

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, BS

Agricultural business management (ABM) majors learn to apply the fundamentals of business to agriculture and related industries. Students study business operations, finance and economic decision analysis, analytical and managerial tools, organization of the food system, and commodity markets.

Offered through the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, ABM coursework includes agribusiness, economics, statistics, accounting, finance, and management. Majors can take some courses through the School of Business, including business law, fundamentals of accounting and finance, and fundamentals of management. ABM majors learn managerial economics, how businesses make decisions and minimize risk, and how to use applied mathematics and statistics to analyze prices and markets.

The agribusiness industry – which encompasses enterprises related to farming and the bio-economy – needs staff who are educated in both business and agriculture. The ABM major prepares students for great careers in management, business analysis, marketing, commodities trading, sales, consulting, banking, and finance. In addition to agribusiness firms, ABM graduates find employment with food companies, tech companies, co-operatives, government agencies, and financial institutions.

LEARN THROUGH HANDS-ON, REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

Students are encouraged to apply their course learning to real life through research projects, independent studies, and internships with guidance from faculty and staff members. During their final year, majors complete a senior capstone course where they work closely with fellow students on a semester-long project and also hear from program alumni.

BUILD COMMUNITY AND NETWORKS

Students get to know faculty and instructors through the courses they take, and they can build their networks by participating in student organizations and the department's commodity trading challenge team.

Individuals selected for the Renk Scholarship Program (<https://renk.aae.wisc.edu/renk-scholarship/>), operated by the Renk Agribusiness Institute (<https://renk.aae.wisc.edu/>), receive mentorship and financial support, as well as internship and networking opportunities.

CUSTOMIZE A PATH OF STUDY

Core courses focus on macroeconomics, microeconomics, finance, accounting, commodity markets, and economic analysis, planning, and management. ABM students customize their academic experience to fit their career goals by completing additional coursework in finance, accounting, management, marketing, business law, and human resources.

MAKE A STRONG START

A number of first-year seminar courses are available to help new students understand academic programs, access student services, and develop time management and study skills.

GAIN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

There are several internationally focused courses that ABM majors can take within the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Some students choose to study abroad, working with their advisor and the CALS study abroad office to identify appropriate programs. Students can explore studying abroad as an ABM major utilizing the Agricultural Business Management Major Advising Page. Students work with their advisor and the CALS study abroad office to identify appropriate programs.

HOW TO GET IN

HOW TO GET IN

Requirements	Details
How to get in	No application required. All students who meet the requirements listed below are eligible to declare. For information on how to declare, visit Advising & Careers.
Courses required to get in	None
GPA requirements to get in	None
Credits required to get in	Must have fewer than 86 credits.
Other	Students who do not meet the requirements above or are not in good academic standing should schedule a meeting with CALS Dean on Call (https://go.wisc.edu/g85h79) (https://go.wisc.edu/g85h79/) to discuss exceptions.

PROSPECTIVE UW-MADISON STUDENTS

All prospective UW-Madison students must apply through the Office of Admissions and Recruitment (<https://www.admissions.wisc.edu/>).

Students interested in this major should select it as the first choice major on their UW-Madison application. Admitted students who enroll at UW-Madison and attend Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) with the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences have the option to declare this major at SOAR.

Students in the Agricultural Business Management BS degree program may not declare the Certificate in Business Management for Agricultural and Life Sciences.

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students must complete both the following Core General Education (Core GenEd) and University Degree and Quality of Work requirements. The requirements below apply to students whose

first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution is Summer 2026 or later.

Students whose first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution occurred before Summer 2026 should refer to the archived Guide (<https://guide.wisc.edu/archive/>) for the requirements that apply to them.

CORE GENERAL EDUCATION (CORE GENED) REQUIREMENTS

Civics & Perspectives 3 credits of Civics & Perspectives coursework.

Communication & Literacy 6 credits of Communication & Literacy coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement/>)

Humanities & Arts 6 credits of Humanities & Arts coursework.

Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning 6 credits of Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement/>)

Natural Science & Wellness Complete both:

- 6 credits of Natural Science & Wellness or Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.
- one course must be in Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.

Social & Behavioral Science 3 credits of Social & Behavioral Science coursework.

Total Credits 30 credits.

For more information see the policy (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1095/>).

UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND QUALITY OF WORK REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate degree recipients must complete the following minimum requirements. Requirements for some programs will exceed these requirements; see program requirements for additional information.

Total Degree 120 degree credits.

Residency Complete 30 credits in residence. A course is considered "in residence" if it is taken when in undergraduate degree-seeking status and:

- is offered by UW-Madison and completed on the UW-Madison campus or at an approved off-site location, or
- is offered by UW-Madison in an online or distance format, or is completed during participation in a UW-Madison study abroad/study away program.

Quality of Work Achieve at least the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, and/or academic program.

Math Demonstrate minimal mathematics competence by:

- placing above MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing a more advanced mathematics course such as MATH#160;112, MATH#160;113, MATH#160;114, MATH#160;141, MATH#160;211, or MATH#160;221.

English Language If required to take the UW-Madison English as a Second Language Assessment Test (MSN-ESLAT), demonstrate minimal English language competence by:

- earning credit for ESL#160;118, or
- achieving a qualifying MSN-ESLAT placement test score.

Language Complete one:

- 2 high school units of a single language other than English, or
- one course with the second semester Language designation.

Major Declaration Declare and complete the requirements for at least one major.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES REQUIREMENTS

CALS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Cumulative Credits

- Students must earn 120 degree credits.
- Students declared in Biological Systems Engineering BS must earn 125 degree credits.

Quality of Work Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.000 to remain in good standing and be eligible for graduation.

Residency Students must complete 30 degree credits in residence at UW-Madison after earning 86 credits toward their undergraduate degree.

In addition to the university's general requirements, all undergraduate students in CALS must satisfy a set of college and major requirements. Courses may not double count within university requirements, CALS college requirements, or major requirements. A course may count toward university requirements and a college and/or a major requirement; similarly, a course counted toward college requirements may also be used to satisfy a university and/or a major requirement.

CALS COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

CALS First-Year Seminar 1 credit. See the full list of eligible courses below or use this link: <https://go.wisc.edu/calsfirstyearseminars> (<https://go.wisc.edu/calsfirstyearseminars/>)

Ethnic Studies 3 credits with the Ethnic Studies designation.

Communication Complete either:

- 1 course with the Communication A designation, or
- satisfaction of Communication A based on UW Placement Test.

Quantitative Reasoning A	Complete either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 course with the Quantitative Reasoning A designation, or • satisfaction of Quantitative Reasoning A based on UW Placement Test.
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Introductory Chemistry	Complete one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHEM#160;103 • CHEM#160;108 • CHEM#160;109
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CALS International Comparisons	3 credits. See the full list of eligible courses below or use this link: https://go.wisc.edu/calsinternationalcomparisons/ (https://go.wisc.edu/calsinternationalcomparisons/)
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Communication B	1 course with the Communication B designation.
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Quantitative Reasoning B	1 course with the Quantitative Reasoning B designation.
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Biological Science	5 credits with the Biological Science designation.
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Additional Science	3 credits with the Biological, Physical, or Natural Science designations.
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Science Breadth	3 credits with the Biological, Physical, Natural, or Social Science designations.
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Humanities	6 credits with the Humanities or Literature designation.
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Social Sciences	3 credits with the Social Sciences designation.
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Capstone Learning Experience	Each major articulates the required capstone learning experience.
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CALS First-Year Seminars

