This handbook is reissued each summer. It represents the policies and degree requirements of the Department of Economics as of the date on the cover.

The requirements in this document are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, the general degree requirements and the policies on satisfactory progress, probation and exclusion adopted by The Graduate School (TGS) of Northwestern University.

Updates to the handbook during the academic year are be posted on the Department’s website: https://www.economics.northwestern.edu under the “Graduate” tab, and in the Department’s Graduate Connection newsletter which is issued at the beginning of September, December, and March.
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Ph.D. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core Courses:</strong></td>
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<td>ECON 410-1,2,3 Microeconomics</td>
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<td>ECON 411-1,2,3 Macroeconomics</td>
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<td>ECON 480-1,2,3 Introduction to Econometrics</td>
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<td><strong>Nine Approved Field Courses that must include:</strong></td>
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<td>(a) At least one course in Economic History</td>
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<td>(or) ECON 420-2 Advanced Topics in American</td>
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<td>Economic History</td>
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<td>(or) ECON 420-2 Advanced Topics in European</td>
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<td>Economic History</td>
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<td>(b) Three field sequences of at least two- quarters each. A field sequence consists of two or three quarter-length courses as determined by the department.</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td><strong>Total Required Units:</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
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Other Ph.D. Degree Requirements

*Examinations:* satisfactory grades in each of the three core areas (microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics); oral examination for approval of dissertation prospectus

*Research/Projects:* two research papers presented in the student seminar (ECON 501) or equivalent

*Ph.D. Dissertation:* original, independent research

*Final Evaluations:* oral dissertation defense

*Supervised Teaching Experience:* All doctoral students are required to act as a teaching assistant for at least one quarter. As part of these duties, the student must lead a weekly discussion section. Teaching experience is an essential part of graduate training. Foreign students must demonstrate acceptable English proficiency as prescribed by TGS. Evaluations are made and kept as part of the students’ record.

M.A. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The department does not normally admit students for a terminal M.A. degree. Economics doctoral students who complete the ECON 410, ECON 411, ECON 480 sequences with a B average are eligible to receive the M.A. degree. Students must file for the master’s degree within five years of initial registration as a graduate student.

Northwestern Ph.D. students in other departments interested in obtaining an Ad-hoc Combined Master’s degree in Economics should consult the separate Handbook.
FINANCIAL ECONOMICS Ph.D. PROGRAM

The Department of Economics and the Finance Department in the Kellogg School of Management have a joint Ph.D. degree in Financial Economics. Students enrolled in that program should consult the student handbook for that program and not this document. Both programs have common first year requirements.

There are two points of entry into the joint program. The first is a direct application when applying to graduate school at Northwestern. Admission requires approved by both the Economics and the Finance admissions committees.

The second is for students initially enrolled in the Economics Ph.D. program to apply for entry after achieving candidacy. (Students initially enrolled in the Finance Ph.D. program can do the same.) Economics students should initiate the process by contacting the Economics Director of Graduate Studies immediately after candidacy. Applications must be approved by both the Economics and the Finance admissions committees. If the application is approved, the student initiates a degree transfer request to TGS.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

This section summarizes important deadlines and criteria for maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress can lead to probation and ultimately exclusion (dismissal) from the program and Northwestern University. These conditions should be read in conjunction with the general degree requirements and the policies on satisfactory progress, probation, and exclusion of TGS.

Milestones are extended for students on an approved leave of absence or with approved parental accommodation. See the TGS website for details.

GRADES AND CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Students must maintain an overall cumulative grade average of B (3.0 GPA), and not have more than three incomplete (Y or X) grades. Students not meeting this requirement are placed on probation by TGS. Students on probation have two quarters (excluding summers) to remediate their grades or else are excluded from the program and Northwestern University.

ENROLLMENT IN FIRST YEAR CLASSES

Students must enroll for letter grade in Economics 410-1,2,3, 411-1,2,3 and 480-1,2,3 during their first year. Failure to enroll or dropping any of these classes, except in the case of an approved leave, results in exclusion from the Ph.D. program. There is no additional remediation period associated with this requirement.
CANDIDACY

All qualifying examinations must be completed by the end of the Spring Quarter of the second year of study (the seventh quarter of study). A student failing to pass all three qualifying examinations by this time is excluded from the program and Northwestern University. There is no additional remediation period associated with this milestone.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

Students must complete the coursework component of the Ph.D. degree and have their prospectus (dissertation proposal) approved by their committee no later than the end of the Fall Quarter in their fourth year of study, which falls on the last date of the 13th quarter of study. Any student not meeting this milestone is placed on Departmental probation. A student who fails to resume satisfactory academic standing within two quarters, which is the say the last date of the Spring Quarter in their fourth year of study (last date of the 15th quarter of study), is excluded from the program and Northwestern University.

