

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
FOR THE  
PH.D. DEGREE IN ECONOMICS**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The following information is a guide to policies and procedures for the Ph.D. degree in Economics at Kansas State University. The information is intended for use by graduate students, faculty, and staff in the Department of Economics. The official policies of the Graduate School for graduate study are given in the *Graduate Handbook*, which is available at <https://www.k-state.edu/grad/graduate-handbook/>. Students are responsible for being familiar with departmental and Graduate School policies. If an inconsistency between the *Graduate Handbook* and this document arises, the *Graduate Handbook* takes precedence.

The Ph.D. degree is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated unique ability as scholars and researchers as well as proficiency in communication. The degree also certifies that the candidate has displayed familiarity with and understanding of the subject matter in the discipline and possesses the ability to make original contributions to knowledge.

The major tasks that must be completed in order to be awarded the Ph.D. degree are:

1. Be admitted to the program.
2. Complete required courses.
3. Form a supervisory committee.
4. File a Program of Study.
5. Pass comprehensive examinations.
6. Prepare and defend an acceptable dissertation proposal.
7. Prepare and defend an acceptable dissertation.

Details concerning each of these tasks are given in Sections 2-8 of this document. Section 9 describes the procedures to get an M.A. degree concurrently with the Ph.D. degree. Section 10 explains policy regarding assistantships, enrollment requirements, and exceptions.

## **2. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to general Graduate School requirements, the Department of Economics has the following requirements for admission to the Ph.D. program:

- (1) 3 credit hours of intermediate macroeconomic theory
- (2) 3 credit hours of intermediate microeconomic theory
- (3) 3 credit hours of statistics
- (4) 3 credit hours of calculus

The grade earned in these courses should be B or higher (or the equivalent for institutions outside the U.S.) unless the student has received a grade of B or higher in a more advanced course in the particular subject matter. A minimum GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 credit hours taken is also required. Although students with academic performance below these standards may be admitted because of other considerations, such as high Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, admission will be probationary.

Applicants normally are expected to provide GRE scores. In the absence of a GRE score, substantial evidence of academic ability should be provided. Even so, an application without a GRE can be very difficult to evaluate. Transcripts from outside the United States can be especially difficult to assess. Students also are expected to submit transcripts from each college or university attended, a statement of objectives, and three letters of recommendation.

Applicants whose native language is not English must provide TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE scores as described at <https://www.k-state.edu/grad/admissions/application-process/international/> if they have not received a degree in the last two years from a United States college or university. All applicants are expected to meet the minimum requirements listed on that page.

### **3. THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

The supervisory committee is responsible for ensuring that the student's doctoral program is of high quality. In consultation with the student, the supervisory committee advises the student on many aspects of the student's Ph.D. program. These aspects include, but are not restricted to, courses to be taken, the Program of Study, field examinations, the preparation of a dissertation, and meeting university and departmental regulations. Many aspects of the student's Ph.D. program require the formal approval of the supervisory committee.

The major professor is the chair of the supervisory committee and is the major advisor of the student. The major professor generally provides the main guidance to the student during the preparation of the dissertation. The major professor generally is chosen on the basis of area of specialization. After becoming familiar with the research areas of the faculty, the student seeks a member of the graduate faculty who is willing to serve as major professor. If the student is continuing for Ph.D. study after completing a Master's degree, the major professor is not necessarily the same faculty member who was the major professor for the Master's degree.

In consultation with the major professor, the student selects the remaining members of the supervisory committee. In addition to the major professor, the supervisory committee must contain at least three other members of the graduate faculty. One member of the supervisory

committee must be a graduate faculty member from outside the department. The student is responsible for finding faculty members willing to serve on the supervisory committee.

The major professor and supervisory committee should be selected by the end of the student's first year of study for the Ph.D. degree. After being approved by the department head or the Director of Graduate Studies, the committee is formally appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The proposed supervisory committee and the proposed Program of Study (see section 4) are submitted simultaneously to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval on the Graduate School form *Program of Study: Doctoral*. Changes in the supervisory committee require the approval of the department head or the Director of Graduate Studies, as well as all members of the supervisory committee, including those individuals to be added or replaced. The department head may sign for faculty no longer on campus. Requests for changes in the supervisory committee are submitted on the Graduate School form *Program/Committee Change Form*.

After the student is admitted to candidacy (see section 7), the Dean of the Graduate School appoints to the supervisory committee a member of the graduate faculty from another department who serves as chairperson for the final oral examination. The committee so constituted is known as the examining committee.

