Gatton College | **Ph.D. in Economics**

2021-2022 STUDENT HANDBOOK






GATTON

UK KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

GATTON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS . UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Ph.D. in Economics

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021-22

Table of Contents

Personnel

Department Chair	James P. Ziliak	jziliak@uky.edu
Associate Chair	Ana Maria Herrera	amherrera@uky.edu
Director of Graduate Studies	Carlos Lamarche	clamarche@uky.edu
Administrative Assistant	Jennifer Hart	jennifer.hart@uky.edu
Assistant Director for Graduate Programs	Jeannie Graves	jeannie.graves@uky.edu

Preface

This handbook describes the doctoral program in Economics at the University of Kentucky. It provides a summary of some of the policies and procedures that are relevant to Economics students. This handbook is regularly updated. Our goal is to provide each student in the department with the best opportunity for success in graduate school and professional careers. We welcome suggestions about how the handbook can be more useful.

The appendices offer advice to students along various stages of their graduate work in the hope that it will foster the transition from student to professional economist. It is written based on a four-year plan of study with the full knowledge that many students do not complete all requirements in this period, although we do expect the majority of students to finish within five years.

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive description of the policies and procedures of the Graduate College, Gatton College, or University. Students are advised to consult the Graduate School Bulletin for a comprehensive description of graduate studies at the University of Kentucky. In case of disagreement, the official document of the Graduate School takes precedence over this handbook.

Program Mission

The mission of the doctoral program in economics is to prepare students for successful careers in higher education, at government institutes, "think tanks," corporations and financial institutions: in other words, in places where advanced knowledge and high-level research skills in economics are essential. To accomplish this mission, the program prepares graduates to comprehend and evaluate research, to perform research which advances knowledge, and to provide effective instruction, all within a supportive collegial environment. Specifically, the program is designed to produce students with:

- an understanding of economic theory necessary to apply advanced economic research to real world issues;
- knowledge of the field of economics sufficient to produce state-of-the-art research;
- skills in the quantitative techniques used by the economics profession;
- strong written and oral communication skills.

To this end, students work closely with the Director of Graduate Studies for Economics (hereafter DGS), their advisory committee, and individual faculty, throughout the duration of their course of study.

Program Expectations

Doctoral students are expected to conform to the highest academic, ethical, and professional standards, and to make satisfactory progress toward the degree at every stage of the program.

Role of the Graduate School

Doctoral students are expected to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations of the Graduate School with regard to all stages of progress toward the degree. They are also encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Graduate School for professional development, networking with other graduate students, and enhanced teaching practices. The Graduate School website https://gradschool.uky.edu/ should have the most up-to-date information about Graduate School requirements and events.

Additional Information

Student Rights & Responsibilities: https://www.uky.edu/studentconduct/code-student-conduct
Graduate School Bulletin: https://gradschool.uky.edu/graduate-school-bulletin
DGS Handbook: https://gradschool.uky.edu/directors-graduate-studies

Program Description

On average, it takes five years of full-time study to complete the Ph.D. program in Economics.

Typical Program Structure

First year:
- *Fall*: ECO 590, 601, 602, 603
- *Spring*: ECO 701, 702, 703
- *End of first year (June)*: preliminary exams in macro and micro theory
- Retake in January of second year if necessary

Second year:
- *Fall*: two field courses, ECO 706
- *Spring*: two field courses, ECO 707 or ECO 790
- *End of second year (June)*: Written field exams
- Retake in January of third year if necessary

Third year:

Fall: Most students take three courses: independent study (ECO 797) and additional electives. These are the nine credits of "supporting work" – note that ECO 797 may only count for three of these nine credits (i.e., students must take at least two additional courses, in addition to independent research).
Spring: additional electives, ECO 707, or ECO 790.
Most students propose their dissertation in the spring of the third year, in which case they may elect to register for two credits of dissertation residency credit (ECO 767) for the spring semester. Otherwise, they need to register for nine credits to be considered full time.

Fourth year and beyond:
Fall and Spring: Dissertation research and workshops
After the successful dissertation proposal, the student registers for two credits of ECO 767 (dissertation residency credit) until the dissertation defense has been completed.

Master's Degree

Most students enrolled in the Ph.D. program are eligible for an M.S. degree in Economics after their third semester in the program, provided they pass both of the preliminary exams at the master's level or better, have no grades of incomplete, and have a GPA of at least 3.0.

Information about applying for this degree will be provided at the appropriate time; for a December degree, the deadline to apply is usually mid-September.
See https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates

Orientation and Registration

A two and a half week long orientation for new doctoral students is conducted each year prior to the start of the Fall semester. All new students are required to attend orientation events including:

- Department Orientation
- College Orientation
- Graduate School Orientation.
- Math Camp
- Networking and Social Activities

The complete Orientation Schedule is published on the Gatton College Ph.D. program website and will be provided to new students during the summer.

Registration for Courses

New doctoral students will be able to register during the August Orientation, following consultation with their DGS. Thereafter, students are expected to register for courses during the Advance Priority Registration period. Students who experience problems with registration should contact the DGS or staff in the Office of the Associate Dean.

Orientation and International Students

All new international students are also required to attend these separate Orientation events during the first week of Orientation

- The Office of International Affairs Orientation
- The Graduate School International Teaching Assistant Orientation and Language Screening.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Training
International Teaching Assistants may be asked to undertake additional ESL training under the following circumstances
A. If an ITA fails the initial Fall ITA screening, then the student in question is required to undertake further ESL training during their first academic year as follows.

- Fall semester enrollment in ENG 098 and successful completion of the course
- Spring semester enrollment in DGS recommended courses offered by UK or the UK Center for English as a Second Language

B. A student who passes the ITA screening but nevertheless continues to experience language difficulties may upon the recommendation of the DGS and approval of the Associate Dean be required to take ESL training at any time during their studies. Students who fail to make the recommended improvements in necessary English skills following additional ESL training may be subject to non-renewal of their teaching assistantship.