GOOD PROGRESS ON DISSERTATION

Students in their fifth year and above must be certified as making “good progress” on their dissertation by July 31 at the end of each year. A student not meeting this milestone is placed on Departmental probation. Students are removed from probation if their thesis advisor writes to the Director of Graduate Studies advising that satisfactory progress has resumed. A student who fails to resume good progress within two quarters, which is the say the last date of the following Winter Quarter, is excluded from the program and Northwestern University.

TIME LIMIT

Students must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. within nine years (36 quarters of study) of initial registration in TGS. After nine years, students are placed on probation by TGS. Students who have exceeded their time-to-degree deadline and cannot remediate within the two-quarter probationary period may petition for a one-time extension. Information on the conditions and requirements for an extension can be found on TGS's website.

GOALS FOR FIRST YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS

CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In their first year, graduate students are required to take the following courses:

- Economics 401 Mathematical Methods for Economic Theory
- Economics 410-1,2,3 Microeconomics
- Economics 411-1,2,3 Macroeconomics
• Economics 480-1,2,3 *Introduction to Econometrics*

Doctoral students do not formally register for Economics 401 which is held prior to the start of the Fall Quarter. (The course is listed in the registration system in Fall Quarter, but just for undergraduates in the accelerated BA/MA program.)

Students must enroll for letter grade in the other nine courses during their first year. Failure to enroll or dropping any of these classes, except in the case of an approved leave, results in dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

**MAINTAIN FULL-TIME CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

Students must register for at least three units each quarter to be a full-time student. During Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters, students register for Economics 410, 411 and 480. During the Summer Quarter at the end of the first year, students receiving funding register for TGS 500 to maintain their full-time status.

**ADDITIONAL MATH TRAINING**

Students with weaker mathematical preparation, or whose who do poorly in Economics 401, should ask the instructor of Economics 401 or the Director of Graduate Studies for recommendations for additional math courses. These may include the Math Department's undergraduate *Real Analysis* course (Math 320-1) as a fourth course in the fall quarter. This course continues in the winter and spring quarters. Students with stronger mathematical backgrounds might consider the graduate level *Analysis* course (Math 410-1,2,3).

**ACHIEVE CANDIDACY**

*The candidacy rules were revised for the entering class of 2020. Students in the class of 2019 may elect to follow these new rules. Students from earlier years should consult the relevant Graduate Student Handbook.*

To achieve candidacy, students must pass qualifying examinations in each of the three core areas of study: microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics.

To pass the qualifying examination in a core area, students must achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or greater in the three courses in that core area. Specifically:

- In microeconomics, a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater in ECON 410-1, ECON 410-2, and ECON 410-3.
- In macroeconomics, a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater in ECON 411-1, ECON 411-2, and ECON 411-3.
- In econometrics, a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater in ECON 480-1, ECON 480-2, and ECON 480-3.
Students who have not passed all three qualifying examinations at the end of their first year can remediate a lower GPA in a core area by retaking courses during their second year. Specifically, students can retake (in the second year only) as many of the core courses in a specific core area in which they received a B- or lower grade when the course was initially taken to bring the GPA in that core area to 3.0. When a course is retaken, the grade in the retake (whether higher or lower than the original grade) supersedes the original grade for the purposes of calculating the GPA in that core area.

TGS requires satisfactory academic progress defined in part as maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater in all courses combined. Students may be excluded by TGS for failing to remediate falling below this threshold within two quarters. Students should note that in calculating the overall cumulative GPA, the University includes both the original grade and the retake grade with equal weight when a course is retaken. This contrasts with how the GPA in the core areas is calculated to determine whether a student passes a qualifying exam.

All qualifying examinations must be completed by the end of the Spring Quarter of the second year of study. Students failing to pass all three qualifying examinations by this time are excluded from the program. There is no additional remediation period associated with this milestone.

**FILE TO RECEIVE A MASTER’S DEGREE**

Doctoral students who have passed all three qualifying examinations are eligible to file for a M.A. degree in Economics, if they are in good standing with TGS.

In addition, students failing to pass all three qualifying examinations by the end of the Spring Quarter of the second year of study can file for a M.A. degree in Economics provided that they obtained a grade of C- or greater in each of the nine courses, and are in good standing with TGS. However, they cannot continue in the Ph.D. program.

There are some rare occasions when it is not in a doctoral student’s interest to file for the M.A. An example might be if an external funder would terminate funding if the student files for any graduate degree. Please check for these rare circumstances before you file.

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT**

The primary source of funding in the second through fifth years is as a Teaching Assistant (TA). To serve as a TA, students must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English. This can occur in several ways:

- Obtaining an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited institution where the language of instruction is English,
- Scoring 26 or higher on the Speaking Section of the TOEFL Internet-based test taken in the two years prior to entry to Northwestern,
- Scoring 8 or higher on the Speaking Section of the IELTS test taken in the two years prior to entry to Northwestern, or
• Taking the Versant English Test which is administered soon after arrival at Northwestern in the weeks prior to the start of the Fall Quarter and scoring at least 65 (out of a possible 80).

