

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
OF GRADUATE STUDY IN ECONOMICS

Graduate Studies Program Officers <AY2025-2026>

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I. Introduction

This document governs the rules and conduct of the graduate program in the Department of Economics. The Graduate School Handbook governs policies and procedures for all graduate programs, and all graduate students should be familiar with its contents. The Handbook is available at <http://www.gradsch.ohio-state.edu/graduate-school-handbook1.html>

The graduate program in economics is governed by the **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)** of the Department, which consists of both voting members and non-voting members, all appointed by the Department Chair. The **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** is the chair of the GSC. The **Director of Graduate Admissions (DGA)** presides over admission decisions and fellowship selection in consultation with the GSC.

Voting members include the DGS, DGA, and graduate faculty members; non-voting members include the Graduate Placement Officer (*ex officio*), and two graduate student representatives. The Graduate Program Coordinator administers day-to-day operations via the **Office of the Graduate Studies (OGS)**, and acts as the primary point of contact for all matters related to the functioning of the Graduate Program.

II. Admission to the Program

Information on how to apply to the graduate program is available at the department website. The DGA, in consultation with the GSC, is responsible for all admissions and financial aid recommendations including fellowships. The first round of admissions with potential financial support are issued in the latter half of January; the first round fellowship awards will be announced in mid-February; and additional fellowships and financial support will be issued by late April.

III. Program Structure

III.A. Ph.D. Program

The Economics Ph.D. program is structured as a five-year program. Students may choose to stay for a sixth year, though funding is not guaranteed past the fifth year. Progress through the program is assessed by a series of benchmark tests and papers, one of which occurs approximately at the end of each academic year. Throughout, students are expected to remain in compliance with all academic and course registration requirements mandated in the Graduate School Handbook. Normal academic progress is defined as successful completion of the benchmarks in the timeframe outlined below.

Year One:

Prior to the beginning of Autumn semester, the department organizes a Mathematics workshop (Math Camp) intended for all entering graduate students. Students are strongly advised to attend the Math

Camp, as it allows students to review and supplement the technical material before, rather than concurrently with, their core courses.

Students must successfully complete the following core courses during Autumn and Spring semesters of their first year in the program:

Microeconomic Theory Core - Economics 8711, 8712, 8713 and 8714.

Macroeconomic Theory Core - Economics 8821, 8822, 8823, and 8824.

Econometrics Core - Economics 8731 and 8732.

Detailed information on each of these courses is listed here: <https://economics.osu.edu/current-economics-phd-courses>

In addition, students must obtain a 'Ph.D. Pass' in the two Qualifying Exams – one in microeconomics and one in macroeconomics – that are administered in the summer following the first year. Qualifier Examinations are given in two rounds each year. For each examination round, the DGS appoints an examination committee of at least three faculty members to administer each Qualifying Examination. Each examiner grades the examination as **Ph.D. Pass**, **M.A. Pass**, or **Fail**. The result of the examination is Ph.D. Pass, M.A. Pass, or Fail, determined by the strict majority rule as follows:

- To obtain the Ph.D. Pass result on the examination, a student must receive Ph.D. Passes from a strict majority of the exam committee.
- To obtain the M.A. Pass result on the examination, a student must receive at least M.A. Passes from a strict majority of the exam committee.
- A student obtains the Fail result on the examination if and only if the exam committee majority fails to deliver the Ph.D. Pass or the M.A. Pass.

A student must obtain Ph.D. Passes on both the micro qualifying examination and the macro qualifying examination in order to remain eligible to pursue a Ph.D. in our program. A student may retake each qualifying examination only once and in a timely fashion (i.e., both attempts should be in the summer following the first year in the program).

Year Two:

A Ph.D. student is required to attain proficiency in at least two major fields of the student's choice before the start of the third year. The student's field proficiency is achieved by successfully completing the designated field courses. The list of approved fields, and the required courses for each field, will be announced every year prior to the beginning of Autumn semester. Typically, there will be two or three field courses designated for each field. To achieve proficiency in a field, a student must maintain a GPA of B⁺ (3.30/4.00) or above, and not earn a grade of B⁻ (2.70/4.00) or below over the set of required field courses.

