

Program Handbook

Department of Economics

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures that govern the Graduate Program of the Department of Economics. It complements the [Graduate School's Academic Code](#) and the [Graduate School's Bulletin of Information](#) by providing information on policies that are specific to the Economics Graduate Program.

Course of Study and Ph.D. Requirements

The Ph.D. program is designed as a 5-year program. The typical year-by-year course of study is described below.

First Year

Math Camp

Economics is a quantitative social science that leans heavily on certain branches of mathematics. Since it may have been some time since entering students have had their college math courses, in the week prior to the beginning of classes we run a very brief intensive "math camp" to review the college-level math relevant to economics. Attendance is optional, but strongly recommended.

The Core Courses

During the first year of study, students will acquire a thorough knowledge of microeconomic theory, macroeconomic theory, and econometrics in a set of required courses referred to as the "core." Both semesters of the first year have 4.5 credit classes in each of the three core areas:

Fall Semester

ECON 60101: Microeconomic Theory I
ECON 60201: Macroeconomic Theory I
ECON 60302: Econometrics I

Spring Semester

ECON 60102: Microeconomic Theory II
ECON 60202: Macroeconomic Theory II
ECON 60303: Econometrics II

Comprehensive Exams

After the spring semester, students take the comprehensive written exams in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory. These are competency evaluations that assess your command of the essential concepts and methods that are necessary to read the literature and to perform research at the disciplinary frontier. Possible outcomes of the comprehensive exams are (a) Ph.D. pass, (b) M.A. pass, and (c) fail. Students who do not attain a Ph.D. pass in either examination have one opportunity for a re-take later in the summer following the first year, typically about a month after the first attempt. Failure to pass both exams at the Ph.D. level results in dismissal from the program.

Second Year

The second year is a transition year, in that students continue to satisfy course requirements, while at the same time beginning to undertake research, which culminates in the "Second-year research paper."

Field Requirements

A field is a two-semester sequence in an advanced area of study. Students must complete the coursework for two such fields. The fields that are currently offered are:

- Labor Economics
- Public Economics
- Macroeconomics
- International Economics
- Health Economics
- Development Economics

Graduate Student Research Seminars

Graduate student research seminars are an extremely important aspect of the Ph.D. program. The department currently offers three such seminars: microeconomics, macroeconomics, and theory. Participation in these seminars provides students with insights into current research topics and offers a forum for students and faculty to present and discuss their ongoing research. Attendance and active participation in the research seminars helps students to formulate and develop their own independent research. Beginning in the second year, students are required to register for a research seminar. Beginning in the third year, they are required to give a presentation of their ongoing research in the seminar once each semester.

Second-to-Third Year Research Paper

Under the direction of a faculty advisor, students write an independent and original research paper in the second year, and the summer after the second year. Students present their findings to the faculty at the end of the first semester in their third year. Faculty members evaluate the written paper as well as the presentation and defense. If students do not pass this evaluation, the faculty can outline what must be done to receive a passing mark and a timeframe in which it must be completed. Students who do not pass the second year paper requirement must leave the program.

Third Year

In addition to the Second-year Research Paper presentation early in the third year, students in the third year finish their course work by finishing any needed field courses. (Students must take two additional field courses, in addition to the coursework for their two 2-course fields, for a total of six field courses.) Time and energy are increasingly directed towards dissertation research.

Faculty adviser

All students are required to have a faculty advisor in their major field of study by the end of their third year. The role of the faculty advisor is to help the student to make the transition from coursework to research and to help identify suitable dissertation topics. Often the faculty advisor also serves as the major advisor for the dissertation.

Fourth Year

Dissertation proposal and candidacy exam

You must be admitted to candidacy by the end of your fourth year by passing your candidacy exam. The candidacy examination consists of a written component and an oral component. The written part normally precedes the oral part and is satisfied by either a written dissertation proposal or a paper that will become a chapter of the dissertation. The oral part of the examination is conducted as soon as feasible after passage of the written part, according to the rules of the Graduate School. It can be taken no later than one calendar year prior to defense of the dissertation. The oral part is comprehensive and is intended to test your readiness for advanced research in the more specialized area(s) of your field as well as the feasibility of the specific research proposed for the dissertation. Successful passage indicates that, in the judgment of the faculty, you have an adequate knowledge of the basic literature, problems, and research methods in your field.

Fifth Year

During the fifth year, students complete their dissertation research, defend their dissertation, and initiate post-dissertation research. The dissertation must contain original research of sufficient quality to be published in well-respected peer-reviewed general interest or field journals. It is typically supervised by one major advisor, and it must be orally defended before a committee of the advisor and two reading committee members of the faculty. Committee members from outside the department or university must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. Usually, students consult with several members of the department during the dissertation stage.

Financial Support for Graduate Students

Students admitted with a Graduate Assistant position will receive a stipend that will be paid semi-monthly.

Stipend support during the summer may be available, but is not guaranteed. It is allotted on a case-by-case basis when such funding is available.

The responsibilities of Graduate Assistants vary by seniority. Although there can be exceptions, typically students in their first and fifth years will serve as Teaching Assistants for undergraduate courses. Students in their second and third years will typically serve as Research Assistants. In their fourth year, students may teach their own undergraduate course.

Grading Policy

The following information on grading is taken from the Academic Code:

A	4.000
A-	3.667
B+	3.333
B	3.000
B-	2.667
C+	2.333
C	2.000
C-	1.667
D	1.000
F	0.000
I	0.000 (until Incomplete is removed)

Grades of C- and D are awarded in the Graduate School and are used to calculate both semester and cumulative G.P.A.; however, they will not be accepted for completion of graduate degree requirements, specific required coursework, and/or total credit hours for completion of coursework. If a student receives lower than a grade of C in a required course, he or she must either retake the same course or its equivalent as determined by the program to fulfill the degree requirement.