Students who fail to pass the Versant test receive information on English as a Second Language (ESL) programs offered by TGS. Students then have several options to demonstrate proficiency in spoken English:
• Retake the Versant English Test and score 65 or higher (out of a possible 80),
• Retake the Versant English Test and score 63 or 64 on two separate occasions. The tests with these scores need not be consecutive,
• Take the SPEAK test and score 50 or higher (out of a possible 60), or
• Enroll in Linguistics 480 The Language of Teaching and Teachers and demonstrate the required level of English proficiency during the face-to-face teaching demonstration required as part of this course.

Please take meeting the language requirement seriously. You cannot be funded as a TA until you demonstrate proficiency. Deadlines for providing documentation of proficiency are July 31 for Fall Quarter, November 15 for Winter Quarter and February 15 for Spring Quarter. In the past, otherwise qualified students have been ineligible for TA funding and have had to seek alternative funding.

Even students who are expecting to receive external in their second year are advised to meet this requirement as soon as possible. External funding rarely lasts for a student's full career at Northwestern. Moreover, TGS requires students serve as a TA for at least one quarter as a degree requirement.

SUMMER AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

The first-year core courses are a lot of work, and students deserve a well-earned break. The Department recommends that students also take time during the summer to:
1. Get familiar with the field course options. The Department organizes some sessions for students to become familiar with the various fields and meet with faculty members in those fields.
2. Start thinking about research. All faculty members should be willing to talk about a summer plan of work. Talk to one or two of them about a research project, a reading list, or other ways of getting involved in research. The summer after your first year is a great time for doing so.

GOALS FOR SECOND- AND THIRD-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

By the end of the third year a student should have decided on a thesis topic and found a faculty advisor(s) and dissertation committee. Students do this by taking field courses and
interacting with the instructors of these courses, attending field seminars, participating in informal field lunches and paper reading groups, and presenting their own papers in the Economics 501 seminar.

COMPLETE CANDIDACY

Students who have not passed all three qualifying examinations at the end of their first year can remediate a lower GPA in a core area by retaking courses during their second year. Specifically, students can retake (in the second year only) as many of the core courses in a specific core area, in which they received a B- or lower grade when the course was initially taken, to bring the GPA in that core area to 3.0. When a course is retaken, the grade in the retake (whether higher or lower than the original grade) supersedes the original grade for the purposes of calculating the GPA in that core area.

FIELD COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must take a minimum of nine approved field courses for letter grades (not P/N). These nine courses must include:

(a) At least one course in Economic History. Students must take either Economics 420-1 Advanced Topics in American Economic History or 420-1 Advanced Topics in European Economic History for a letter grade. In some years, additional economic history courses may be scheduled as Economics 498 Advanced Topics in Economics. The annual guidance statement identifies additional courses that meet the economic history requirement. Typically, Economic History courses are partially evaluated by the writing of a research paper. Students have one calendar year after taking the course to submit the paper.

(b) Three field sequences of at least two-quarters each. A field sequence consists of two or three quarter-length courses as determined by the department.

At least six of the nine courses must be among those offered by the Economics Department. They must carry an Economics course number.

Procedures and Guidance on Field Course Selection

- Each summer, the Department posts a document on its website providing guidance on acceptable course sequences for the upcoming academic year.
- Any individual course cannot be used to satisfy more than one sequence.
- Any sequence not listed in the guidance must be approved in advance by an Economics field group representative and the Director of Graduate Studies. This includes sequences offered by the Kellogg School of Management.
- Students are welcome to audit or register for credit additional courses beyond the minimum requirements.
- Students are advised to seek guidance from faculty members who might be their future advisor or thesis committee members on the appropriate choice of field courses that prepare them for doctoral research.
• Prior to the start of the second year, the Department organizes events for students to become familiar with the various fields and meet with faculty members in those fields.
• Except for courses in Economic History, students should receive a letter grade at the end of the quarter in which they register for a course. Please see the Department’s policy on incomplete grades.

**Departmental Policy on Incomplete Grades**

TGS defines an incomplete grade as follows: “A grade of Y is given when a student does not submit all assigned work in a course; a grade of X is given when a student fails to take the final examination. All X or Y grades are incompletes and must be made up within one calendar year of the date the grade is incurred, ....; after one calendar year, the X or Y becomes a permanent grade on the record.” TGS places students with more than three incomplete grades on academic probation.

Consequently, faculty are expected to limit field course assignments to those that can be completed during the quarter. There are only two exceptions. First, the History requirement (Economics 420) can assign an incomplete grade for 12 months to permit completion of a paper. Second, econometrics courses can assign an incomplete only until the end of the vacation period following the quarter the class is in.