In addition, each student must fulfill the Field Requirement either in the form of a Field Exam or a Field Paper in *one out of the two chosen fields*. The Field Committee that the DGS appoints for each approved field decides whether that field requires a Field Paper or a Field Exam for the current academic year. Field Examinations are given in two examination rounds per academic year, usually during the months of June and July. Field Papers should be submitted to the OGS and to the members of the relevant Field Committee by the due date set by OGS, usually in early June. A student who fails in the field paper

submitted in the first round may resubmit a revised paper by a second due date set by OGS, usually in July. The same set of faculty members serve as a Field Committee in both the June and July Field Requirement rounds of a given year.

Each student's Field Requirement, either Field Paper or Field Exam, is graded in its entirety by each member of the given Field Committee. The outcome of the second-year Field Requirements is graded as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory". A "Satisfactory" grade indicates that a student has demonstrated a potential ability to do original research in the field. A student's outcome in a given field is decided by a majority vote of its Field Committee members. The student shall receive the committee's vote-and-comment tally without identifying the individual members' votes or comments. If a student does not achieve a "Satisfactory" grade in the chosen field after two Field Requirement rounds, the student's progress towards a Ph.D. will be terminated.

Year Three:

During the third year, each student must enroll in at least one lecture-based course offered by the Economics department. Seminars, workshops, and individual studies do not count towards fulfilling this requirement.

By the end of Autumn semester of the third year, each student should have an approved Candidacy Examination Committee (CEC) consisting of four graduate faculty members. At least three of the four members of the CEC must come from the Department of Economics. One of the members of the CEC should be designated as the Committee's chair. The Committee's chair will be listed as the student's advisor for the purpose of the Candidacy Examination, but there is no requirement that the same faculty member will continue to be the student's advisor post-candidacy. The student must obtain the consent of the four faculty members to serve on his/her Committee and report their names to OGS. The DGS, in consultation with the CEC, approves or requires changes to be made in the proposed Committee.

The CEC may require the student to provide periodic reports showing his/her research progress during the third year. The reports may be in the form of written papers and/or of oral presentations in front of CEC members. A Committee member who views the student's progress as unsatisfactory may choose to leave the Committee; if that happens the student would have to find a replacement.

Students must complete the Candidacy Examination by the last day of classes in Spring semester of their third year in the program. The chair of the CEC is responsible for coordinating the preparation and conduct of the examination. Detailed information on the conduct of the candidacy exam can be found in the Graduate School Handbook: <https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/all#7-4>. Graduate School rules specify that "the Candidacy Examination is a single examination consisting of two portions, written and oral, administered under the auspices of the GSC in conjunction with the student's Advisory Committee and the Graduate School" (*Graduate School Handbook: 7.3*).

Three weeks before the expected date of the oral examination, the student should submit the written part of the Candidacy Examination to the members of the CEC, with a copy sent to OGS. The written part should demonstrate that the student has the capacity to undertake independent research, and the ability to think and express ideas clearly. The CEC grades the written portion of the examination as

either *Satisfactory* or *Unsatisfactory*. The student is considered to have passed the written portion of the Candidacy Examination only if the Committee's verdict is "Satisfactory" by a unanimous vote.

The oral portion of the Candidacy Examination is held after satisfactory completion of the written portion, and must be completed within one month of the written portion. To schedule the oral exam, the student must submit an Application for Candidacy on [GRADFORMS](#) and have this approved by OGS/DGS and the CEC's chair **at least two weeks before the oral's proposed date**.

