hills, Cornerstone Research, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Cloudreach, Wells Fargo Bank, CIT Real Estate Finance, as well as international hedge funds and research think tanks in Asia. Alumni from our MA Program have also been accepted into PhD Programs at Washington State University, Texas A&M University, University of Iowa, University of Oregon, Georgia State University, Drexel University, Syracuse University, Queen’s University (Canada), and the University of Southern California.

As part of a USC-wide initiative on building communication skills, the Department also offers a course for students to hone their research, writing, and presentation abilities. The Department’s web site provides up-to-date information on department courses and seminars. For more information, please visit https://dornsife.usc.edu/econ/.

The faculty of the USC Economics Department is committed to innovation in the Master’s Program curriculum. New courses are constantly being developed to bring insights from current research in
emerging fields. Recent innovations include courses on big data, environmental and urban economics, and the introduction of classes that teach software skills like R and Python.

The Economics Department also has close relationships with other departments across campus—particularly with the Marshall School of Business and the Price School of Public Policy. These partnerships add to the range of elective courses that are available for our students to take part in, and provide networking and social opportunities across disciplines.

Banks and financial firms often hire graduates from the Department of Economics who have taken advantage of Marshall’s finance curriculum, whereas our students’ work with the School of Public Policy opens doors to opportunities in fields such as transportation, health care, urban planning, and education.

**Extracurricular and Social Engagement**

The Economics Graduate Student Association (EGSA) provides an informal forum for students to meet and explore various topics of mutual interest with faculty. Sponsored by the Department, the EGSA is run by and for Economics Master’s students to address issues such as career planning and current topics in economic policy. Students and faculty also enjoy the relaxed interactions that the EGSA provides.

Meanwhile, across the university, there are ample opportunities for social engagement, from football games to special interest clubs and informal student associations. The USC alumni network, aptly nicknamed, “The Trojan Family,” is widely recognized as among the world’s strongest.

For those looking to explore more of what Los Angeles has to offer, the USC campus, located in the heart of L.A.’s Downtown Arts and Education Corridor, is a short metro ride from attractions such as the Staples Center, Chinatown, the technology-focused Campus at Playa Vista, and the beach. For a virtual tour of the USC campus, visit [https://visit.usc.edu/](https://visit.usc.edu/)

**Applications**

All applicants must apply through the USC online application system located at [http://gradadm.usc.edu](http://gradadm.usc.edu)

The online application requires:

1. **Statement of purpose.** This is typically two pages in length, double-spaced, about your interest in Economics.

2. **GRE scores.** We accept GRE scores that are no more than 5 years old. We like to see applicants with at least 150 on the verbal section and 151 on the quantitative section. Our ETS department code is 1801 and USC (school code) is 4852.
3. **Transcripts.** USC must receive sealed and official transcripts from all universities you have attended. Transcripts must be sent directly to USC Graduate Admissions, not to the Department of Economics. International applicants must send both original language and English language transcripts.

4. **Three Letters of Recommendation.** It is recommended to have at least two of the letters from academic references.

5. **English Proficiency Requirements.** We accept both the TOEFL and IELTS examinations. Students must receive at least a composite score of 7 on the IELTS and 90 on the TOEFL.

If you have questions about the application, please email Mr. Alexander Karnazes at karnazes@usc.edu