Otherwise, all and any incomplete grades require the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should notify the Director of Graduate Studies immediately of any violation of this policy.

Sometimes, students may see a “NR” on their transcript. This means the instructor did not file a grade by the deadline of the Monday after exam week. Students seeing an NR should immediately contract the instructor to rectify the situation. “NR” grades cause complications when the prospectus is filed and when the student graduates, and it is best to rectify the situation before memories fade.

**OTHER COURSES**

In addition to the courses taken as part of field course requirements, students are encouraged to take additional courses that they find interesting. Unlike courses that count as part of the field requirements, students should generally audit these classes rather than take them for credit. However, students can take additional courses for a letter grade if they wish.

**ATTEND FIELD SEMINARS**

While not part of the formal degree requirements, attending research seminars is probably one of the most valuable aspects of graduate education. These seminars typically meet in the Fall and Spring Quarters. Students get to meet leaders in each field and observe the cutting edge of new research. Starting in the second year, students should regularly
attend one or more of our workshop series. As a signaling and commitment device students can formally register for one or more of these series.

Currently the seminar series are:
- Economics 515 – Research Seminar in Economic Theory
- Economics 520 – Research Seminar in Economic History
- Economics 530 – Research Seminar in Macroeconomics
- Economics 535 – Research Seminar in Applied Microeconomics (including development economics)
- Economics 550 – Research Seminar in Industrial Organization
- Economics 560 – Research Seminar in Development and Trade Economics (despite the title this seminar deals with international economics and trade. For development economics see Economics 535.)
- Economics 580 – Research Seminar in Econometrics

Additional seminar series are organized by the Kellogg School of Management.

Most fields also offer weekly informal lunch meetings and paper reading groups. Some of which are organized by and for students. These events are invaluable for students to have informal contact with older students and faculty in fields that interest them and in which they might write a thesis.

**MAINTAIN FULL-TIME REGISTRATION**

Students must register for at least three units each quarter to be a full-time student.

In Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters, between 1 and 3 units of Economics 590 can be used to supplement regular course registrations. This applies in both the second and third years.

During the Summer Quarter, students should register using TGS 500.

**TWO PAPERS PRESENTED IN THE ECONOMICS 501 SEMINAR**

Each student must write and orally present two research papers in Economics 501 Graduate Student Seminar. Two faculty member readers must approve the paper. The Economics 501 seminar should be an opportunity to present work in progress that may become part of the student's dissertation. Because the papers are evaluated by two faculty of a student’s choosing, Economics 501 is a mechanism for students to interact with faculty and interest them in becoming their thesis advisor or serve on their thesis committee.

**First Paper**

The first paper should be completed by July 31 at the end of the second year. One faculty member must sign the Submission of an Economics 501 Paper form by July 31 as part
of the prerequisites for third year funding. This paper is then presented in the Economics 501 seminar during the Fall Quarter of the third year. Each seminar session is 50-minutes long. Presenters should be prepared to speak for thirty to forty minutes and expect to receive questions.

Second Paper

The second paper is typically completed by the Winter Quarter of the third year and presented in the Economics 501 seminar during the Spring Quarter of the third year. The second paper may be a revised version of the first, but only if the readers feel that sufficient progress has been made.

Registration

Students must register for a total of two quarters of Economics 501 in the Fall and Spring Quarters of the third year. The seminar normally meets twice or three times a week. The days and times are listed in the University class schedule. The seminar is organized by one or two faculty members each year, who attend each seminar.

Economics 501 is aimed primarily at third year students. Second year students should plan to audit some seminars in the Spring Quarter to gain some idea of the level of papers and presentation. Any second-year student who has made good progress on their first paper can elect to present the paper in the spring quarter of their second year if they wish.

Order of Presentations

An initial order of the presentations for Fall and Spring of the following academic year is in the March edition of the Graduate Connection newsletter, based on two separate random drawings of names. Then in the September (for Fall) and March (for Spring) editions of the Graduate Connection, the actual dates for each presentation are given. Pareto-improving exchanges can then occur between students, with the consent of the organizers.

Evaluation

The course is graded Pass / No Pass (P/N). In each quarter, a pass grade for the quarter is awarded if:
1. A research paper is written and orally presented in the Economics 501 seminar.
2. Two faculty members sign the Completion of an Economics 501 Paper form signifying that the paper met the requirements for an Economics 501 research paper for the Ph.D. degree in Economics, and that they attended the presentation of the paper and affirm that it met required presentational standards. At least one of the faculty signing each form must hold a tenure-line appointment in the Economics Department (an exception to this condition is only permissible with prior written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies). The form must be received by the Graduate Program Manager.
within two weeks of the presentation or by the Friday of exam week of that quarter, whichever is earlier.