Code	Title	Credits
AN SCI 135	Grand Challenges and Career Opportunities in Animal and Dairy Sciences	1
BIOCHEM 100	Biochemistry First-Year Seminar	1
COUN PSY 125	The Wisconsin Experience Seminar	1
F&W ECOL 101	Orientation to Wildlife Ecology	1
F&W ECOL 105	Environment, Pollutants, and You	3
GENETICS 155	Freshman Seminar in Genetics	1
INTEGSCI 100	Exploring Biology	2
INTEGSCI 140	Exploring Service in STEM	1
INTER-AG 155	Issues in Agriculture, Environment, and Life Sciences	1
LSC 155	First-Year Seminar in Science Communication	1
MICROBIO 150	Microbiomes and Microbiology - First-Year Seminar	1
PLANTSCI/AGROECOL 100	First-Year Seminar in Agroecology and Plant Science	1
PL PATH 155	Food Frontlines: Security, Sustainability, and Survival	1
SOIL SCI 155	First-year Seminar in Soil and Environmental Sciences	1

Learning Community/Student Group Courses

The following learning community/student group courses are approved as CALS First-Year Seminars.

COUN PSY 117	PEOPLE First Year Seminar	1
INTEGSCI 110	BioHouse Seminar: Biology for the 21st Century	1
INTER-AG 117	GreenHouse Roots Seminar	1
INTER-AG 140	CALS QuickStart: Foundations	1
INTER-AG 175	WISE Seminar	1

CALS International Comparisons

Code	Title	Credits
The 3 credit requirement may be fulfilled as either a stand-alone 3 credit course or as a set of courses as listed below.		
A A E/ENVIR ST 244	The Environment and the Global Economy	4
A A E 319	The International Agricultural Economy	3
A A E/NUTR SCI 350	World Hunger and Malnutrition	3
A A E 352	Global Health: Economics, Natural Systems, and Policy (approved for enrollments Summer 2021 and later)	4
A A E/INTL ST 373	Globalization, Poverty and Development	3
A A E/INTL ST 374	The Growth and Development of Nations in the Global Economy	3
A A E/ECON 473	Economic Growth and Development in Southeast Asia	3
A A E/ECON 474	Economic Problems of Developing Areas	3
A A E/ECON/INTL BUS 462	Latin American Economic Development	3
A A E/ECON 477	Agricultural and Economic Development in Africa	3
AGROECOL 377	Global Food Production and Health	3
AN SCI/DY SCI 370	Livestock Production and Health in Agricultural Development	3
ASIAN/HISTORY/POLI SCI 255	Introduction to East Asian Civilizations (approved for enrollments Summer 2021 and later)	3-4
C&E SOC/SOC 341	Labor in Global Food Systems (approved for enrollments Summer 2020 and later)	3
C&E SOC/ENVIR ST/SOC 540	Sociology of International Development, Environment, and Sustainability	3
CSCS 500	Global Health and Communities: From Research to Praxis	3
DY SCI 471	Food Production Systems and Sustainability	3
ENTOM/ENVIR ST 201	Insects and Human Culture-a Survey Course in Entomology	3
ENTOM/ENVIR ST 205	Our Planet, Our Health (approved for enrollments Fall 2026 and later)	3
ENTOM/ZOOLOGY 371	Medical Entomology: Biology of Vector and Vector-borne Diseases	3

F&W ECOL/ ENVIR ST 100	Forests of the World (approved for enrollments Summer 2020 and later)	3
F&W ECOL/ ENVIR ST/ ZOOLOGY 360	Extinction of Species	3
LSC 251	Science, Media and Society (approved for enrollments Summer 2020 and later)	3
PL PATH/ BOTANY 123	Plants, Parasites, and People	3
PL PATH 311	Global Food Security	3
PLANTSCI 370	World Vegetable Crops	3
The following study abroad courses fulfill the CALS International Comparisons requirement. Only the specific course numbers and titles listed, including Topics titles (in parentheses), are approved to meet the CALS International Comparisons requirement.		
BIOCHEM 307	Study Abroad: Introduction to Biological Sciences Research in Japan (approved for enrollments Fall 2026 and later)	3
NUTR SCI/INTER-AG 421	Global Health Field Experience (UW Mobile Clinics and Health Care in Uganda)	3
INTER-AG 321 & INTER-AG/ NUTR SCI 421	Study Abroad Pre-Departure Seminar and Global Health Field Experience (UW Global Health Community Health and Asset-Based Community Development in Sri Lanka)	3
INTER-AG 321 & INTER-AG/ NUTR SCI 421	Study Abroad Pre-Departure Seminar and Global Health Field Experience (UW Agriculture, Health and Nutrition in Uganda)	3
INTER-AG/ NUTR SCI 421	Global Health Field Experience (UW Health, Education and Tanzanian Culture)	3