Degree Requirements

Reprinted from the Graduate School Bulletin, part 2, Economics (https://gradschool.uky.edu/sites/gradschool.uky.edu/files/Bulletin/2018-2019/economics.pdf)

Core Economic Theory- The theory examinations should be taken after completing:

ECO601 - Advanced Microeconomic Theory
ECO602 - Macroeconomic Theory
ECO701 - Neoclassical Microeconomic Theory
ECO702 - Advanced Macroeconomic Theory

OR equivalent courses approved by DGS (this is rare).

Written Examinations ("prelims") - The student must show competence in economic theory as demonstrated by passing departmental written examinations in Microeconomic Theory and Macroeconomic Theory. This examination is given twice a year, in January and June, and students must pass both exams at the Ph.D. level. Students failing the examination are allowed a second attempt; those failing on the second attempt are not permitted to continue in the program. Students typically first take the theory exams in June at the end of their first year in the program.

Statistics/Econometrics-The student must demonstrate competence in the area of statistics and econometrics. This competence may be demonstrated by satisfactory performance in the following courses:

ECO603 - Research Methods and Procedures
ECO703 - Introduction to Econometrics I
ECO706 - Introduction to Econometrics II

ECO707 - Research Seminar in Economics or **ECO 790** - Time Series Analysis

OR by passing a special examination (this is rare).

Elective Areas:

All Ph.D. students must choose two fields of study approved by the student's Advisory Committee. Fields are typically offered every other year or as available. The two fields may be chosen from the following:

- Environmental and Health Economics
- Industrial Organization
- International Economics
- Labor Economics
- Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics
- Public Economics

Minimum course preparation for each field shall consist of at least two courses as determined by the student's Advisory Committee. In addition to the chosen fields, the student is encouraged to take elective courses in other areas of economics, such as econometrics or economic theory, or in other disciplines such as Agricultural Economics, Finance, Marketing, Mathematics, or Public Administration. Courses in other disciplines must be approved by the DGS of Economics in order for them to count toward the economics elective requirements.

Supporting Work: At least nine hours of supporting course work must be selected. These courses must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee. The supporting work will allow the student to pursue more intensive study of one or both of the two chosen fields, or to pursue courses in other fields of economics.

The supporting work cannot consist of 400 or 500 level courses, ECO610 or ECO611, ECO652, or any of the core courses in economic theory (ECO601, ECO602, ECO701, ECO702, ECO704) or econometrics (ECO703, ECO706). Only three of the nine elective hours can be satisfied by taking ECO797.

Grades: A minimum grade point average of 3.0 must be attained in all courses attempted for graduate credit after being admitted to the Graduate School.

Students obtaining more than six quality points below 3.0 will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Substitutions and Waivers: To substitute an alternative course for a required core course, the student must present the alternative course material to the instructor of the core course. The core course instructor must certify to the DGS that the courses are equivalent. A student may receive a waiver for a particular required course if the student demonstrates to the DGS and Advisory Committee (if already appointed, see below) extensive background in the subject area. When a waiver is granted, the DGS and the student's Advisory Committee usually recommend another course to be taken in substitution for the waived course.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination in Economics is composed of a written examination in the student's field of concentration and an oral defense of a dissertation proposal.

Written Examination/Field Exam: The student must demonstrate competence in their chosen field of economics through passing a comprehensive examination ("field exam"). This examination is given twice a year following the academic year in which the field is offered, at the beginning of the eight-week summer session (June), and, if necessary, at the beginning of the spring semester (January). The written examination is prepared and graded by specialists in the respective fields. In the event that the student fails the examination, the student's Advisory Committee and/or the exam committee determines the conditions which must be met before another examination is given. Two failures to pass the written examination constitute failure of the qualifying examination.

Students typically take the field examination in June after completing their second year in the program.

Oral examination/Dissertation Proposal: After the student has passed the written qualifying examination, the Director of Graduate Studies will, on the advice of the Advisory Committee, schedule an oral examination through the Graduate School which will be administered by the Advisory Committee. Each student develops a dissertation proposal with the help of his/her Advisory Committee. The student submits a written, formal dissertation proposal to the Committee for its approval. The examination will ordinarily consist of the presentation and defense of a dissertation proposal.

The student should complete the oral examination prior to the end of the 7th semester in the program.

Dissertation Research Residence Credit

Upon being advised to schedule his/her Qualifying Examination, in order to receive Dissertation Residence Credit for the semester, a student must formally file the date of the oral portion of the Qualifying Examination with the Graduate School no later than six weeks after the semester begins.

Provided the appropriate paperwork is filed with the Graduate School within the first six weeks, the actual examination may take place at any time, as long as that semester is in session. The results of the qualifying examination are reported to the Dean of The Graduate School and are recorded on the student's transcript. Students anticipating satisfactory completion of the

Qualifying Examination should advance register for Residence Credit during Priority Registration the preceding semester.

Once the Qualifying Examination is passed successfully, a candidate must register for dissertation residence credit (ECO 767) every semester (Fall & Spring) until they graduate. Tuition for 2 credit hours is assessed each time.

The Advisory Committee will ask the student to prepare an oral defense of this proposal. The defense will be made primarily to the Committee, but other Gatton College faculty members may also participate. Only the Advisory Committee shall vote on the acceptability of the proposal, which must be accepted formally. As noted above, the oral defense of the dissertation proposal constitutes the oral part of the qualifying exam.

Advisory Committee

Initially, doctoral students are guided and advised by the DGS on matters concerning recommended coursework, research, and academic progress. Subsequently, their Advisory Committee, most particularly their Committee chair ("advisor"), assumes these responsibilities.

Each student is expected to form an Advisory Committee, normally during the third year of study (after passing the field exam). However, students are encouraged to discuss their interests with appropriate faculty members earlier than this; for example, a potential advisor can have helpful insight into supporting classes during the second year, even if the committee has not yet been formed.