3. The student had satisfactory attendance at the seminar. Economics 501 is designed to be an interaction between the presenter and peer students. It is mandatory that all third-year students attend every Economics 501 seminar. Excessive absence results in an "N" grade being assigned for the Spring Quarter registration. Excessive absence is defined as being absent from more than 10% of the combined number of sessions in the Fall and Spring Quarters. (For example, if there are 44 sessions in an academic year then absence from five or more sessions is considered excessive absence.) A student is considered absent irrespective of the reason or whether the instructor had been notified in advance. A student assigned an "N" grade for this reason can have the grade changed to a "P" by attending in the following Fall Quarter three sessions for each absence above 10%. (For example, a student missing seven sessions in a year with 44 sessions would have to make up nine sessions, calculated as 3x(7-4)=9.) A total of two pass grades in Economics 501 is required for a student to satisfy the Department’s research paper requirement.

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for the examination of their paper. The student should approach two appropriate faculty members to (a) evaluate the paper, and (b) attend the presentation. The student should approach faculty who taught classes which stimulated the student’s interest in the topic and are also likely to serve on the student’s dissertation committee. The presenter should provide both faculty members with copies of the paper at least one week in advance of the presentation.

**SUPERVISED TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

All doctoral students are required to act as a teaching assistant for at least one quarter at some point in their graduate career (this need not necessarily occur in the second or third years). As part of these duties, the student must lead a weekly discussion section. Teaching experience is an essential part of graduate training. Students who are fully funded for all years of their study from non-departmental sources should "volunteer" as an unpaid Teaching Assistant for one quarter by arranging this with the Associate Chair. Before serving as a paid or unpaid TA, foreign students must demonstrate acceptable English proficiency as prescribed by TGS. Evaluations are made and kept as part of the students' record.

**WRITTEN AND VERBAL PRESENTATION SKILLS**

The effectiveness of research depends crucially on how well researchers can communicate their findings in writing and verbally. In addition, professional economists must be able to communicate with students in the classroom, to clients, and to the public. While these skills are essential for success on the job market, time is scarce during the job-market year, so it is good idea to start working on these skills early.

The Economics 501 seminar and duties as a teaching assistant provide opportunities for students to develop their skills. In addition, Northwestern University offers several
resources for developing writing and presentation skills. See our website for more information and links to resources.

**A DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS PRESENTED AT AN ORAL EXAMINATION**

The prospectus signifies two things. The first is that the student has an acceptable thesis proposal, which is defended at an oral examination. The second is completion of all coursework which comprises the field course requirements including the history requirement, and two Economics 501 presentations.

The oral examination ascertains whether the student's dissertation topic is feasible. The student selects a prospective thesis advisor and a committee of examiners. The student works with the advisor and committee to write a thesis proposal, which is the basis of the oral examination. It is important that the student choose a thesis advisor several months before the proposed oral examination. The advisor's assistance is invaluable in developing a thesis topic.

The terms “advisor” and “committee chair” are used interchangeably.

Rules on the composition of the committee are:
1. The committee must have three or more individuals.
2. At least two members of this committee, including the chair, must be members of the Northwestern University Graduate Faculty.
3. The chair of the committee must hold a tenure-line appointment in the Economics Department or have a voted courtesy appointment in the Economics Department.
4. If the committee chair holds a courtesy appointment, at least one other member of the committee must hold a tenure-line appointment in the Economics Department.

Exceptions to conditions 3 and 4 are only permissible with prior written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. The names of faculty outside Economics holding courtesy appointments are listed on our website in the section on the dissertation prospectus.

**Time Limits**

The Department expects that students making good progress should have completed their coursework and successfully defended their dissertation prospectus by August 31 at the end of their third year. This is a requirement for fourth year funding.

If a student has not completed their coursework and successfully defended their dissertation prospectus by the end of the Fall Quarter in their fourth year of study, which falls on the last date of the 13th quarter of study, they are placed on Departmental probation. A student who fails to resume satisfactory academic standing within after at most two quarters, which is the say the last date of the Spring Quarter in their fourth year of study (last date of the 15th quarter of study) is excluded from the program and Northwestern University.
Administrative Procedures

When you have completed your course work, and have scheduled the oral qualifying examination, you can initiate the process by submitting a *Prospectus Committee* form to TGS on-line using GSTS. Select the "TGS Forms" tab, and then select the prospectus from the pull-down menu.

TGS then asks the Department to verify that the course work is complete, and a successful prospectus defense occurred. So that the Department can do this, the candidate should complete the Department's *Certification of a Dissertation Prospectus* form.

You should complete sections 1 to 3 of this form before the oral examination. These sections ask you to provide information on the completion of your course work. Take the form to the oral examination, where the members of the candidate's committee can sign their acceptance of the prospectus in section 4.

