

Principles of Health Economics

Facilitators

Swiss Society of Health Economics (sggö)

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Advisory and teaching board

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Description

Important questions have received even more attention during recent health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic: How can we make sure that patients get the care they need while not paying more than society can afford? How can we make sure that health care access is equitable? And, how can we encourage health behaviour change, such as motivating people to vaccinate? Health economists study such and other key questions in public health.

Health economists investigate where waste occurs in the health care system, how health insurance companies act, what drives individual health behaviours, inequality in healthcare outcomes and utilization, and how governments should regulate healthcare markets to set the right incentives. The toolkit employed by health economists consists of formal theoretical models used to understand firm healthcare provider, health insurer, patient, and government behaviour as well as rigorous empirical

methods honed to identify causal effects in observational data and measure the value of health interventions and policies.

The course is open to all PhD student interested in in getting a first overview of health economics. The course offers a broad introduction to topics at the heart of health economics.

The 5 days course will consist of three main parts: The first part (3 days) offers an introduction to the nuts and bolts of economics and health economics. It familiarizes students with economic models of healthcare provision, health insurance, government, and patient behaviour, methods of cost-effectiveness analysis, and key empirical methods used. Across these topics, there will be an emphasis on practically relevant applications and on the interplay between these actors. In the second part (2 days), the course details concrete research applications and offers additional insights into the toolbox of health economists, among others, by offering a glance at topics such as 'inequality in health and healthcare provision', 'field experiments in global health', and 'machine learning'. The content of this part is based on current faculty research and new developments in health economics. A research afternoon during which faculty and postdocs present ongoing projects in health economics concludes the course.

Professors from across Switzerland will teach modules based on their topic expertise and present their current research in the workshop. The lecturers are leading researchers in various subfields of health economics (for instance, policy evaluation, insurance choice, health care financing, cost-effectiveness analysis, and health behaviour). They will each give an introduction on the topics selected as well as present ongoing research. For students, this is a unique opportunity to get an introduction to a range of health economics topics, each taught by an expert in each particular subfield.

The course gives participants an overview of the topics economists study and of how they approach key problems in the healthcare sector, healthcare regulation, and policy evaluation. It will therefore cover the core topics of health economics in an accessible way.

Students who would like to go more in-depth on specific methods and topics can access sggö's doctoral courses in health economics and policy (<https://sggöe.ch/curriculum.html>).

Objectives

After the course participants will have a solid basic understanding of:

- Key theoretical and empirical approaches of health economics as well as policy and health technology assessment.
- Economic intuition and theory which helps students understand physician and patient behaviour, the organization of health insurance and hospital markets, and government policy related to healthcare provision and financing.
- Empirical strategies used by economists (econometrics, causal inference, machine learning, experiments, etc.), as well as health technology assessment (cost-effectiveness analysis, decision-analytic modelling, etc.).
- How to judge and constructively criticize empirical evidence in economics and related fields.
- The topics researchers currently work on in the field of health economics.

Dates

8 – 12 September 2025

Eligibility

SSPH+ IGC students, Public Health PhD students, Medical Sciences PhD students, PhD students in social science (economics, psychology, sociology etc.), Medical Doctors, Postdocs or Professors interested in an introduction to health economics.

Course Structure

Day 1: Key Topics in Health Economics I – demand for health and health care

Day 2: Key Topics in Health Economics II – supply of health care

Day 3: Economic evaluation/Health Technology Assessment

Day 4: Health Economics Frontier –advanced topics

Day 5: Health Economics Frontier –advanced topics

Details will follow soon on each topic covered.

Assessment

Proactive student attendance. Essay.

Credits

2 ECTS

Preliminary Work: 10 h; Contact time: 30 h; Essay 15h

(1 ECTS corresponds to appr. 25-30 hours workload)

Location

University of Basel, Faculty of Business and Economics

Course Fees

	2 ECTS
SSPH+ IGC PhD and MD Students	30 CHF
Postdocs from SSPH+ partner institutes	30 CHF
External PhD students, external MD Students and Swiss Public Health Doctors in training	600 CHF
Others	1'600 CHF

Registration

<https://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2025/>

**Deadline for
registration**

8 August 2025