Faculty members elect to serve on a student's Advisory Committee at their discretion. The DGS then recommends the composition of the Advisory Committee to the Dean of The Graduate School, and the Committee is formally established. Any revisions to the Committee must be filed with the Graduate School. Please see the Graduate School web page for establishing the formal committee: Committee Selection Form

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the Advisory Committee is formed in a timely manner and that any changes to the committee are filed with the Graduate School as soon as they occur. The advisory committee is typically formed during the third year in the program, and the committee must be formed before the dissertation proposal can be scheduled.

The Advisory Committee consists of a core of at least four members, all of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kentucky. Constituting the core is the major professor ("advisor") as chair, two other committee members from the Economics Department, and a faculty member from outside the Economics Department. At least three of the four members (including the chair or co-chair) must be full members of the Graduate Faculty (in practice, this means that you cannot have more than one assistant professor on your committee, and an assistant professor cannot be the sole chair, although could be a co-chair). Additional faculty members may also serve on the advisory committee.

Outside Member: The Outside member must be selected from a discipline outside Economics. Business Faculty (Accounting, Finance, Management, and Marketing), Agricultural Economics, Education, Geography, Public Policy, Social Work, and Sociology are examples of disciplines where Graduate Faculty have served as Outside Members for doctoral students in Economics.

In the event that a change in the chair is necessary, the chair of the Advisory Committee and/or the DGS share responsibility for helping the student determine the dissertation director.

Ph.D. Dissertation

The dissertation will be based on original research on a significant topic. The dissertation will be defended in an oral examination.

Oral Defense of the Dissertation

The student will be given a final examination to defend the dissertation – the Oral Defense of the Dissertation. The examination may be as comprehensive in the major area as the Committee desires. The Graduate School sets the deadlines for scheduling the defense, you are strongly encouraged to check their website starting the semester before you plan to defend so that you are familiar with these deadlines. See https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates

The following schedule lists the steps and typical deadlines for setting up a dissertation defense, which is coordinated through the Graduate School:

1. A minimum of two months before the final oral defense is to take place
   The "Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination" form with all required signatures should be received in the Graduate School office. The title of the dissertation as well as the dissertation abstract must be included on the form.

2. A minimum of two weeks before the final examination is to be given: The "Request for Final Doctoral Examination" with required signatures should be submitted to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will send announcements of the examination date and location to the student and the members of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee Chair will receive the Final Examination Card.

3. A maximum of two weeks after administration of the final examination: The signed examination card should be returned to the Office of the Associate Dean from where it is forwarded to the Graduate School. Candidates are not permitted to handle the examination card.

4. Within sixty days after the final examination: Electronic copies of the dissertation (ETD) must be submitted to The Graduate School.
   https://gradschool.uky.edu/electronic-dissertation-defense

Dismissal from the Program

Doctoral students are held to the highest academic standards. Failure to meet expectations of academic progress can result in dismissal from the program.

Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress
University of Kentucky Graduate School regulations indicate that a graduate student who does not maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average will be placed on academic probation for the next semester. If the student fails to attain an increase in his or her grade point average to a 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate School. Note that the University of Kentucky does not assign +/- grades; for graduate courses, letter grades are only A, B, C, and E. (A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, E=no credit)

In addition to Graduate School regulations regarding the maintenance of good academic standing (GPA of at least a 3.0), students in the Ph.D. program in Economics may be dismissed from the program under any one of the following conditions:

A. Students will be dismissed if:
1. The student fails the core theory examinations twice.
2. The student fails the field examination twice.
3. The student fails the qualifying re-examination, following a time extension and re-examination.

B. Students may be dismissed if:
1. The student receives more than six credit hours of “C” grades in his/her doctoral program coursework, regardless of the number of offsetting “A” grades (i.e., regardless of overall GPA).
2. The student receives an “E” grade in any of his or her Ph.D. coursework.
3. The student fails the oral portion of the qualifying exam.
4. In the judgment of the student’s Advisory Committee, the student is not making satisfactory progress toward the completion of a dissertation, even if the qualifying exam has been passed. The Advisory Committee will meet at least annually to review the student’s progress. A majority vote by the Advisory Committee will be needed to recommend dismissal.

Appeals Process

The student’s Advisory Committee Chairperson will notify the Director of Graduate Studies for Economics in writing a recommendation for dismissal, who will then notify the Graduate School of the decision to dismiss the student.

In the event of such a dismissal action, the student has the right to appeal his or her dismissal to the Economics Graduate Studies Committee. The decision of that Committee regarding the dismissal appeal shall be final.

The process outlined above in no way precludes a student from using any other avenues of appeal available within the University (such as the University Ombudsman).

Time Limit for the Degree and Qualifying Re-examination

As stated in the Graduate School Bulletin: All degree requirements for the doctorate must be completed within five years following the semester or summer session in which the candidate successfully completes the qualifying examination, but extensions up to an additional 5 years may be requested for a total of 10 years. Extensions up to 1 year may be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Requests for extensions longer than 1 year must be considered by the Graduate Council. All requests should be initiated by the Director of Graduate Studies. If approved, extensions longer than one year will require a retake of the qualifying examination. Failure to pass the re-examination will result in the termination of degree candidacy; a second re-examination is not permitted. Failure to complete all degree requirements within 10 years of initially taking the qualifying examination will also result in the termination of degree candidacy. All pre- and post-qualifying residency requirements must again be met if the student subsequently seeks readmission to the doctoral program.

Leave of Absence/Readmission

As stated in the Graduate School Bulletin: Enrolled graduate students at the University of Kentucky that sit out for one or more semesters will need to complete a new application and pay the application fee in order to be considered for readmission. In many instances this requirement can be avoided by requesting a "leave of absence." …Procedurally, students should contact their Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to seek approval for the leave **prior to the beginning of the semester in question.** If approved, the DGS will contact their Graduate School admissions officer who will modify the record accordingly. No more than two consecutive and four total semesters in leave of absence status may be requested. Post-qualifying doctoral students are not eligible for the leave of absence. International students considering a leave of absence are strongly encouraged to discuss their plans with the Office of International Affairs, Department of Immigration Services prior to making a formal request.

Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Teaching and Research Assistant Rights and Responsibilities:

Teaching Assistants are advised to consult and follow the policies of teaching and research assistants as outlined by the University of Kentucky Administrative Regulation 5:2 (http://www.uky.edu/regs/files/ar/ar5-2.pdf).

Graduate students with full-time Teaching Assistant appointment are expected to work an average of no more than 20 hours per week of work over the assignment period. As indicated in II.B, "Teaching and research assistants are full-time graduate students and should be assigned responsibility requiring no more than fifty (50) percent of their time. Normally for teaching assistants, this would mean service for not more than an average of twenty (20) hours per week including time spent in preparation, classroom and laboratory teaching, grading papers, counseling students, or in any combination of those activities in which teachers are customarily engaged."

At the beginning of the assignment period, faculty members are expected to clearly communicate to the TAs the responsibilities and expectations of the assignment. It is expected that faculty members serve in a mentoring and development capacity for TAs, and as indicated in II.A of Administrative Regulation 5:2, "Teaching assistants shall be carefully supervised and guided in their duties and responsibilities."

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Doctoral students should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the regulations governing students' rights in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook available online at https://www.uky.edu/studentconduct/code-student-conduct

Failure to comply with the regulations as stipulated in the handbook may result in dismissal from the Doctoral Program in Economics.

Two of the most relevant sections are included below, although students are expected to abide by all University regulations.

Articles of the Code of Student Conduct:

- All students shall be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, age, beliefs, or disability. (See *Governing Regulation XIV.B.1* http://www.uky.edu/regs/files/gr/gr14.pdf)

- Students have the right to be free from harassment, including sexual harassment, by UK Employees, and other Students. For purposes of the Code, harassment means conduct so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it substantially interferes with the ability of a person to work, learn, live or participate in, or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by UK. Sexual harassment - a form of sex discrimination - includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical actions of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the Student's status in a course, program or activity; or is used as a basis for academic or other decisions affecting such Student; or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the Student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. This provision shall not be used to discipline students for speech protected by the First Amendment. (See *Administrative Regulation 6:1* http://www.uky.edu/regs/files/ar/ar6-1.pdf)

Some FAQs from the University: https://www.uky.edu/eeo/faqs

Article 6.3 Academic Offenses and Procedures
Students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records (US: 3/7/88: 3/20/89)

6.3.1 Plagiarism

All academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or selfexpression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or content from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work (including, but not limited to a published article, a book, a website, computer code, or a paper from a friend) without clear attribution. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be, except under specific circumstances (e.g. Writing Center review, peer review) allowed by the Instructor of Record or that person's designee. Plagiarism may also include double submission, self-plagiarism, or unauthorized resubmission of one's own work, as defined by the instructor.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, except where prohibited by the Instructor of Record (e.g. individual take-home exams). However, the actual work must be done by the student, and the student alone, unless collaboration is allowed by the Instructor of Record (e.g. group projects). When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these *Rules* shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

6.3.2. Cheating

Cheating is defined by its general usage. It includes, but is not limited to, the wrongfully giving, taking, or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another on any academic work which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade. The fact that a student could not have benefited from an action is not by itself proof that the action does not constitute cheating. Any question of definition shall be referred to the University Appeals Board

6.3.3. Falsification or Misuse of Academic Records (US: 3/20/89)

Maintaining the integrity, accuracy, and appropriate privacy of student academic records is an essential administrative function of the University and a basic protection of all students. Accordingly, the actual or attempted falsification, theft, misrepresentation or other alteration or misuse of any official academic record of the University, specifically including knowingly having unauthorized access to such records or the unauthorized disclosure of information contained in such records, is a serious academic offense. As used in this context, "academic record" includes all paper and electronic versions of the partial or complete permanent academic record, all official and unofficial academic transcripts, application documents and admission credentials, and all academic record transaction documents. The minimum sanction for falsification, including the omission of information, or attempted falsification or other misuse of academic records as described in this section is suspension for one semester.

Financial Assistance

Qualified students may be awarded financial assistance through the Economics Department of the College of Business and Economics and The Graduate School. The majority of doctoral students receive financial assistance in the form of Teaching or Research Assistantships. Assistantship continuations are contingent upon demonstration of satisfactory academic progress in the program and satisfactory performance of assistantship responsibilities. For first-year students, this includes satisfactory completion of coursework. For second-year students, this includes continued satisfactory completion of coursework, and passing the theory "prelim" exams. For third-year students, this includes continued satisfactory completion of coursework, passing both the theory and field portion of the qualifying exam. For fourth-year students this includes continued satisfactory completion of coursework, passing both the theory and field portion of the qualifying exam, and passing the oral portion of the qualifying exam. After passing the qualifying exam, students must continue to make progress on their dissertation research by presenting this research in public formats including, but not limited to the distribution of draft research papers or chapters, presentation of research in departmental seminars, or presentation of research at professional conferences.

Teaching Assistantships: The College of Business and Economics awards a number of teaching assistantships each year. New students are notified of their assistantship by an award letter issued at the time of admission. Continuing students receive notification of continuation of their assistantship for the following academic year by March 1 of the preceding academic year. Students generally teach two sections of an introductory level course in their major area.

Research Assistantships: Research assistants work with a professor on a research project. Also offered through the College, research assistantships typically provide comparable stipends to the teaching assistantships. An award letter is issued at the time of the appointment to the research assistantship.

Termination of Financial Support due to Unsatisfactory Performance of Assistantship Duties

As Graduate Assistants are regarded as employees of the University of Kentucky, they are expected to perform the duties assigned by their academic unit head, other administrative unit or research center director in return for the compensation they receive. These responsibilities are outlined in more detail in the contracts.

Graduate Student assignment expectations

1. Full time graduate assistants are expected to devote up to 20 hours a week to their assigned duties, half time assistants up to 10 hours a week.
2. Perform their duties in a timely and prompt fashion.
3. Meet all deadlines as required or requested.
4. Report regularly to faculty supervisors.
5. Implement any recommendations they receive on performance improvement.