The completed form, along with a copy of your transcript (which can be printed out from CAESAR), should be returned immediately to the Graduate Program Manager's office. The Director of Graduate Studies reviews the form and authorize TGS to accept your dissertation prospectus.

A Note on Human Subjects

Even though we are a social science rather than a medical science, it is possible that government restrictions on the privacy of human subjects may apply to your Ph.D. dissertation. If you are collecting new data, or even using previously collected data, on individual identifiable people, then you may have to get prior approval for your research from Northwestern's Institutional Research Board. You should read the FAQ section of their website to see if it applies to you. The website also includes information on the approval process if that is necessary.

**GOALS FOR DISSERTATION YEARS GRADUATE STUDENTS**

*MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS*

By the end of the Fourth Year

Students are only eligible for fifth year funding if their dissertation committee chair has certified by July 31 that the student has submitted a written paper sufficiently far in advance of the deadline for the faculty member to have comprehensively reviewed it, and can certify that it is of suitable quality to form at least one chapter of a dissertation.
Coauthored papers are allowed but can only be used by one student for purposes of paper certification.

At the end of the Fifth and each Subsequent Year

Students in year five and above can demonstrate making “good progress” by July 31 each year by (1) having already filed to receive their degree in the Summer Quarter, or (2) their advisor checks options A (student going on the job market in the coming year) or option B (student is not going on the job market but is making good progress) or Option C (student already has a job and is making good progress) on the form Certification of Good Progress By Dissertation Committee Chair for Students currently in Year 5 and Above. A student whose advisor either checks option D (student is not making good progress) or does not submit the form is regarded as not making good progress and placed on Departmental probation.

Students are removed from probation if their thesis advisor writes to the Director of Graduate Studies advising that satisfactory progress has resumed. A student who fails to resume good progress within two quarters, which is the say the last date of the following Winter Quarter, is excluded from the program and Northwestern University.

ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH SEMINARS

During the dissertation years, active participation in the field seminar(s) appropriate to a student’s interests is vital. Students get to meet, at lunches and in office visits, external presenters with whom they may ultimately interview for jobs. When the student has prepared their job market paper, they normally present their work in the relevant field seminar in the Fall Quarter of their final year.

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

All active students must be registered in each of the fall, winter and spring quarters until all degree requirements have been completed. Summer registration is also required when the student is receiving University funding.

Dissertation-stage students receiving funding should register using TGS 500. If a student is not funded in a quarter, they should register using TGS 512. Consult the TGS website for fees and conditions associated with TGS 512.

PLACEMENT

The Department assists its students in obtaining jobs. The assistance includes editorial advice on the job market paper and vita, training on presentation skills and practice interviews. The Placement Director coordinates the activity. Each year a timetable is issued that indicates the key dates.
The vitae of job market candidates are disseminated by the department on its website. Candidates also prepare a personal web page. See the Placement section of the Goals for Dissertation Year Students section of our website for practical information on preparing vitae and personal websites.

Students on the job market should inform the Placement Director of their preferred positions, any constraints they face, the state of their negotiations, and their acceptance of job offers. The Placement Director is a resource for advice.

**DISSERTATION GUIDELINES**

TGS requires that “every candidate for the Ph.D. degree must present a dissertation that gives evidence of original and significant research.”

The Department of Economics has additional guidelines:
1. Each dissertation should contain at least three chapters.
2. At least one chapter should be single authored. A student can be exempted from this requirement by their dissertation committee, subject to the written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. Coauthored chapters with other students and faculty members are allowed, but at most one chapter can be coauthored with a faculty member. Each of the student authors of a coauthored paper can include it in their dissertation.

TGS has guidelines for the format of the thesis posted on their website.

**FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION**

When the student's dissertation is complete, they must pass a final oral examination on the dissertation and related topics. The student requests the appointment of a committee of examiners, at least four weeks in advance of the examination date. This Final Exam Application form is submitted to TGS on-line using GSTS.

Ordinarily, the examiners are the members of the student's thesis committee. The committee need not be the same as that listed at the prospectus. However, the same rules on committee composition apply:
1. The committee must have three or more individuals.
2. At least two members of this committee, including the chair, must be members of the Northwestern University Graduate Faculty.
3. The chair of the committee must hold a tenure-line appointment in the Economics Department or have a voted courtesy appointment in the Economics Department.
4. If the committee chair holds a courtesy appointment, at least one other member of the committee must hold a tenure-line appointment in the Economics Department.

Exceptions to conditions 3 and 4 are only permissible with prior written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. The names of faculty outside Economics holding courtesy appointments are listed on our website in the section on the dissertation prospectus.
Full information on completion procedures are posted on TGS's website.

**TIME LIMIT**

Students must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. within nine years (36 quarters of study) of initial registration in TGS. After nine years, students are placed on probation by TGS for unsatisfactory progress. Students who have exceeded their time to degree deadline and cannot remediate within the two-quarter probationary period may petition for a one-time extension. Information on the conditions and requirements for an extension can be found on TGS's Website.