For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

#### **4. THE PROGRAM OF STUDY**

Every doctoral student must file a Program of Study with the Graduate School. The Program of Study is a formal list of the courses the student intends to take to fulfill the requirements of the degree. The student should prepare the Program of Study in consultation with the supervisory committee. The Program of Study should consist solely of courses directly related to the doctorate. The Program of Study should include all the courses required for the Ph.D. in Economics (see section 5) and the courses to be covered in the preliminary examinations (see section 7.2). Transfer credit may be listed on the Program of Study subject to the approval of the supervisory committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student has completed an MA degree at K-State, the 30 hours of transfer credit from K-State should be listed, along with a notation that the courses included are required for the Ph.D.

The Program of Study must be approved by all members of the supervisory committee and either the department head or the director of graduate studies. A Program of Study will not be approved by the Graduate School if it is missing any of the required signatures.

Full-time students should file their programs before the end of their second semester of graduate study. Part-time students should file their programs upon the completion of 9 credit hours. The proposed Program of Study and the proposed supervisory committee (see section 3) are submitted simultaneously to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval on the Graduate School form *Program of Study: Doctoral*. Changes in the Program of Study require the approval of all members of the supervisory committee and either the department head or the Director of Graduate Studies. Requests for changes in the Program of Study are submitted on the Graduate School form *Program/Committee Change Form*.

For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

## 5. REQUIRED COURSES

The Ph.D. requires at least 90 credit hours. At least 30 hours must be for research credit earned in preparation of a dissertation. The remaining 60 hours normally come from course work. Of those, students must complete ECON 830 and ECON 930 with a grade of B or better in each course.

There are 10 required courses:

ECON 735 - Mathematical Economics

ECON 940 - Advanced Microeconomic Theory I

ECON 945 - Advanced Microeconomic Theory II

ECON 805 - Macroeconomic Theory I

ECON 905 - Macroeconomic Theory II

STAT 706 - Basic Elements of Statistical Theory

ECON 830 - Econometrics I

ECON 930 - Econometrics II

One graduate economics course at the 800-level or above in a third field<sup>1</sup>

One of AGECE 901, 905, 923, or 936

The remaining 30 hours of course work is at the discretion of the student, subject to the restriction that all courses must be approved by the major professor and the supervisory

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<sup>1</sup>For example, if a student's two fields are monetary and international economics, an 800- or 900-level course in labor or industrial organization would be acceptable. The substitute course must be taught by the Department of Economics. Students should consult with members of their doctoral committee for recommendations as to which course to take.



committee. While some of the discretionary 30 hours may come from related disciplines, it is expected that the majority of the discretionary 30 hours will come from economics courses.

A student entering the Ph.D. program with a Master's degree (from this or any other institution) may request transfer of up to 30 hours of that degree toward the Ph.D. The number of hours accepted depends upon the relevance of the course work toward the Ph.D., and is decided on a case-by-case basis. The substitution of transfer courses for the required courses listed above is decided on a case-by-case basis.

For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

## **6. GRADE REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1 Graded Work**

Graduate work is graded A, B, C, D, F, credit/no-credit, pass/fail, incomplete, or withdrawn. For graduate credit, the grade in a course must be C or higher. To remain in good standing, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

To be awarded a graduate degree, the student (a) must not be on probation, (b) must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on graduate coursework and on coursework on the program of study, (c) must meet all the requirements of the Graduate School, the student's academic program area, and the student's supervisory committee, and (d) must be enrolled during the semester in which the degree requirements are completed.

### **6.2 Non-Graded Work (pass/fail, credit/no-credit)**

At the discretion of the graduate faculty of the department or interdepartmental committee, seminars in which letter grading conflicts with objectives may be offered on a

credit/no-credit or pass/fail basis. Seminars that are to be so offered must be listed with the Dean of the Graduate School.

All courses in the program of study, except dissertation research and seminars that have been approved for credit/no-credit or pass/fail, must be taken for letter grades. Research for doctoral dissertations is graded credit/no-credit exclusively. Incompletes for research credit hours awarded while research is in progress are not subject to the incomplete policy for course work.

No more than 6 hours of credit/no-credit or pass/fail course work may appear on the program of study for the Ph.D.

Apart from the program of study, courses may be taken credit/no-credit or pass/fail with the approval of the major professor and the professor offering the course. These courses do not apply toward a degree.