6. In case of sudden illness, an emergency or an unavoidable absence, graduate assistants are expected to inform their faculty supervisor and their DGS in as timely manner as possible.
7. In the event of a planned short-term temporary absence, assistants are expected to apply for leave of absence from their faculty supervisor at least ten days in advance of the anticipated absence.
8. If an assistant needs to be absent for a semester then leave of absence must be requested and approved the semester before the anticipated absence.

   Graduate Assistants who fail to meet any of these expectations are, upon review of the unsatisfactory performance by the supervisor, DGS, Department Chair, and the associate dean, subject to

   - Withdrawal of their assistantship during the academic year
   - Non-renewal of the assistantship in subsequent years
   - Having to reapply for admission to the program

Additional Financial Support

The Graduate School website maintains a list of fellowship opportunities, both through the University and more general: https://gradschool.uky.edu/fellowships

There are additional fellowships available through the Gatton College. The Director of Graduate Studies, together with the Graduate Studies Committee, nominates suitably qualified individuals for these fellowships.

Other Support

For advanced doctoral students, the Graduate School also offers a limited range of support funding for research expenses and presentations at professional conferences and meetings.

College funds for dissertation research support are also available once a student has successfully defended the dissertation proposal. Application for such support is made through the Office of the Associate Dean.

Placement

Faculty members actively assist students in obtaining employment. During the fall of the year that a candidate enters the job market, the DGS and the student's advisor provide additional guidelines about the application process: identifying appropriate job openings, finalizing the job market paper, requesting recommendation letters, and the application process. In addition, students typically present their job market paper to faculty and students in the department, and participate in mock interviews with faculty members.

APPENDIX I: Students' Survival Guide

By James P. Ziliak,
Gatton Endowed Chair in Microeconomics
Director, Center for Poverty Research
Chair, Department of Economics
University of Kentucky
(as written for the 2001-2002 University of Oregon Graduate Student Handbook)

Year 1: Surviving the Core

The first year of graduate school is both exciting and intense. It is a period where many lifelong friendships are established because of the shared experience of the first-year coursework. For many incoming students with liberal arts backgrounds, the first year is often challenging because of the mathematical and analytical rigor of the class material, which at times seems quite distant from the intuitive approach found in most undergraduate courses. This material is designed to establish a common language used by the professional economist, regardless of their ultimate area of expertise.

What Are The Qualifying Exams?

The examinations in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory are an opportunity for the student to reflect on the many new concepts encountered during the first year, and to bring them together in a cohesive fashion. The material for each exam typically is taken from the coursework covered during the academic year. However, as a key objective of the Core is to help engender methods of analyzing complex economic problems, questions not directly from the courses are a distinct possibility. The questions are designed to test your ability to use the techniques covered in the core courses, and also your ability to apply those techniques to model solutions to problems that are new to you.

Tips On Preparing For The Qualifying Exams

- Stay on top of your coursework. This includes not only obvious things like attending your classes and doing homework, but also going a step beyond such as forming study groups to work on problems related, but not identical, to those assigned by the instructor. If you fall behind for a few days it is very difficult to catch up because of the wealth of new material that is delivered with each lecture. Remember, one of the goals of the first year is create a toolkit for future use in your research and teaching, and this needs constant attention.
- Review previous coursework at regular intervals. For example during the second semester it is beneficial to periodically review what was covered in the first semester.
- Obtain copies of previous exams to help gauge the scope and content of tests administered to previous cohorts. Also, seek advice from fellow graduate students who passed the exams and are now in the second year and beyond.
- Think like an economist!

Other Helpful Hints For The First Year

- A good teaching record at all levels of instruction is a very important part of your overall performance as a graduate student, regardless of whether or not you ultimately end up in academia.
- Set realistic work habits, and make sure to use the resources around you, including fellow students in the form of study groups. In addition, while trying to keep distractions at a minimum, a well-balanced approach is to your work is healthy so you want to make sure to 'blow off steam' periodically by taking advantage of the nearby amenities.

Year Two: Finding Your Comparative Advantage

Congratulations on passing the Core! You've demonstrated competency in the fundamental tools of being a professional economist, and are now in a position to create your own path for graduate studies. Some students know exactly the fields in which they wish to specialize in prior to entering graduate school and plow ahead with their planned course of study in the second year, but for many others fog covers the pathway and thus they spend the second year searching for fields of specialization. One of the finest ways to help in the transition is to browse professional publications as well as the popular press. For example, journals such as the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* and the *Journal of Economic Literature* offer survey papers across a variety of fields that are accessible to a wide audience. Examining a broad range of topics and the methods employed to address the issues will help you understand your own preferences and skills.

Another resource at your fingertips is the extensive departmental-wide seminar series. The department brings in speakers from around the country and world to present their latest research—it's a great way to see research in action!

Field Paper

The field paper is a huge step for many students because it is often the first foray into original research. As such it can be fraught with anxiety. This is natural, and like the Core, is a shared experience with your peers. It is important to realize that **the field paper is not a dissertation prospectus**. Instead, in lieu of field-specific examinations, the field paper is designed to demonstrate your competency to conduct research in one of your fields of interest. It often lays the groundwork for a more advanced treatment of the topic in your dissertation, but there is no necessary connection between the field paper and dissertation.

Here are a few tips about writing the field paper:

- Choose to specialize in an area for which you have a demonstrated passion. Academic research should not be viewed as drudgery, but rather an avenue to advance scientific knowledge. This process is made much easier if you care deeply about your areas of specialization, not only the topics but also the research methodology.
- Make liberal use of online literature databases while scoping out topics in which you are potentially interested. These resources can give you a feel for the literature and the main "players" long before you actually hit the library.

- Attend departmental seminars throughout your second year to witness first hand how research is conducted and presented. In addition you should check online the library regularly with the explicit intention of “surfing” through journals for ideas.
- Choose an advisor that is the best match for you. You should consider not only the advisor’s area of specialization but also whether you are likely to have a good working relationship. Again, this advisor may or may not turn out to be your dissertation advisor; however, the field paper is likely to take around six months or so to complete so you want to find an advisor that is most likely to help you attain your goals.
- Focus, focus, focus! You are unlikely to turn the profession on its head with your field paper, so focusing on one topic or a select few and exploring them in detail often turns out to be a fruitful way to proceed.