**THESIS SUBMISSION**

Following successful completion of the final examination, an electronic version of the dissertation must be submitted to TGS. See the TGS website for more information.

**GRADUATE!**

Congratulations!

**FUNDING**

See the Graduate > Funding section of the Department’s website for the forms that need to be submitted to certify good progress to make a student funding eligible.

The funding criteria stated below are applicable to funding that is controlled and allocated by the Department. These are:

- University Fellowships
  - First Year University Fellowships (UF)
  - Summer University Fellowships (SUF)
  - Dissertation Year University Fellowships (DYUF)
- Graduate Assistantships, which are usually referred to as Teaching Assistantships (TA)

These criteria also apply to TA positions funded by other programs, such as MMSS, that use Economics students as TAs.

The University provides the Department with an annual budget to fund University Fellowships and Graduate Assistantships. This budget is based on funding an entering class of about 16 students for five years (20 quarters) each. In actuality, the Department can sustain an entering class in the low 20s, and support students until the Spring Quarter of the sixth year (23 quarters).

We can do this because some students are offered Research Assistantships (RA) that provide a monthly stipend. These positions supersede Departmentally controlled funding.
Other students obtain external fellowships. TGS has policies to supplement and incentivize external awards.

Continued funding has always required students to maintain satisfactory progress. The funding criteria defines satisfactory progress by year, and the processes used to allocate the provision of additional funding beyond the quarters offered by TGS in a student's initial offer letter.

Students holding University Fellowships or Graduate Assistantships can undertake additional work for hourly pay. But there are limits on the additional hours each quarter, and permission must be obtained from TGS in advance.

In rare cases, a student's admission letter may contain alternative funding criteria, which take precedence over these rules.

**FOREIGN STUDENTS**

Students graduating from institutions where instruction is not in English must demonstrate proficiency in English prior to being funded as a TA.

**ACADEMIC YEAR FUNDING**

**First Year Students**

A student's admission letter indicates whether they have been awarded a University Fellowship in the first year. Unfortunately, we cannot make additional fellowships available during the first year. However, funding in the second year and beyond depends on the student's progress, as detailed below, and not on the nature of first year funding.

**Second Year Students**

Students who remain in the doctoral program are funding eligible irrespective of whether they have achieved candidacy. Second year funding is as a TA.

**Third Year Students**

Eligibility for third year funding requires certification by a faculty member by July 31 of an acceptable Economics 501 paper. While certification is required, presentation in the Economics 501 seminar is not. The presentation of the paper is usually in the Fall Quarter of the third year, although presentation in the Spring Quarter of the second year is encouraged. Third year funding is as a TA.

**Fourth Year Students**

Eligibility for fourth year funding requires completion of a thesis prospectus by August 31. The thesis prospectus requires a successful thesis proposal defense and completion of
all course work. Fourth year funding is as a TA in Fall and Winter Quarters, followed by a DYUF in Spring Quarter. The latter requires the student's dissertation committee chair to certify by February 15 that the student is expected to enter the job market in their fifth year. In the absence of such certification, the student is funded as a TA in the Spring Quarter.

In addition, the Department awards the Robert Eisner Memorial Fellowship to one fourth year student. To be eligible, students must have met the standard requirements for departmental funding. This award recognizes a student who has distinguished his or herself in both teaching and research.

We cannot guarantee that TA funding is available for a student whose thesis prospectus is completed after August 31. In any event, TA funding is not awarded for any quarter in which the student has not completed the thesis prospectus. For example, a student completing the prospectus in November of the fourth year will not receive TA funding for the Fall Quarter and can only be funded in the Winter and Spring Quarters if there are any unallocated TA positions remaining within our budget.

Fifth Year Students

Eligibility for fifth year funding requires certification by the dissertation committee chair by July 31 that the student has submitted a written paper sufficiently far in advance of the deadline for the faculty member to have comprehensively reviewed it, and that it is of suitable quality to form at least one chapter of a dissertation. Coauthored papers are allowed but can only be used by one student for purposes of paper certification.

Provided a satisfactory written paper is provided, the dissertation committee chair can indicate whether the student will be on the job market in their fifth year. If the student intends to be on the job market, funding is as a DYUF in Fall and Winter Quarters, followed by a TA in Spring Quarter. If the student withdraws from the job market prior to the ASSA meetings, the Winter Quarter DYUF is converted to a TA.

In the event that there are still funds available within the budget after all of the eligible students in years two through four and the job-market fifth and sixth year students have been funded, other fifth year students who have provided a satisfactory written paper may be supported. These students perform TA duties in every quarter that they are funded. However, if the student's dissertation committee chair certifies by February 15 that the student is expected to enter the job market in their sixth year, the Spring Quarter TA is converted to a DYUF. (Note that if the student took advantage of a DYUF in the Spring Quarter of their fourth year, they are not eligible again in their fifth year.)