### **6.3 Incomplete Policy**

The grade of Incomplete (I) is given in regular courses (other than independent studies, research, and problems) upon request of the student for personal emergencies that are verifiable. The faculty member has the responsibility to provide written notification to the student of the work required to remove the incomplete. The student has the responsibility to take the initiative in completing the work and is expected to make up the I during the first semester in residence at the University after receiving the grade, except for theses, dissertations, and directed research courses. If the student does not make up the I during the first semester in residence after receiving it, a grade may be given by the faculty member without further consultation with the student.

If after the end of the first semester the I remains on the record, it will be designated as F for record keeping and will be computed in the student's GPA, weighted at 0 points per credit. A grade of NR will be treated in a like manner using the designation NX.

## 7. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students must pass three written comprehensive examinations. An examination in microeconomic theory and an examination in macroeconomic theory are required. Together, these two examinations constitute the *qualifying examinations*. An additional examination in a field of the student's choice, subject to supervisory committee approval, is also required. The field examination constitutes the *preliminary examination*. Both qualifying examinations must be passed before the preliminary examination is attempted unless an exemption is granted by the Graduate Committee. Upon passing the qualifying and preliminary examinations the student is admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. The student must be admitted to candidacy at least seven months before the final oral examination may be given.

### 7.1 Qualifying Examinations

When the student has completed ECON 940 and ECON 945, the student should be prepared to take the microeconomic theory qualifying examination. When the student has completed ECON 805 and ECON 905, the student should be prepared to take the macroeconomic theory qualifying examination. For each examination the student is responsible for material covered in the most recent presentation of the relevant courses. Problems need not be based on specific course material. Problems intended to test the student's ability to apply the

concepts developed in the relevant courses are legitimate. Problems intended to test the student's broad understanding of the subject material are also legitimate.

The two qualifying examinations shall be given twice a year, just prior to the beginning of the fall semester and just prior to the beginning of the spring semester. The exams will normally be given in the same week. The student shall notify the Director of Graduate Studies of his or her intention to take the examinations at least four weeks before the examinations are to be given.

Students are expected to take the qualifying examinations as soon as the necessary courses have been completed. In particular, students entering the Ph.D. program in the fall semester on a regular admission basis are expected to take the qualifying examinations in January of the second year, i.e., after three semesters of course work. Students *must* take the qualifying examinations by at least the second offering following completion of the course work in the core area. If a qualifying exam is not taken by the second opportunity, a failure will be recorded for that offering of the exam, unless the Graduate Committee determines that extreme circumstances outside the control of the student prevented the student from taking the exam.

If the student fails a qualifying examination, the student must retake the exam by at least the second opportunity, or another failure is recorded. Failure to pass either qualifying examination on the second attempt shall result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program unless the student successfully appeals to the Graduate Committee for a third and final attempt. A student may petition for a third attempt on one, but not both, of the microeconomics or macroeconomics qualifying examinations. [In other words, a student is limited to a total of five attempts to pass both qualifying examinations and may not attempt any

one qualifying examination more than three times.] Under normal circumstance, such a petition will be considered only if s/he has received a Masters Pass on at least one of the two previous attempts on that examination. If there is sufficient evidence of extenuating circumstances, the Graduate Committee may consider a petition for a third attempt from a student that has not received a Masters Pass on the two previous attempts. Student appeals will include a petition letter, a supporting letter from the student's major advisor, and a written plan describing steps for improving the student's exam performance. A plan should include at least one of the following: (i) sitting in on one or more of the relevant courses covering the exam material, (ii) submission of a satisfactory set of solutions to the most recent qualifying examination.

The Director of Graduate Studies will appoint two of the three examiners for the microeconomics qualifying examination, three examiners for the macroeconomics qualifying examination, and will designate a committee member as chairperson for each of the examining committees. The Director of Graduate Studies in agricultural economics will appoint one member to the microeconomic theory examining committee. Each qualifying examination committee shall be responsible for preparing, administering, and grading the examination. The grade determined by majority vote shall be either Ph.D. pass, Ph.D. fail/Masters pass, or Ph.D. fail/Masters fail. The Director of Graduate Studies shall handle the administration of the qualifying examinations, including scheduling the examinations in accordance with the Graduate Committee guidelines.

## **7.2 Preliminary Examinations**

The preliminary examination consist of a written, comprehensive examination. The examination shall cover a field of economics (excluding microeconomics and macroeconomics). The

preliminary examination shall cover at least six credit hours of course work from courses numbered 800 or above, excluding ECON 830 and ECON 930. The specific course work for the preliminary examination shall be determined by the major professor in consultation with the student and must be approved by the supervisory committee. All course work for the preliminary examination shall appear on the Program of Study.