Basic Protocol For Good Working Relations With Your Advisor

Respect your advisor’s time. Most faculty view advising as an extension of their teaching and research responsibilities, and thus embrace the opportunity to advise students. At the same time it is a privilege and not a right to be advised by a faculty member. Academics are an idiosyncratic lot, and thus you should have a discussion upfront with your advisor regarding the parameters of your working relationship. However, most prefer that students:

- come prepared for every meeting. For example, ‘parking’ in their office for extended periods while fumbling around for papers, ideas, etc… is generally frowned upon.
- respect their office hours and/or appointment times. Some may have an open door policy, but others may not. Make sure to find this out early in the relationship.
- do not expect faculty (necessarily) to come looking for you at regular intervals to check on your progress. Students sometimes procrastinate about checking in with their advisors because they feel that they do not have enough to show for their last week(s) of progress. It is sometimes better to admit that you are mired and ask for a nudge in the appropriate direction, rather than to assume that “a miracle will soon occur and everything will fall into place so I report to my advisor with a fait accompli”.
- follow generally accepted rules regarding format and structure of the field paper. This includes separate sections of title page, abstract, introduction, background/literature review, model, data (if applicable), results, conclusion, references, figures, and tables. Simple things like stapling the paper, and not turning in papers with coffee stains or that have been trampled by the family pet, etc…can go a long way. **Remember, what you submit to your committee is a reflection of you!**

Preparing A Literature Review

While the details of the field paper content differ across the faculty most require some review of the literature. The following tips are highly instructive:

- Use all modern resources available for conducting your initial triage of the broader literature in order to narrow down your topic to a tractable size.
- What are the main ideas and contributions that form the core of the literature?
- Which papers are most important?
- Have there been controversies and how have they been resolved?
- What are common mistakes and/or assumptions made by the papers?

- What are the current deficiencies and unresolved issues as you see them?
- Are there important connections to other topics?
- Has the emphasis been more empirical or theoretical? Why?

Year Three: In Search Of An Idea

The third year of graduate studies is a period of transition from coursework and the field paper to the dissertation. It is also not uncommon for the student to complete any remaining coursework requirements. Because of this there is less likely to be a 'typical plan of study' as in the first two years.

In addition to course and research responsibilities, most of our students have the opportunity to teach one or more courses. This is a fundamental part of your development as a professional economist as it offers the chance to bring your knowledge of economics to bear in front of an untrained audience.

Dissertation Proposal

The focal point of the third year of study is coming up with a topic for your dissertation. Is this easy? No. Is it impossible? No again. For some the field paper flows nicely into a topic for the dissertation, while for others the correlation is near zero (rarely negative though). Choosing your thesis chair (and committee) is much more important than choosing your field committee, both because the stakes are higher and because the process is longer. Once you have settled on a chairperson, he/she will offer guidance on filling out the remainder of your committee.

Advice is cheap (like this User's Guide) and economists feel especially compelled to dole out advice even when it is not requested. In the case of the prospectus, though, seeking out advice from a variety of sources is especially important. David Levine, an economist in the Haas School of Business at the University of California-Berkeley, has a web page devoted to 'cheap advice' (http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/levine/cheap_advice.html) and offers the following tips for writing a dissertation:

- "Hints for finding paper topics: Choosing a paper topic requires balancing the importance and feasibility of the topic. Feasibility involves tractability for theoretical research, and data availability for empirical research. I recommend creating a number of one-page paper proposals, each with a topic sentence and data source. There are several heuristics for finding researchable paper topics. One way is to list three or four papers you like. This list may hint at the style, political point of view, level of abstraction, and methods that are appropriate for you. Other paper ideas are motivated by bad research, not good: find statements by policy-makers, analysts and journalists that make you angry, and find data sets to address the issue. When studying for exams, keep a list of stupid things you read to return to during the dissertation stage. Don't be afraid of normal science: repeating in a longitudinal data set what others have done only in the cross section. Some paper ideas are data-driven: read codebooks from a variety of data sets and see if certain questions spark ideas or tests of theories you find interesting. For every paper you read, think what else you would have done with that dataset or methodology.
- Write a paper, not a dissertation. A dissertation can be a daunting prospect. If possible, focus on a 25-page paper with a clear one-sentence topic. If you like this paper, then it

can become the basis of a dissertation. I promise you that just about any topic can grow to 150 pages; nearly all topics students first choose are WAY too broad.

- A dissertation is any stack of papers with three signatures on the top sheet. Paul Samuelson's dissertation was modestly entitled Foundations of Economics. It lived up to that title, and remains a classic to this day. I initially felt that my dissertation should be, if not that good, at least vaguely comparable in the sense of answering one of the Big Questions. Do not fall prey, as I did, to the "magnum opus fallacy". A dissertation should be normal science that certifies your competency. Save the big thoughts in a file, and get finished! Write an opus when you are a professor, and are being paid for it. Meanwhile, negotiate the smallest useful chunk of the Big Project with your dissertation advisers, and do that single piece of research.
- A dissertation group is essential. Having folks to bounce your ideas off of at an early stage is irreplaceable. The members of your dissertation group do not need to have similar fields; any smart person will be useful at each stage of a project, from vague ideas through research design, and write up. All you need are people who are willing to listen to raw ideas, and willing to read first "pre-drafts" of chapters."

Intelligent people may quibble with some of the details offered by Professor Levine, but the general thrust is right on target. Hone in on a topic, narrow it down into something manageable, write a paper, and build it into a dissertation. Importantly, don't forget to choose a topic that is fun and exciting to you! (It is a rare Ph.D. student who can get through a dissertation without being somewhat bored by the topic at the end. If you begin with anything less than great enthusiasm, it will be difficult to survive the inevitable downward trend.)

