

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
Department of Economics

Doctor of Philosophy Program Guidelines: August 2009

I. Admission

Each application is evaluated on its individual merits by the Economics Department. The applicant's academic record, letters of recommendation, and GRE scores all weigh heavily in the decision.

II. General Requirements

A. Students are required to complete a minimum of 60 credit hours in graduate level courses in economics and/or supporting fields (as approved by the Department) not including credits for dissertation work. The 60 credits must include:

1. Eight core courses: Eco 610 Mathematics for Economists; Eco 600 and 700 Microeconomics I and II; Eco 601 and 701 Macroeconomics I and II; Eco 620, 621 and 720 Econometrics I, II and III. These courses may be replaced by equivalent work as approved by the Department.
2. Seven economics elective courses at the 600 level or above. These courses do not include the core courses listed above, nor do they include Eco 797 Independent Study, Eco 798 Advanced Research Topics, workshops or dissertation credits.
3. Two or more credits for Eco 798 Advanced Research Topics. This course is described in Appendix A.
4. Four to eight credits for a workshop (Eco 800, 801 or 820).

B. Up to 6 credits of course work at the master's level may be offered in fulfillment of the 60 required credits. However, such course work must be completed before the student commences the Ph.D. program. The master's level credits cannot include Eco 500, 501, 510, 520, 521, 597 or their equivalents. The 60 required credits may include up to 30 credits for work done elsewhere beyond the baccalaureate degree and prior to admission to candidacy for the doctorate. Only 6 of the transferred 30 credits can be from master's level work. The University residence requirement cannot be satisfied by transfer credits. When applying for transfer credits, students should present a syllabus and an example of graded work (a paper or final exam) from the course to be credited. If these materials are not available, the student should be prepared to take the final exam in a comparable course in the department.

- C. Matriculated full-time students in the Ph.D. program must obtain permission from the Director of Graduate Studies to take courses outside of economics.
- D. To satisfy Departmental Qualifying Examination requirements, students must demonstrate proficiency in macro and microeconomic theory, in econometrics and in two fields of concentration. A description of the examination procedure is in Section IV. The fields of concentration currently offered are: Advanced Macroeconomics, Advanced Microeconomics, Econometrics, Industrial Organization, International Economics, Labor and Income Distribution, and Public Economics.
- E. Students must have completed the core courses and seven elective courses with an average of B or better by the end of the third year (or by December of the fourth year for those who postponed part of the first year core sequence).
- F. All students in residence must participate in a workshop beginning the second semester of the third year and continuing, while in residence, until completing the degree. Students are required to attend the workshop sessions, complete any work assigned by the director, and present a paper at least once each calendar year. The paper must be typed and made available to all workshop participants before the workshop meeting.
- G. Students must submit an approved Third Year Paper by the beginning of their fourth year in the program. (See Appendix A.)
- H. Students must demonstrate proficiency in either a foreign language or at least one of the research tools used by economists. (See Appendix B.)
- I. Students must advance to candidacy by the end of their fourth year in the program and before the beginning of their last semester. (See Appendix B.)
- J. Each student must prepare a doctoral dissertation that is approved by the student's thesis committee. (See Section III.) Beginning in the third year in the program, students are expected to make periodic reports on their progress on the dissertation in a department workshop, normally at least one report per year.
- K. Students are expected to maintain "normal progress" within the program as described in Section III, below.

Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may jeopardize funding and/or enrollment status.

III. Program Planning

Definition of "normal progress" in the Ph.D. program.

First Year:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Eco 600	Eco 700
Eco 601	Eco 701
Eco 610	Eco 621
Eco 620	

Those who have completed a one-year sequence of mathematical statistics may be permitted to skip Eco 620.

Pass macroeconomics and microeconomics preliminary exams.

Second Year:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Eco 720	Three Ph.D. electives
Two Ph.D. electives	

Pass the econometrics preliminary examination if required.

Third Year:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Eco 798	Eco 800, 801 or 820
Two Ph.D. electives	

In Fall, pass a comprehensive examination in a field of concentration.

Write Third Year Paper, present in workshop in spring

Finish all required examinations

Complete Residency and Research Tool requirements and advance to Ph.D. Candidacy (See Appendix B.)

Apply for financial support for dissertation

Apply for special M.A. degree (Ph.D. Candidates have satisfied all requirements for the M.A.)

Fourth Year:

Present first draft of dissertation in a department workshop.

Complete and defend dissertation.