Under exceptional circumstances, a student receives the temporary grade of I when he or she has not completed the requirements for a 60000 or higher-level graduate course within the semester or summer session (for further details, refer to the *Incomplete Coursework* section below). No grade of I can be given for courses below the 60000 level or to graduating students in the final semester or final summer session of a terminal degree program.

The grades of S and U (Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory) are used in courses without semester credit hours, as well as in research courses, departmental seminars, colloquia, workshops, directed studies, field education, and skills courses. These courses, if given the grade of S, do figure in a student's earned semester credit-hour total but do not figure in the computation of the G.P.A. No credit is given for a grade of U.

The grade of V (Auditor) does not have quality-points attached to it. It is the only grade available to the registered auditor. The audit must be requested before the sixth class day of the semester. The audited class is made part of the student's permanent record, and the auditor should attend the course throughout the entire semester. The grade of V cannot be changed to a credit-earning grade. Normally, graduate students are limited to auditing a maximum of two courses per semester.

The grade of W (discontinued with permission) is given for a course that a student is allowed to drop after the mid semester point. Approval of the grade of W is granted by the associate dean of students in the Graduate School or other authorized office.

Incomplete Coursework

Students should complete the work of graduate courses at the 60000-90000 level during the regular academic term in which they are taken. This expectation of students should also guide faculty members who teach graduate courses. That is, faculty are obligated to evaluate and grade graduate work by the end of the term in which the course is offered.

A grade of "Incomplete" (I) should be given *only in exceptional circumstances* when there are compelling reasons. When a student receives a grade of I, he or she has 30 days from when grades were due (for the semester in which the I was given) to complete the coursework for a grade. If the coursework is not completed by this date, the grade of I will be changed permanently to a grade of F. Extensions for Incompletes require formal approval from the Associate Dean of Students in the Graduate School.

Maintaining "Good Academic Standing"

Students must maintain "Good Academic Standing" to continue in the program. In addition to adhering to the timeline of requirements set out above, students must achieve a threshold level of academic performance in their coursework.

Immediate dismissal from the program may be triggered if the student's GPA (grade point average) for any one particular semester is below 2.5.

A student will be considered NOT in good academic standing if the student's cumulative GPA for any two consecutive semesters is below 3.0

If the student is not in good academic standing, the student has one semester to raise his or her GPA sufficiently to restore good academic standing. It is a Graduate School policy that *A student must be in academic good standing to be eligible for new or continued financial support*. Therefore, a student will not be eligible for new or continued financial support in the semester in which he or she is not in good academic standing. Admission to candidacy and graduation require that the cumulative GPA be at least 3.0.

Students who encounter life events that are likely to impede satisfactory progress should immediately inform the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair and should consider requesting a leave of absence. A leave of absence must be made before the semester in which the leave is taken, must be approved by the Graduate School, and can be taken for a maximum of two consecutive semesters. If a student is allowed to leave the University during the semester, the withdrawal procedure must be followed. Failure to return at the end of the leave results in termination from the program.

Academic Integrity

In addition to maintaining Good Academic Standing, students must adhere to a standard of Academic Integrity. The following text from the Academic Code describes that standard:

Integrity in scholarship and research is an essential characteristic of the academic life and social structure in the University. Any activity that compromises the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge besmirches the intellectual effort and may undermine confidence in the academic enterprise. A commitment to honesty is expected in all academic endeavors, and this should be continuously emphasized to students, research assistants, associates, and colleagues by mentors and academic leaders.

Violation of integrity in research/scholarship includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism; deliberate fabrication or falsification in proposing, performing, or reporting research; or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research. Misconduct in research/scholarship does not include errors of judgment; errors in recording, selection, or analysis of data; differences in opinions involving interpretation; or conduct unrelated to the research process. Misconduct includes practices that materially and adversely affect the integrity of scholarship and research.

Plagiarism is a form of misconduct. A person's words and ideas are his or her own; they belong to the individual and should be considered the individual's property. Those who appropriate the words and/or ideas of another, and who attempt to present them as their own without proper acknowledgement of the source, whether intentional or not, are committing plagiarism or intellectual theft. It is assumed that all work submitted by a student represents the student's own ideas and work. Verbatim copying, paraphrasing, adapting or summarizing the work of another, regardless of the source – whether books, journals, periodicals, websites, or other forms of media – must be properly cited. Any representation of the work of another that is not properly referenced is considered to be plagiarism. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not a defense to an allegation of a violation of the academic integrity policy. It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with this definition of plagiarism and to learn proper citation techniques.

Any student who is found in violation of integrity in research and/or scholarship can be dismissed from the University.

Annual evaluations

In August, all students will receive an annual review of their performance and progress from the Department. At the end of the spring semester, every faculty member is asked to provide an evaluation to the Director of Graduate Studies for every student with whom he or she has worked during the year. The Director of Graduate Studies will summarize the reviews into a written letter for the student. One of the main purposes of the evaluation is to provide recommendations for possible improvement.

Grievance procedure

Students may file a grievance regarding some aspect of the Graduate Program with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee. Appeals beyond the department level are made directly to the Dean of the Graduate School. Instructions for how to appeal to the Dean can be found at: http://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/9047/info_appeal_procedure.pdf

The Master of Arts Degree

The Department does not administer a stand-alone M.A. program but does allow students to apply for an M.A. if they choose to terminate their study in the Ph.D. program and they satisfy the requirements for the M.A. degree. This degree is typically awarded to those who successfully complete the required course work in the first-year core, who pass the comprehensive exams at the "M.A. pass" level, and who meet the University requirements for the M.A. Specifically, a student must have a total of 30 credit hours of course work and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.