In the event a student fails a preliminary examination, the student may not retake the examination for at least three months. Two failures in a particular preliminary examination will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program unless the student successfully appeals to the Graduate Committee for a third and final attempt. The Graduate Committee will make the final decision on an appeal.

Field examinations will be prepared and graded by faculty members with expertise in the particular fields, subject to supervisory committee approval. Grades will be pass or fail as determined by the faculty members grading the examination. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the administration of field examinations.

Some fields and the courses that have been covered on the preliminary examinations are:

Econometrics	ECON 935, ECON 938
Industrial Organization	ECON 947, ECON 948
International Economics	ECON 823, ECON 981
Labor Economics	ECON 920, ECON 927
Monetary Economics	ECON 910, ECON 915

This list is not exhaustive. For each field, it is the responsibility of the student to assemble at least two courses that constitute a cohesive area. ECON 890 (Seminar in Economics) may be

used as a course covered in a field examination. The courses constituting a field must be approved by the supervisory committee before the examination is taken.

The preliminary examinations must be completed at least 7 months before the final oral defense of the dissertation. The preliminary examinations may be scheduled after the program of study is filed and at a time deemed appropriate by the supervisory committee. Students must be enrolled the semester that preliminary examinations are taken. Once the supervisory committee and the student set an examination date, the student should complete the Graduate School form *Request For Preliminary Examination Ballot*, one month in advance of the preliminary examination. If all requirements have been met, a ballot will be sent to the major professor by the Graduate School.

For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

## **8. THE DISSERTATION**

A doctoral dissertation must be completed before the awarding of a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate the student's ability to conduct significant original research, to analyze the information obtained from the research, and to present the results in a form acceptable to the supervisory committee. The student generally works closely with the major professor during the preparation of the dissertation. The student should also consult regularly with the other members of the supervisory committee regarding their dissertation work.

Before substantial time is invested in a particular topic, the student shall prepare a written dissertation proposal, including identification of the problem to be studied, a review of literature relevant to that problem, and an outline of the research procedures to be used. The candidate

shall defend that proposal at a seminar. In consultation with the major professor, the student shall schedule the seminar and arrange for the announcement of the time and location to faculty and graduate students in economics and agricultural economics. The presentation shall be open to faculty and graduate students.

The oral defense of the dissertation proposal must be completed at least six months prior to the date of the final Ph.D. oral dissertation defense. Any deviation from this requirement must be approved by all members of the supervisory committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. If the supervisory committee decides that the proposal or the presentation is unsatisfactory, a second oral defense of the dissertation proposal is held after the candidate has submitted a satisfactorily rewritten proposal to the committee.

The tentative completed dissertation is defended in a public final oral examination. The student is responsible for scheduling the final oral examination. The student must submit the form *Approval To Schedule Final Examination: Doctoral* to the Graduate School not less than two weeks prior to the examination. That form requires the signature of the advisor, each committee member, the outside chairperson appointed by the Graduate School, and either the department head or director of graduate studies. The date, time, and place of the examination must be included on the form.

Students should begin the process of scheduling the final examination well in advance of the desired date due to the difficulty of finding a time that all faculty members will be available. The outside chair needs to be included in this scheduling process. It is recommended that the student contact the outside chair early in the semester to confirm that they are still working at the university and that they will be available to participate in the examination that semester. Failure



to include the outside chair in the scheduling process or to confirm the availability of the outside chair well in advance of the desired examination date may cause a delay in the defense and graduation.

Copies of the dissertation must be provided to each member of the final examining committee at least two weeks before the final oral examination. At least three-fourths of the committee must agree that the dissertation is in acceptable form before the final examination may be scheduled. The final oral examination is scheduled by completing the Graduate School form *Approval to Schedule Final Examination: Doctoral*. All departmental graduate faculty must be notified of the time and place of the examination. The notice should include the title of the dissertation. The final oral examination is public, i.e., it is open to all interested individuals.

The candidate normally will be requested to review in 20 or 25 minutes the problem addressed by the dissertation and the analytical procedures and major findings. This presentation will be followed by questions from and discussion with the examining committee over these topics and related topics in the major and minor fields. Regarding the use of visual aids in the presentation of the dissertation, it is the policy of the Graduate Council that “The use of such materials, if admitted by the Chair of the oral examination, should be for the benefit of the committee and not the candidate.” To pass the final oral examination, the candidate must receive the approval of at least three-fourths of the examining committee. With the permission of at least three-fourths of the committee, a failed oral examination may be retaken no sooner than three months from the date of the failure. After the final oral examination is passed, final copies of the dissertation are distributed in accordance with Graduate School guidelines. The dissertation must conform to Graduate School guidelines concerning format and appearance.