IV. Examinations

A. Departmental Preliminary Examinations are offered in:

1. Microeconomic theory, covering the subject areas of Economics 600 and 700
2. Macroeconomic theory, covering 601 and 701

3. Econometrics, covering the subject areas of Economics 620, 621 and 720.
- B. Departmental Comprehensive Examinations are offered in current fields of concentration. Each comprehensive examination is based on the content of a two course sequence, and possibly on additional material outlined in Appendix B.
- C. Timing and Taking of Examinations
1. Microeconomics, macroeconomics preliminary examinations will be given in June and at the beginning of the fall semester. Comprehensive (field) examinations and econometrics preliminary examinations will be given at the beginning of the fall semester and at the beginning of the spring semester.
 2. The economic theory component of the Departmental Qualifying Examination must be satisfied by passing the preliminary examinations in micro and macroeconomic theory.
 3. If a student fails a preliminary exam twice, s/he will be referred to the Qualifying Examination Committee (QEC). This committee is made up of first year PhD course instructors along with preliminary examination committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies. The QEC will determine, based on the student's performance on all preliminary examinations and coursework, whether the student is eligible for a third attempt. Only students who have passed the theory component of the qualifying examination will be permitted to remain in the program.
 4. The econometrics component of the Departmental Qualifying Examination must be satisfied in either of the following ways:
 - Completing economics 621 and 720 with grades of B or better;
 - Passing the econometrics preliminary examination.
 5. Students are expected to take preliminary exams (including the econometrics prelim if necessary) at the first available date after completing the corresponding course sequences.
 6. Students are allowed two attempts to pass each comprehensive exam. In order to remain in the program, they must pass all required theory and comprehensive examinations by January of their fourth year.
 7. Students may petition the graduate studies committee for a third attempt at a written comprehensive examination. Permission to sit for a written comprehensive examination a third time will only be granted under extenuating circumstances.
 8. Students are not allowed to take a comprehensive exam until they have passed both theory preliminary exams.

9. A written examination in one of the two fields may be waived if it is not econometrics and if a student obtains B or better grade in each course in the field.

D. Examination Procedures

1. The Graduate Studies Committee will be in charge of administering the comprehensive examinations. It will schedule and post notices at least four weeks in advance (and by those notices, solicit the names of those students who intend to appear for examination, and so determine which exams need to be prepared), and appoint Exam Committees of three or more faculty members in micro and macroeconomics and in econometrics, and at least two members in the fields of concentration.
2. Each examination will be prepared by the appropriate Exam Committee under the initiative of the chairperson appointed by the Graduate Studies Committee.

E. Grading of Written Comprehensive and Preliminary Examinations

1. Examinations will be coded to preserve the students' anonymity.
2. Grades for each question will be assigned from among the following:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
P+	Pass with distinction
P	Satisfactory
P-	Marginal pass
F+	Marginal fail
F	Fail

3. The Exam Committee will determine a first stage overall grade that is one of the above grades or M (marginal). This first stage grade will be based entirely on what the student has written. If the committee is not unanimous in its choice of grade, it will ask the Graduate Studies Committee to assign additional reader(s), and the first stage grade will be chosen by majority vote. A student with a first stage M grade on a spring prelim or a field exam receives a final overall P- grade if s/he got B+ or better in both courses associated with that exam and receives an F+ grade otherwise. If a student receives a first stage M grade on a later preliminary exam, the examination committee determines the final overall grade of P- or F+ based on the student's entire academic record in the program.
4. The grades assigned by the Exam Committee members will be recorded in a departmental file along with any of the members' comments.

F. Review and Disposition of Comprehensive Examinations

1. Students may review their examination papers, but only in the presence of a faculty member. No student may review another student's papers.
2. Each student's examination papers will be kept in that student's file in the Department as long as the student is registered in the program.

V. Doctoral Dissertation

A. Dissertation Committee

During the third year, the student is expected to find a faculty member within the Department to serve as chair of the Dissertation Committee. With the dissertation chair's advice and the concurrence of the Department, the student should solicit two or three additional members for the Committee. Students are encouraged to select one committee member from outside the Department.

Following the presentation of the dissertation proposal, the student and the dissertation advisor must jointly file the student's topic and the names of the Committee members with the Graduate Studies Committee. (A form is available in the Department.) Committee members can be changed at any time, but the student must maintain a current membership form with the Department.

B. Dissertation Proposal and Further Progress

Students are required to prepare a dissertation proposal usually during their third year in the program. The proposal would normally consist of four sections: a) literature survey; b) statement of the problems to be addressed; c) description of the research tools to be used in analyzing the problems; and d) preliminary results. The proposal should be formally presented in one of the three workshops, usually during the Spring semester of the third year. Additional results are to be presented in a workshop in each successive year.

C. Dissertation Acceptance.

Before accepting the final draft of the dissertation, the Committee will conduct an oral examination of the candidate on the dissertation.