Some ultimately choose a different path whereby instead of a single topic the dissertation is composed of two or three essays. The essays may or may not be directly related to one another—these are issues to be negotiated with the chair of your thesis committee—but offer the advantage of being 'journal' ready.

Year Four: The Dissertation and Job Hunting

Your attention at this stage of graduate schooling should be devoted to the execution of the doctoral dissertation and the search for gainful employment. At times the process of the dissertation can seem a grind because most students have never devoted so much time and energy to complete one project in their lives. The process can be assisted greatly by being organized in your thoughts, maintaining a regular work schedule (whether it is 8am-5pm or 11pm-8am—the point is to establish a consistent pattern), and maintaining open and regular channels of communication with your committee chair. It is easy to get distracted by other matters and to wander aimlessly at times—the key is to focus on completing the dissertation, and to jealously protect your research time.

When Is The Dissertation Complete?

The dissertation is considered completed when your chair and committee say so. Again there is sizable variation across the faculty in terms of how much detail is contained in the dissertation, but if there is good communication between the student and committee there should be no 'surprises' as to the thesis requirements. Once the chair and committee agree that it is near completion **the student is expected to**:

- set up a date to defend the dissertation. This date must accommodate the schedule of the committee, be open to all faculty in Economics, and conform to the university academic calendar.
- obtain a form that is to be signed by all committee members stating that the student is ready to defend. A copy of the final draft of the dissertation must be turned in to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense, and you must check with each advisor as to how far in advance they require the prospectus prior to signing the form.
- send a gentle reminder to your committee a couple of days prior to your defense, and make sure you show up to defend the prospectus on the date assigned.
- submit the final draft to the graduate school to make sure it conforms to university policies such as formatting.

Job Hunting

Most students enter the job market after defending the dissertation defense, but prior to final completion of the dissertation. The jobs that our graduates seek span the spectrum available—research-oriented universities, research organizations and institutions, teaching-oriented universities and colleges, and private-sector concerns. The primary job market for economists takes place once a year at the Allied Social Sciences Association (ASSA) meetings, which are typically held during the first week of January. However, many tasks must be completed prior to the meetings. Below is a timeline of tips for those going on the job market.

In September the student should:

- Complete a job market paper (or papers).
- Verify with your advisor on your job readiness. You need his/her approval first, then the approval of your committee (who will likely write letters of recommendation).
- Attend the department-sponsored job-market meeting.
- Write vitae and sample cover letters, and show them to your advisors.
- Get letters of recommendation. Allow at least one month's lead time for letters. Provide your recommenders with a copy of your vitae, teaching evaluations, and a brief statement about your professional goals.
- Get a room and a plane ticket to the ASSA meetings. Purchase whatever attire is necessary to dress and appear in a business-like fashion.

In October and November the student should:

- Go through the *Job Openings for Economists* (JOE), which is the primary advertising outlet (see https://www.aeaweb.org/joe/), and perhaps also the *Chronicles of Higher Education*. Make lists of the jobs you are interested in and go through the list with your thesis chair.
- Give a seminar to the faculty based on your job-market paper, and follow up with as many members of the audience as possible for feedback about your talk—not only the substance, but also the style. It is invaluable to get constructive comments from those "in-house" who know your background and are concerned about your job-market success. Better to hone your paper(s) among 'family' than among 'strangers'!

- Send out packets with a letter of introduction, vitae, research paper, transcript, and teaching evaluations.
- Wait for people to call and schedule interviews with you at the meetings. Some years, not much will happen until the last minute. Be sure to clear your social/travel calendar so that you are available to receive calls and schedule appointments.

In late November/early December the student should:

- Contact our DGS to arrange practice interviews with faculty.

In January the student should:

- Go to the ASSA interviews, talk about your work, teaching, ask about their school. (Don't start your spiel with "My dissertation is about…". Instead, say "My current research focuses on…". Talk as though you already had a couple of years of experience in the kind of job you are looking for. If you want to be an assistant professor somewhere, for example, observe how assistant professors conduct themselves and take notes.)
- Wait for them to call you back and schedule a fly-out.
- Fly to the school, talk to the faculty, go out to dinner, give your talk, and possibly teach a class. Try very hard not to get sick during this period. Get enough sleep, and take your vitamins (or whatever else seems to work for you).
- Send a note to the department head and/or search-committee chair thanking them for the visit.
- Wait for them to offer you the job. Once you get your first fly-out, it is permissible to drop an email to other nearby prospects letting them know that you will be in the area, since X is flying you out, in case they are planning to invite you for an interview.

Additional details regarding certain aspects of the job hunt include:

- Letters:

  You will need 3 letters of recommendation. Your advisor is a must, and committee members usually write the other letters, but you should consult with your advisor regarding who would compose your best set of references. Don't hesitate to ask people what sort of letter they feel they will be able to write for you, in particular whether they will recommend you for research, teaching jobs, etc.

  In general the letters play to the strengths of the individual student (i.e. research, teaching, level of collegiality) and frequently are tailored to the job under consideration. With few exceptions, the letters will discuss your dissertation. The writer will summarize it, explain how it relates to the literature, explain how important it is and why, and possibly speculate where they think you will get it published. Aside from the dissertation the letters discuss your teaching, work ethic, coursework performance, etc… For teaching-oriented positions the letter writer will often focus heavily on your teaching experience and performance.

The key to getting good letters, and promptly, is to provide the writers with a copy of your vitae and of your paper(s), the sooner the better. In addition, providing a copy of your teaching evaluations and a short personal statement of your professional goals is very helpful. You should also be prepared to discuss with them why you think the work is important, how it fits with the literature, etc… Your job is to make it easy for people to write you a good letter.

- Packets:

Your packet will contain your vita, transcripts, and paper(s) and a letter from you. Go over your vita and letter with your advisor, make sure it contains info about your research, lists all your teaching, mentions future research and teaching interests, and so on.