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Code	Title	Credits
Mathematics and Statistics		
Complete one of the following:		5-10
MATH 221	Calculus and Analytic Geometry 1	
MATH 211 & MATH 213	Survey of Calculus 1 and Survey of Calculus 2	
MATH 211 & ECON 205	Survey of Calculus 1 and Quantitative Tools for Economics	
Complete one of the following:		3-4
ECON 310	Statistics: Measurement in Economics	
STAT 301	Introduction to Statistical Methods	
STAT 324	Introduction to Statistics for Science and Engineering	

STAT 371	Introductory Applied Statistics for the Life Sciences	
GEN BUS 306 & GEN BUS 307	Business Analytics I and Business Analytics II	
SOC/ C&E SOC 360	Statistics for Sociologists I	
PSYCH 210	Basic Statistics for Psychology	
Core		
A A E 101	Introduction to Agricultural and Applied Economics	4
or ECON 101	Principles of Microeconomics	
ECON 102	Principles of Macroeconomics	3-4
ECON 301	Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	4
or ECON 311	Intermediate Microeconomic Theory - Advanced Treatment	
A A E 267	Career Development for AAE & ABM Majors	1
A A E 320	Agricultural Systems Management	3
A A E 335	Introduction to Data Analysis using Spreadsheets	2
A A E 322	Commodity Markets	4
A A E 419	Agricultural Finance	3
A A E/ECON 421	Economic Decision Analysis	4
A A E 422	Food Systems and Supply Chains	3
Complete three of the following courses for at least 9 credits. A maximum of 3 credits of A A E 399 can count toward this requirement.		9
A A E 319	The International Agricultural Economy	
A A E 323	Cooperatives and Alternative Forms of Enterprise Ownership	
A A E 399	Coordinative Internship/ Cooperative Education	
A A E/M H R 540	Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Technology	
ECON/FINANCE 300	Introduction to Finance	
ECON 302	Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory	
GEN BUS 301	Business Law	
GEN BUS 310	Fundamentals of Accounting and Finance for Non-Business Majors	
GEN BUS 311	Fundamentals of Management and Marketing for Non-Business Majors	
MARKETNG 300	Marketing Management	
M H R 300	Managing Organizations	
M H R 305	Human Resource Management	
ACCT I S 100	Introductory Financial Accounting	
ACCT I S 211	Introductory Managerial Accounting	
ACCT I S 300	Accounting Principles	
Capstone		
A A E 500	Senior Capstone Experience	3
Total Credits		51-58

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Evaluate how insights from economics can support effective decision-making in businesses, communities, and societies.
2. Apply economic concepts and methods to real world situations in agricultural business management.
3. Analyze, interpret, and effectively summarize quantitative data.
4. Employ economic models and mathematical techniques to structure and solve questions of resource allocation.
5. Describe the structure of the agricultural business sector and how it functions.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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This sample four-year plan is a tool to assist students and their advisors.

Students should use their DARS report, the degree planner, Guide requirements, and the course search & enroll tools to make their own four-year plan based on their placement scores, credit for transferred courses and approved examinations, and individual interests.

Note: Students must complete MATH 213, or MATH 221 or ECON 205. Students may satisfy the required level of math proficiency through the math placement exam. On the other hand, this level of competence may require as many as three or four semesters of coursework in mathematics, depending on where students begin their course sequence.