The dissertation must be approved by a majority of the Committee members, overall, as well as a majority of the Committee members from the Department.

D. Dissertation and Load Credit Registration

After the completion of 60 credit hours of study and the successful completion of all qualifying examinations, a student is required to register for a minimum of one dissertation credit hour during each fall and spring semester until the degree is

completed.

VI. Official Leave of Absence from a Graduate Program

Prior to advancing to Candidacy, a graduate student may be granted an official leave of absence from a degree program for an appropriate academic or personal reason. A leave of absence must be approved by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee, the College, and by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Normally, a leave of absence will be granted for a period up to one year; under compelling justification, a leave may be extended for another year. Once admitted to Candidacy, students are no longer permitted to take a leave of absence.

The period of authorized leave of absence is not counted as part of the statute of limitations for completion of degree requirements. (See the Graduate Bulletin.)

Students who are on leave of absence are not entitled to use University facilities and faculty resources exclusively afforded to registered students.

Appendix A: The Third Year Paper and Eco 798, Advanced Research Topics

During the third year in the program, students are required to write a research paper or extended dissertation proposal. The purpose of this requirement is to facilitate the transition from normal course work to dissertation research. In the fall semester, the student is expected to find an advisor to supervise the Third Year Paper. The student enrolls in Eco 798 with the advisor during the fall or spring semester. This is an independent study for the purpose of writing the Third Year Paper. (Note that it is not required that the research conducted in Eco 798 be continued for the dissertation or that the same advisor for Eco 798 continue as the dissertation advisor.) A first draft of the paper is to be turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies at the beginning of the spring semester of the third year. The Graduate Studies Committee assigns a second reader to evaluate the paper and to provide comments. (Students are encouraged to seek the advice of a second reader as early as possible in the preparation of the paper.) Copies of the evaluations and recommendations of both the advisor and the second reader are provided to the Director of Graduate Studies and are used in subsequent financial aid and award decisions. Students then incorporate the comments they receive and present the paper in a departmental workshop during the spring semester. A final draft of the paper, incorporating any additional comments, must be approved by the advisor and second reader and turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies by the beginning of the fourth year. Only after the approved final draft has been submitted will the student receive credit for Eco 798 or the workshop.

Generally, Third Year Papers are judged on the basis of the understanding of the literature demonstrated therein, on the progress in establishing a research design (e.g., formulation of the problem, mathematical modeling, data collected, proposed statistical analysis, theoretical or empirical results), and on the likely

significance of the research proposed and accomplished. Successful completion of the paper and of a workshop in the third year is part of normal progress in the program. Outstanding third year papers may be nominated by the advisor for an excellence in research award.

Guidelines for preparing the Third Year Paper:

The most useful kind of Third Year Paper is a self-contained paper that can be used as a dissertation proposal or dissertation chapter. In any case, the paper should include a thorough description of the research problem, the relevant literature, and the role and significance of the proposed research. This should be followed by descriptions of the methods, models, and/or data, to be used. Some original results should be presented to show that progress can be made on the topic. The content of the paper should be presented in the format that is standard in economics research journals. The first section is an introduction that describes the problem and (among other things) outlines what is done in the rest of the paper. A concluding section should discuss remaining open problems and directions for further research. At the end of the paper there should be a list of references to the papers and data cited in the earlier sections. If the paper presents results of computer calculations, the student should submit copies of the programs used along with the paper.

Appendix B: Residency, Research Skill Requirement and Candidacy

Residency Requirement:

Each student must complete at least 9 credits in Ph.D. core or elective courses in each of two semesters (not necessarily consecutive). This requirement is designed to ensure for each student a period of intensive intellectual growth and interaction with other participants in the program.

Research Skill Requirement:

The student must demonstrate proficiency in either a foreign language or at least one of the research tools used by economists. These include mathematical techniques of problem solving and statistical and econometric techniques involving data analysis. The methodology section of a student's dissertation proposal, in which the student describes the research tools he/she plans to use in the dissertation can be used to show proficiency. Upon completing the requirement, a student should complete a Research Skill Form (available in the Department) which must be signed by the student's advisor and by the Director of Graduate Studies and submitted to the Department Secretary.

Candidacy:

A student becomes a Candidate when the following requirements are satisfied:

1. Completion of all required core and elective courses with an average grade of B or better
2. Completion of Third Year Paper requirement (Eco 798 with a grade of S)
3. Satisfactory completion of all required comprehensive exams (grade P- or better)
4. Fulfillment of residency requirement
5. Fulfillment of research skill requirement

It is necessary to file a Candidacy form which is available in the Department.