For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

## **9. CONCURRENT MA DEGREE**

A student enrolled in the Ph.D. program may choose to pursue an M.A. degree in economics. The requirements for the M.A. degree can be met with 30 credit hours taken for the Ph.D. program and passing both qualifying examinations. It may be possible for a student enrolled in the Ph.D. program to earn an M.A. degree without taking any additional courses beyond those required for the Ph.D. degree. The student should inform the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as the decision to pursue the M.A. degree has been made, but must do so prior to filing a Program of Study for the Ph.D. degree or scheduling the Ph.D. qualifying examinations. The Director of Graduate Studies will notify the Dean of the Graduate School that the student wishes to pursue the M.A. degree.

As soon as possible after notifying the Director of Graduate Studies, the student will file a Program of Study. The Director of Graduate Studies will normally be listed as the Major Professor on the Program of Study, but any eligible faculty member may do so if they are willing. The supervisory committee will consist of the Major Professor plus two other faculty members chosen by the student in consultation with the Major Professor.

The Program of Study for the M.A. degree must be approved by the Graduate School prior to filing a Program of Study for the Ph.D. degree. The 30 hours of coursework used to fulfill the requirements for the M.A. degree should be listed on the Ph.D. Program of Study, along with a notation that the courses included are required for the Ph.D. After the Program of

Study has been approved by the Graduate School, and two weeks before sitting for the second of the two PhD qualifying exams, the student needs to submit to the Graduate School the *Approval to Schedule Final Examination* form. The final examination date should be listed as the date of the second of the two qualifying exams.

## 10. MISCELLANEOUS

### 10.1 Assistantships

Each year the Department of Economics offers assistantships to some of its graduate students. The number of assistantships available in a given year depends on the size of the GTA budget (which the department receives from the College of Arts and Sciences). Because the budget is, regrettably, not large enough to provide financial assistance to every graduate student, representatives of the department (namely, the Department Head and the Director of Graduate Studies) must decide which students are to be offered support. Renewal of support from one year to the next is not guaranteed. These decisions are based on various criteria.

Grades are important, especially in core courses (graduate micro, macro, and econometrics). An A in a core course is weighted more heavily than an A in an applied economics course (especially at the 600-level). In turn, an A in an applied economics course counts more than an A in a course from another department.

Progress toward completing the degree is also important. Graduate students seeking financial assistance are expected to stay on a schedule that allows them to complete their degree in a timely fashion. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, required courses should be

taken as soon as possible, and students in the Ph.D. program should take the qualifying and preliminary exams immediately after they have completed the necessary course work.

Appointment or reappointment to a GTA position depends on suitable progress in terms of grades, courses taken, comprehensive examinations, and compliance with all university requirements.

Because the department relies on graduate students to teach some of its courses, graduate students with the academic ability, composure, and communication skills necessary for classroom instruction will be given a high priority for an assistantship. International students can be considered for classroom teaching positions only if they have received a passing score on the SPEAK test, administered by the English Language Program.

Other things equal, students in the Ph.D. program will be favored over students in the M.A. program, but the type of program is less important than a student's academic record. Students who have completed at least four years in our graduate program will generally be a lower priority for support than students in their first four years unless the department needs the skills of more senior students, e.g., to teach.

## **10.2 Enrollment Requirements**

A student working for a doctorate must be enrolled at Kansas State University during the semester in which the preliminary examination is taken and in each subsequent semester until the degree requirements are met and the dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School, unless a leave of absence is approved by the major professor, department head, and Dean of the Graduate School. Failure to enroll will result in loss of candidacy. To regain candidacy, the student must

successfully petition the Readmission Committee of the Graduate School. For more details and restrictions see the *Graduate Handbook*.

### **10.3 Exceptions**

Unless explicitly stated elsewhere in this document, a request for an exception from the policies in this document should be made in writing by the major professor to the appropriate administrative body, with copies sent to the Director of Graduate Studies and the department head. For policies originating from the Graduate School, the request should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School. For policies originating from the Ph.D. program or the department, the request should be directed to the Graduate Committee. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for information concerning the appropriate direction for the request.