The CEC discusses and votes on the student's performance at the end of the oral portion in the absence of the student. Each member of the CEC votes either *Satisfactory* or *Unsatisfactory*. The student is considered to have completed the Candidacy Examination successfully if and only if all members of the Committee vote *Satisfactory*. If the examination is judged unsatisfactory, the CEC must decide whether the student should be permitted to take a second Candidacy Examination. The scope and nature of the second Candidacy Examination are determined by the CEC, but it must include an oral portion. If a second examination is to be held, the CEC must be the same as the original one, unless substitution is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. No student is permitted to take the Candidacy Examination more than twice.

A student who fails to pass Candidacy by the end of Spring semester of the third year shall automatically be placed in probationary status and will receive a reduced stipend as a GA in Autumn semester of his/her fourth year. If a student fails to pass Candidacy by the end of Autumn semester of their fourth year, they lose departmental financial support entirely and permanently.

Upon successfully completing the Candidacy Examination, the student attains post-candidacy status and is a Ph.D. Candidate in Economics.

Year Four:

During the fourth year, each student must enroll in at least one lecture-based course offered by the Economics Department. Seminars, workshops, and individual studies do not count towards fulfilling this requirement. A student who completed two or more lecture-based courses in their third year is not required to enroll in additional courses in their fourth year.

After passing candidacy, students are expected to devote the large majority of their time to conducting independent research. Therefore, post-candidacy students are expected to enroll in the Graduate School required load of (exactly) 3 credit hours per semester.

Every fourth-year student must present his/her research at least once before the end of Spring semester. The venue of the presentation should be a departmental seminar/workshop, or a non-departmental venue (e.g., a conference) approved by the student's advisor and DGS.

Each fourth-year student should get an explicit consent from a graduate faculty member in the department to serve as his/her advisor, and from two additional faculty members to serve on his/her Provisional Dissertation Committee (PDC). The advisor is the chair of the PDC. The PDC may include one faculty member from another department if approved by DGS. The names of the members of the student's PDC should be reported to the OGS by the end of Autumn semester of the fourth year.

The student must submit a dissertation proposal to his/her PDC by the end of Spring semester of the fourth year. The proposal should show the progress made since Candidacy, and demonstrate that the student is on track to complete his degree in a timely manner. Each member of the PDC evaluates the proposal as *Satisfactory* or *Unsatisfactory*, and a unanimous agreement of the PDC is required for a satisfactory outcome.

The PDC may request an oral exam to accompany the dissertation proposal. An oral exam will be conducted only if all members of the PDC unanimously agree on its necessity. If an oral exam does take place, the PDC evaluates the written proposal in combination with the oral exam and decides whether the outcome is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (by unanimity rule).

Failure to obtain a Satisfactory outcome for the dissertation proposal by the end of Spring semester shall automatically result in probationary status and a reduced stipend for GA's in Autumn semester of their fifth year. If a student fails to obtain a Satisfactory outcome by the end of Autumn semester of their fifth year, they lose departmental financial support entirely and permanently.

Years Five and Six:

All fifth-year students in good academic standing will be funded by the department. Departmental financial support is not guaranteed for students in their sixth year, although some sixth-year students may be supported if funds are available. Decisions on funding for sixth-year students will be made based on the student's individual academic merits. The DGS, in consultation with the student's advisor, would make recommendations to the Office of Undergraduate Studies regarding hiring of sixth-year students as GTA's.

The Department does not support students beyond the sixth year of the Ph.D. program, except in special circumstances and only with DGS approval.

Detailed information on the conduct of the final defense, dissertation submission, and graduation process can be found in the Graduate School Handbook: <https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/all#7-10>

III.B. M.A. Program

The M.A. degree is awarded en route to the Ph.D. upon successful completion of the entire Core Curriculum and both Qualifier Exams (see Year One in Section III.A. above). The Department has no separate M.A. program. The written portion of the M.A. Examination is offered concurrently with the Qualifying Examinations and consists of separate examinations in Microeconomic and Macroeconomic theory. A necessary condition for passing the Master's examination is that the student obtains the "M.A. Pass" grade in both qualifying examinations. See Section III.A above on how the qualifier exams are graded.

