Learning outcomes
The Master’s programme in Economics is an academic programme that equips students with the essential tools of economics at an advanced level, and teaches them how to apply these principles to important, real-life policy tasks. The programme focuses on social issues and policy orientation and aims to turn students into economic generalists, while offering them the possibility to become specialists in well-defined focus areas (specializations). The programme aims at developing and testing students’ economic intuition and analytical skills, emphasizing policy orientation and empirical applicability.

The programme has formulated three main objectives, which are:

- To increase students’ generalist and specialist knowledge and understanding of economic theories, tools and academic competences, commensurate with the academic standards of and professional requirements for an internationally recognized and highly reputable master’s degree.
- To produce graduates who can identify the economic dimensions of current policy issues.
- To transfer the required problem-solving skills so that graduates can successfully address future questions through independent economic research.

The programme offers several specializations. In order for all specializations to meet the objectives described above, a set of common learning outcomes was formulated:

DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE
Students will know the main defining principles, methodological cornerstones and tools in modern advanced microeconomics and macroeconomics, and possess applicable knowledge of core empirical methods and their statistical foundations. Graduates will be aware of the normative aspects of economics as a discipline and the discipline’s relation to other social sciences, humanities and arts.

CRITICAL READERSHIP
Students are trained to read and understand important contributions to the literature of general economic analysis and of selected subfields and will have become critical readers.

ANALYTICAL AND QUANTITATIVE SKILLS
Students will possess and develop analytical skills that will help them apply appropriate mathematical and empirical modelling tools. They will know how to translate economic hypotheses into statistical hypotheses and know how to apply statistical testing methodology. Graduates are able to analyse and substantially interpret empirical economic data and will be capable of drawing policy conclusions where appropriate.

SOCIETAL AND CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE
Graduates have a feel for how their skills and tools can be applied to finding answers to pertinent social, societal and economic problems. Students will have developed a critical attitude to the relevance and shortcomings of empirical data compared to
theoretical requirements and will be aware of potential limitations to the insights that can be gained from theoretical reasoning alone when addressing real-life issues.

PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE Students will possess the skill of self-reflection, allowing them to independently identify and fill in any gaps in the knowledge they need to answer specific research questions and to acquire the use of new tools where necessary and appropriate to foray into unknown territory.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS Graduates will be able to identify relevant economic issues, formulate appropriate research questions and implement a plan for answering their question. Graduates will be able to work both independently and with others in teams, and will be able to present their findings to both expert and non-expert audiences.

Teaching
Tuition is carried out in plenary lectures and small groups. Much attention is paid to an active method of studying. This includes writing study papers, working out cases and preparing practical assignments. In this way students become familiar with the application of advanced theory to practical work. It also serves to integrate the theory studied in the individual courses into a comprehensive body of knowledge. Papers are written both individually and in groups of two or three students, thus furthering the students' ability to work in teams.

Much time is also devoted to presentation and discussion of one's work to fellow-students and staff and group discussion of e.g. research papers. The small-scale tuition environment provides an excellent opportunity for guidance and feedback by staff and other students. Apart from developing the student's communicative skills in oral and written presentation, much attention is paid to the development of critical judgement in assessing research work of others.

Enrolment for courses and exams
See VUnet for more information about course enrolment