

ACADEMIC PREPARATION AFTER YOU DECLARE THE MAJOR

Once you declare Economics as your major, here are some important issues that you should consider as soon as possible:

If you have a GPA of at least 3.0, you should consider applying for the Honors Program. Please visit www.honors.hawaii.edu for more information.

Think about your plans after graduation. Are you entering the job market? What type of job are you interested in? Are you thinking about graduate school? What type of graduate degree are you going to pursue?

Unfortunately, many students do not think about these issues early enough. Your future plans should guide you as you chose your course work. While getting good grades, convenient class times, and taking fun courses are important, your post graduation plans should play a central role in your course selection.

For example, if you would like to work in the financial services sector after graduation, you may wish to take Econ 340, Econ 440, Econ 461, Econ 450 and/or Econ 452 as part of your curriculum. If you are interested in working in International Business, you may wish to take Econ 362, Econ 410, Econ 460, Econ 461 and/or one or more of the regional Economics courses such as Econ 317, Econ 416 or Econ 415. Also, once you know your areas of interest, the Undergraduate Economics Advisor and your mentor should be able to help you choose the Economics courses you need to achieve your goals.

The same reasoning should be used in choosing your courses outside of Economics. To be competitive in the job market you are interested in, you may require specific skills. How are your math skills? How are your communication skills? How are your writing skills? How are your computer skills? If your mathematics is your weakness, make sure you strengthen it before you graduate by taking more math courses. If communication is your weakness, make sure you know how to communicate by taking speech and communication courses before you graduate.

If you are going to graduate school, do some advance research and find out what kind of courses you should be taking the next two years so that you are fully prepared for graduate work. If you are interested in an MA or PhD in Economics, please visit <http://www.economics.hawaii.edu/programs/preparation.htm> for information on how to prepare yourself for grad school. You may want to talk to faculty members and graduate students in the areas that you are interested in to get a feel for what life in graduate school may be like.

After you declare your major, you should go to Career Services in QLCSS 212. Career Services offer various services that will help you prepare for life after graduation. How should you choose your career? Career Services have counselors and books in their library that will help you find the right career. Do you have a resume? If not, they have workshops on how to write resumes and cover letters. If you do have a resume, the

counselors will critique it for you. Do you want to prepare for job interviews? They offer interview workshops, too. Do you need a place to store recommendation letters for jobs and graduate schools? No problem, they offer that service, too. Do you need a list of internships? They have a library full of such information. So do visit Career Services soon, not just right before you graduate. For more information visit www.hawaii.edu/career/index.htm.

Consider doing an internships and taking part-time jobs that give you good experience. While it is true that many students must work to finance their education, it is also imperative that you get good experience even if it means sacrificing some income. Even though they may not pay you a salary, a great internship at Merrill Lynch may be a much better long-term investment than working in a restaurant. To earn academic credit for your internship, register for Econ 390 (Internship) and/or Econ 391 (Co-op Education). For more information visit www.economics.hawaii.edu/programs/internships.htm.

The Econ Club is another great way to gain experience working on economics-related projects. Let the Undergrad Econ Advisor know if you're interested in joining and he will put you in touch with the Club. Economics also supports membership to Omicron Delta Epsilon, an International Economics Honors Society, for top students in Economics. Please ask the Undergrad Econ Advisor for more details. The more involved you are in these types activities, the more experience you gain, and the better your resume will look.

During your senior year take advantage of the expertise of the counselors at career services. They will help you decide who to send your resumes to. Keep in mind that many of the best positions may be filled quickly, so don't wait to look for jobs until after graduation. Ideally, you should have an offer in hand before you graduate.

If you are planning to go to graduate school, you should also be checking out the deadlines for applications, the tests that various schools require and any other requirements that a particular school may have, such as the number of recommendation letters, etc. You may even consider visiting the schools you are really interested in, to confirm whether those schools really fit your needs.

The worst-case scenario would be to not get into grad school and not have prepared for the job market so that you will be behind everyone else in terms of preparation. Therefore, the old adage of "Prepare for the worst and hope for the best" applies here and while it will involve extra work, diversifying your risk by preparing for both will be well-worth the trouble.