Students must complete at least 120 total credits to be eligible for graduation.

SAMPLE AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FOUR-YEAR PLAN

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
General Education	3 A A E 101	4
MATH 114 or 211	4-5 MATH 221 or 213	3-5
CALS First Year Seminar	1 General Education	3
CALS Biological Science Requirement	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	14-15	13-15

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ECON 102	3-4 ECON 301	4
ECON 310, STAT 301, or STAT 371	3-4 A A E 322	4
A A E 267	1 CALS Biological Science	3
A A E 320	3 Major Elective Requirement	3
General Education	3	
Elective	3	
	16-18	14

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
A A E 335	2 A A E 419	3
A A E 422	3 CHEM 108	5
General Education	3 General Education	3-4
Elective	7 Elective	3
	15	14-15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
A A E/ECON 421	4 A A E 500	3
CALS International Comparisons	3 Major Elective Requirement	3
Major Elective Requirement	3 Electives	9
Electives	6	
	16	15

Total Credits 117-123

ADVISING AND CAREERS

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ADVISING

Each agricultural business management major receives one-on-one guidance from an academic advisor. The advisor helps students plan their coursework and identify opportunities to get involved in department and campus activities.

The agricultural and applied economics department offers a course in career development for majors. Students in the course hear from department alumni and others about their career paths and receive resume writing assistance and interviewing tips.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Agricultural business management graduates have great careers in management, business analysis, marketing, commodities trading, sales, consulting, banking, and finance. They find positions with agribusiness firms, food companies, tech companies, co-operatives, government agencies, and financial institutions.

Graduates are recognized for their skills in management, leadership, public speaking, sales, marketing, social media, customer service, strategic planning, risk analysis, business process management, and management accounting.

Visit aae.wisc.edu/undergrad/advising (<https://aae.wisc.edu/undergrad/advising/>) for detailed advising information.

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

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STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are numerous campus student organizations of interest to agricultural business management majors, including Alpha Gamma Rho, Association of Women in Agriculture, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and National Agri-Marketing Association. A full list of organizations is available

on the Wisconsin Involvement Network website (<https://win.wisc.edu/organizations/>).

COMPETITIVE TEAMS

Students can join the UW–Madison team that participates in the annual CME Group University Trading Challenge (<https://www.cmegroup.com/events/university-trading-challenge.html>). This simulated trading competition pits hundreds of college teams from around the world against one another as they make real-time commodity trading decisions.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Students are able to gain social science research experience on both domestic and international topics by working with a faculty member on a specific project.

INTERNSHIPS

Agricultural business management majors are encouraged to complete an internship during their undergraduate years, and they typically do so during the summer after their sophomore or junior years. Internships allow students to explore career options, gain professional skills, and develop their networks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

Students have numerous volunteer activities to choose from. The Morgridge Center for Public Service (<https://morgridge.wisc.edu/>) provides resources to help students connect with volunteer opportunities based on their interests and goals.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

ABM majors can choose to study abroad. Students work with their advisor and the CALS study abroad office to identify appropriate programs. More information is available on the CALS study abroad advising page (<https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/undergraduate-students/international-programs/study-abroad-advising/>).

RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

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Students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) receive more than \$1.25 million in scholarships annually. The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics awards an average of \$60,000 in scholarships per year to students in the department. Students apply for CALS and department scholarships through a single application in the Wisconsin Scholarship Hub (WiSH). Learn more about college scholarships (<https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/undergraduate-students/financing-your-education/cals-scholarships/>).

ABM majors are also eligible to apply for the Renk Scholarship Program (<https://renk.aae.wisc.edu/renk-scholarship/>), which can provide scholarships for up to three years. The program, offered through the Renk Agribusiness Institute (<https://renk.aae.wisc.edu/>), is designed for high-performing students with an interest in agriculture or agribusiness. In addition to financial support, Renk Scholars are provided networking opportunities that help them find internships and other experiences to build their business and leadership skills.