Further information on procedures for the M.A. program can be found in the Graduate School Handbook: <https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/all#6-0>

For information on the Master of Applied Economics program administered by the Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics, see here:

<https://aede.osu.edu/graduate/masters-program>

III.C. Graduate Minor in Economics

Students not seeking a graduate degree in economics may seek a transcript designated *Graduate Minor in Economics* outside the student's home degree program. For more details, see here:

<https://economics.osu.edu/successful-career-economics/graduate-minor-economics>

III.D. English as a Second Language (ESL) for International Students

The Graduate School requires that a graduate student from a country where English is not the first language must meet the Ohio State written English requirement within the first year of graduate program matriculation. Upon arrival and before the start of the first semester of enrollment, a student for whom English is a second language must take a placement examination in English, administered and evaluated by the Ohio State Department of Education: Teaching and Learning (EDUTL). Depending on the outcome of the test, the student may be placed in EDUTL 5901, 5901.05 or 5902. A student placed in this sequence must complete EDUTL 5902 within the first year of graduate program matriculation.

The State of Ohio legislature mandates that foreign graduate students for whom English is a second language must be certified in spoken English before they can be assigned to classroom teaching duties as Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA). Therefore, no international student is allowed to hold an instructional GTA appointment without having obtained the Ohio State Instructional English Certification issued by the ESL Department. To guarantee departmental support, graduate students need to satisfy the Ohio State Instructional English requirements by the beginning of the first semester of the second year.

Detailed information on ESL tests and programs can be found here: <https://esl.ehe.osu.edu/>

IV. Financial Support and Other Resources

It is the intent of the Department of Economics to provide financial support in the form of Fellowships and/or Graduate Associateships (GA) to all academically eligible students up to and including the fifth year of their Ph.D. program. The Department may support sixth-year students based on their individual merits and on the availability of funds. The Department does not support students beyond the sixth year of the Ph.D. program, except in special circumstances and only with DGS approval.

The Department financial support in the form of GA appointment is conditional on the student making normal progress towards a Ph.D. as outlined in Section III.A above, providing a good faith effort to honor the terms of GA appointments, and maintaining satisfactory performance on assigned GA duties. If a student does not qualify for GTA support, and no faculty member chooses to support them as a GRA, then the student must either self-fund or withdraw from the program.

Our regular GA support is a nine-month appointment that covers Autumn and Spring semesters, providing tuition coverage, a health insurance subsidy, and a monthly stipend. The Department offers a limited number of GA appointments during Summer semester.

IV.A. Fellowships

A fellowship is awarded with the expectation that the student will pursue full-time study or research towards completion of the degree. Therefore, a fellowship student shall carry no departmental or university employment duties. All students with fellowships, whether funded through the university or by external organizations, must comply with all University and Graduate School policies regarding Fellowships, available here: <https://gradsch.osu.edu/fellowships>

IV.B. Graduate Research Associates (GRAs)

Graduate Research Associates (GRAs) are hired by individual faculty members who have research funding to support a research assistant. The GRA assists the faculty member with their research. The faculty member provides the name of the student selected to the OGS and to the Undergraduate Studies office each semester.

IV.C. Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs)

The Department awards Graduate Teaching Associateships (GTAs) based on students' academic merits and teaching ability. The Office of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with OGS and DGS, is responsible for appointing GTAs. Appointments are based on an evaluation of students' academic progress, ESL scores, previous teaching record, and department need. The undergraduate coordinator informs the OGS and the department HR/Fiscal officer of the assignments, and the OGS and HR/Fiscal officer process the official hire documents.

GTA positions include independent instructor, recitation leader and grader. Stipends may vary based on the type of position assigned. The following describes requirements for each of these positions.

Independent instructor:

1. Hold classes in accordance with the official University calendar.
2. Select and order textbooks in advance and in a timely fashion.
3. Write a syllabus, prepare homework, quizzes, and exams, and maintain grade books.
4. Administer a final exam during the regularly scheduled exam period.
5. Hold regularly scheduled office hours.
6. Learn the course management technology and software, including, but not limited to, Faculty Center and Carmen.