You should probably prepare different cover letters, for different types of jobs. For example, one letter might emphasize teaching, and another might emphasize research. The teaching letter should probably include something about your philosophy of teaching. For jobs that you really, really want, go to that department's website and personalize your letter.

You will want to include info on how to contact you on your vita (e.g. phone, email, etc).

- Interviews:

Register for the ASSA meetings, and get a hotel room. Try to get a room at one of the main hotels, or near them. The job market typically starts a day before the meetings, so plan on arriving early. Get tickets soon, before they are expensive. Remember, the life-cycle hypothesis was written with you in mind. Getting a job is expensive. You may not get reimbursed for fly backs for months. Start applying for those credit cards now.

In mid to late December people will contact you to set up interviews at the meetings. These typically last 30 minutes. There will be 2 to 6 faculty sitting in a hotel room. They'll introduce themselves, chat w/ you for a minute, and then ask you about your work. You'll give a 5-15 minute spiel about your dissertation and why it's interesting. Maybe they will interrupt, maybe not.   Then you'll get questions about what research you are planning next, about teaching, and so on. At the end, you get a chance to ask them questions about what the town is like, how serious the undergrads are, and so on. (Strangely, asking about salary at this point is bad form, even among economists.) This part of the interview is quite important. If they fly you out they are spending a lot of money and time. If they offer you a job, they can't offer it to anyone else for the week or so that they give you to think about it. You want to convince them at the interview that you are really interested in this job, and that if they end up making you an offer you will be considering the job seriously. Assuming it's true, of course.

In early December practice interviews will be set up by the DGS, where you meet with a few faculty members and talk about your research, teaching, future plans, etc. These are modeled after the interviews at the ASSA meetings. They are very important; indeed, we expect you to show up in your interview clothes!

- Fly-backs:

  Anytime from right after the meetings to March people will call you to schedule flybacks. Typically, you will meet w/ faculty individually, give a talk to the faculty based on your job-market paper, and, if it's a teaching school, maybe teach a class to the undergraduates.

  It is essential that you practice your job market talk and interviewing. Schedule a department seminar, and before that set up practice talks with each other.

APPENDIX II: How to Choose A Thesis Advisor

By Michael C. Loui
Associate Dean of the Graduate College
Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

February 5, 1997
Revised January 24, 2004

Choosing a thesis advisor is the most important decision of your life--perhaps more important than choosing a spouse--because your choice affects everything you will do in your career. Indeed, choosing an advisor is similar to getting married: it is making a long-term commitment. Unlike marriage, however, a good advising relationship should end successfully within a few years. Also, unlike husband and wife, the advisor and student do not start as equals. At first, the relationship is essentially an apprenticeship. But although you start as an apprentice, ideally, you should end as a colleague.

As you consider which professor might serve as an advisor, you should first formulate your goals in undertaking thesis research. A thesis demonstrates your ability to make an original, significant contribution to the corpus of human knowledge. Through your thesis project, you develop skills useful in any career: critical reading of the scholarly or scientific literature, formulation and solution of a problem, clear written and oral communication of the results. Furthermore, you learn the practices of a particular scholarly community: theoretical frameworks and experimental paradigms, publication processes, and standards of professional behavior. You learn how to present a paper at a seminar or a conference, and how to give and receive criticism.

You should seek a thesis advisor who can help you meet your goals, and whose working style is compatible with yours. Here are some specific steps that you can take to find an advisor.

Take a course with a potential advisor, possibly individual study. In an individual study course, you can learn about the professor's working style, with a limited, one semester commitment between you and the professor. The individual study course might involve directed reading, with the goal of producing a survey article that could serve as the basis for a thesis. Or the individual study course might involve a small project in the professor's laboratory.

Ask for copies of grant proposals that describe research projects of possible interest to you. A grant proposal states research problems, explains the importance of the problems in the context of other research, and describes recent progress, including the professor's contributions. Usually, a proposal includes references to journal articles and books that you can look up. You do not need the budget part of the proposal, which contains confidential information about salaries.

Consider working with two advisors. If you are interested in an interdisciplinary project, then you could engage two official advisors, one in each discipline. Even if you choose only one official advisor, you may occasionally seek advice from a second professor, who can provide an alternate perspective. Some departments institutionalize this practice by requiring that the chair of a doctoral committee be different from the thesis advisor. Discuss these arrangements with both professors openly, to minimize possible misunderstandings about each professor's role.

Interview a potential advisor. Before the interview, read some articles written by the professor so that you can ask intelligent questions about the professor's research interests. Prepare several questions such as the following. What are the professor's standards and expectations for the quality of the thesis, such as the overall length? Will the professor help formulate the research topic?

How quickly will the professor review drafts of manuscripts? Will the professor help you improve writing and speaking skills? Will the professor encourage publication of your work?

Will the professor provide equipment and materials? Will the professor obtain financial support such as funds to travel to conferences or research assistantships? Will the professor help you find appropriate employment? Where have former students gone?

What will your responsibilities be? Will you write proposals or make presentations to research sponsors?

How frequently will you meet with the professor? *The most common problem in the humanities and social sciences is insufficiently frequent contact with the advisor*. I meet with each of my own thesis students individually for one hour each week, in addition to a weekly group meeting.

What are the obligations to the project funding source? How frequently are reports required? Are deliverables promised? Could publications be delayed by a patent filing? Are there potential conflicts of interest?

How will decisions on co-authorship of papers be made? In engineering and natural sciences, co-authorship is common, but practices vary by discipline. Sometimes, the advisor's name always goes last. Sometimes, the order of names is alphabetical. Sometimes, the first author is the person whose contribution was greatest.

Interview former students. Students who have graduated are more likely to answer your questions candidly than current students. Ask a potential advisor for names and e-mail addresses of former students, whom you can contact.

Was a former student's project unnecessarily prolonged? Did anyone not finish? Why not? Many projects suffer unanticipated delays. Occasionally, for various reasons--not always the advisor's fault--students do not finish theses and dissertations.

How were conflicts resolved? When you work closely with someone else, disagreements are inevitable. The key question is whether conflicts were handled respectfully, with satisfactory resolutions.