



National Bureau of Economic Research

Call for Papers
Tariffs and Economic Performance
April 1, 2027
Cambridge MA

In the decades after the Second World War, the United States was one of the leading proponents of a rules-based international order, and an advocate of multilateral and regional trade liberalization. By 2016, the US average import-weight tariff had fallen to less than 2% by the year 2016. In a stark departure from this historical trend, the United States introduced a sequence of tariffs on trade partners in 2018–2019, with the largest tariffs imposed on China. This turn towards protectionism has continued recently. On April 2, 2025, the United States announced the most sweeping tariff increases since the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of the 1930s.

In the wake of these stark changes in the direction of US trade policy, there is pressing need for further economic research on the impact of tariffs on national economic performance. To promote research on these issues, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), with the support of the Harry and Lynde Bradley Foundation, plans to convene an in-person research conference, in Cambridge, Massachusetts on Thursday, April 1, 2027. The conference will be organized by NBER researchers Amit Khandelwal (Yale University) and Stephen Redding (Stanford University).

This conference will include papers on all issues related to tariffs and national economic performance, including but not limited to:

- What is the impact of tariffs on aggregate real income? To what extent does the cost of tariffs fall on domestic consumers and firms versus foreign firms?
- What are the implications of tariffs for the multilateral trade deficit, bilateral trade deficits, the exchange rate, and the role of the dollar as a reserve currency?
- What are the revenue implications of tariffs as part of the tax system?
- To what extent do tariffs protect the domestic manufacturing sector, in a world in which they both raise output prices (protecting domestic manufacturing firms) and input prices (raising costs for domestic manufacturing firms)?
- What are the implications of tariffs for the organization of global value chains (GVCs)? What is the impact of uncertainty over tariff levels on these GVCs?
- What are the distributional consequences of tariffs across sectors, regions, firms, and households? To what extent will tariffs promote economic activity in former industrial towns and rural areas?
- How important are tariffs relative to non-tariff barriers to trade?
- What are the implications of increased trade in services for tariff policy?

- What are the implications of different institutional frameworks for determining tariffs: multilateral rules versus bilateral negotiations with individual trade partners?
- What are the implications of tariffs for national security and the resilience of the economy in response to external shocks?

The organizers will consider both theoretical and empirical research, and combinations thereof. In keeping with NBER policy, papers may not make specific policy recommendations. All submissions must be uploaded by midnight 11:59pm EST on Wednesday, December 16, 2026:

<https://conference.nber.org/confsubmit/backend/cfp?id=TEPs27>

Submissions from authors with and without NBER affiliations and from early career scholars are welcome. Please do not submit published papers or those that will be published by April 2027. Decisions about which papers will be included on the program will be announced in late January 2027. The NBER will cover the cost of two authors per paper attending the research conference; all co-authors will be invited. Questions may be addressed to confer@nber.org.