Recitation leader:

1. Attend lectures.

2. Meet recitation hours.
3. Attend course-organizing meetings.
4. Assist in preparing course material.
5. Hold regularly scheduled office hours.
6. Participate in preparing, administering, and grading exams.
7. Learn the course management technology and software, including, but not limited to, Faculty Center and Carmen.

Grader:

1. Attend lectures if required by primary instructor.
2. Assist primary instructor with course material.
3. Grade course assignments and exams, and post grades.
4. Hold office hours if required by the primary instructor.
5. Learn the course management technology and software, including, but not limited to, Faculty Center and Carmen.

IV.D. Penalties for Failure to Perform GA Functions

Students appointed as GAs are expected to fulfill their duties properly and punctually. The Departmental procedure for a GTA who fails to meet any or all of his/her requirements is as follows. On the first offense, the Office of Undergraduate Studies issues an email warning. The student must meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), or Undergraduate Program Coordinator if directed by the DUS, to clarify the nature of the offense, to discuss a remedy, and to ascertain the follow-up procedures. If the first offense is not rectified in a timely fashion, or in the instance of a second offense, the student will meet with the DUS or Undergraduate Coordinator and HR/Fiscal Officer to review the appointment expectations. A performance improvement plan will be developed for the student and placed in their file. If the performance problems persist, the department has the option to reduce the student's appointment or to decline all support to the student in the following semester.

If the student's offense is severe, the Department reserves the right to dismiss the offending student immediately from the GA duty, and to terminate his/her GA contract permanently. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct or other university policies also may be grounds for immediate termination of the GA appointment.

GRAs who fail to satisfy the responsibilities and requirements of their appointment are subject to the same procedures and conditions as outlined above for GTAs. The hiring faculty member may elect to terminate the GRA support, in consultation with the OGS and the HR/Fiscal Officer.

IV.E. Funds for Human Subjects Experiments

Students may seek to conduct Human Subjects experiments as part of their research. Such experiments will often require that students have petty cash to pay subjects. All such experiments must be conducted in accordance with the Office of Research policies regarding Human Subjects experiments, details of which are here: <http://orrrp.osu.edu/irb/>

In addition, the Department has its own policies regarding the managements and tracking of petty cash funds held by Graduate Students, available here:

https://economics.osu.edu/sites/economics.osu.edu/files/Protocol%20for%20Human%20Subject%20Experiments_0.pdf

If a student fails to comply with any aspect of these policies, they are subject to penalties up to and including permanent termination of Departmental financial support. Determination of the penalty is made by the student's advisor in consultation with the OGS and the department HR/Fiscal officer.

IV.F. Information Technology Resources

Student use of I.T. resources is determined by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Department HR/Fiscal Officer, the College-assigned Department I.T. personnel, and the OGS.

IV.G. Office Keys

Graduate students may be issued keys to Department buildings and offices. Keys are University property, and as such students are expected to return them upon graduation. Students must immediately notify the department of lost keys. Students who lose or fail to return keys are subject to fines and key replacement fees.

V. University, State and Federal Policies

In addition to policies in this document and the Graduate School Handbook, students need to be aware of numerous further policies and procedures imposed by university services. These may include various enrollment deadlines and fees, general academic conduct, as well as rules for employment and benefits that are intertwined with the structure of academic requirements and financial support mechanisms mentioned above. Although these are only marginally outlined here, students should familiarize themselves with these through the respective university publications.

Student should also be aware of relevant policies outside of the university. Examples include state requirements regarding English proficiency for classroom teaching or federal requirements for students supported by federal grants. Students should inquire with our program or their advisor regarding these policies.

VI. Right to Petition

In the event a student feels that extenuating circumstances justify the waiver of any of the listed rules, the student concerned may submit a written petition to the GSC. Please note that the GSC cannot waive rules that are based upon requirements of the Graduate School.