If the student has not provided a written paper, or if the paper is not of sufficient quality to form at least one chapter of a dissertation, or if the student’s dissertation committee chair certifies that the student is not making good progress on their dissertation, the student is not eligible for any fifth year funding.
Sixth Year Students on the Job Market

Eligibility for funding requires certification by the dissertation committee chair by July 31 that a satisfactory draft of a job-market paper has been submitted and the student is entering the job market. Students can use any remaining quarters of their three-quarter DYUF eligibility that they did not use in their fourth or fifth years. (The Department suggests that students give priority to taking a DYUF in the Winter Quarter, as they will be traveling and unable to undertake alternative funding such as a TA or RA.) The remaining quarters are funded as a TA.

If the student withdraws from the job market prior to the ASSA meetings, any remaining quarters of funding are withdrawn. Such students may be funded as a TA, but only if there are still funds available after all the qualified younger students have been funded.

Sixth Year Students Not on the Job Market

Non-job market sixth years are generally not funded. If there are still funds available after all the qualified younger students, and the job-market sixth year students, have been funded, other sixth year students may be supported. To be eligible, the dissertation committee chair must certify by July 31 that the student is making good progress. These students are funded as a TA in every quarter that they are funded. DYUF funding is not available to sixth year students who are not on the job market.

Seventh and Higher Year Students

In normal circumstances, University rules do not permit funding of students in the seventh and higher years. The Department can petition WCAS for funding as a TA only if (a) there are still funds available after all of the qualified younger students have been funded, and (b) there is an inadequate number of Teaching Assistants to meet classroom needs. The dissertation committee chair must have certified by July 31 that the student is making good progress, and preference is given to those on the job market. However, DYUF funding is not available, even if the student is on the job market.

SUMMER QUARTER FUNDING

First Year Students

A student’s admission letter indicates whether they are eligible for a SUF at the end of the first year. Recipients of SUFs must:
• be intending to register in the following Fall Quarter,
• conduct academic pursuits, and submit a report on these activities by the Friday prior to the start of Fall Quarter,
• do not hold an outside fellowship that provides summer tuition and stipend,
• limit any work for pay either outside of Northwestern University or as an hourly paid research assistant within Northwestern University to a maximum of 120 hours between June 15 and September 15; and
• not take more than three weeks of "vacation" or non-research time away from campus (it is permissible to be absent from campus to conduct research).

An acceptance form for summer funding must be submitted between May 1 and May 15.

Second through Fifth Year Students

To obtain an SUF, students must:
• have been eligible for departmental funding during the previous academic year,
• be intending to register in the following Fall Quarter (unless they are graduating at the end of Summer Quarter),
• conduct academic pursuits, and submit a report on these activities by the Friday prior to the start of Fall Quarter,
• do not hold an outside fellowship that provides summer tuition and stipend,
• limit any work for pay either outside of Northwestern University or as an hourly paid research assistant within Northwestern University to a maximum of 120 hours between June 15 and September 15; and
• not take more than three weeks of "vacation" or non-research time away from campus (it is permissible to be absent from campus to conduct research).

The acceptance form for summer funding must be submitted between May 1 and May 15 each year.

Sixth Year Students and Beyond

The University only funds summers up until the fifth year. Older students can seek RA positions.
### Summary of Continuation and Academic Year Funding Rules

*These Departmental rules are in addition to general TGS requirements on good academic standing and the need to maintain a B average. In addition, Teaching Assistantships require students to have met TGS’s English-language requirements.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Into</th>
<th>Continuation</th>
<th>Academic Year Funding (See text for Summer Quarter Funding Rules)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>See admission letter regarding fellowship funding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Funding is as a TA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Candidacy completion by end of Spring Quarter of Second Year (no additional remediation period)</td>
<td>Certification of one Economics 501 paper by July 31. Funding is as a TA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>Thesis Prospectus by August 31 (Successful thesis proposal defense, plus completion of all course work). Funding is as a TA.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Fifth Year | Thesis Prospectus by end of Spring Quarter of Fourth Year (deadline of the end of the Fall Quarter of fourth year plus two quarters of probation) | Certification by Committee Chair by July 31 that the student has a written paper of suitable quality to form one chapter of a dissertation.  
- If the Committee Chair also certifies that the student intends to be on the job market, funding is in the form of a Fellowship in Fall and Winter Quarters, and TA funding for Spring Quarter.  
- If the student has a satisfactory paper but is not going on the market, funding as a TA is not guaranteed and is only available if there are any funds remaining.*  
*Fifth years without a satisfactory paper are generally not funded.* |
| Sixth Year | Certification by Committee Chair by July 31 of “good progress” on dissertation.@ | Certification by Committee Chair that the student intends to be on the job market then funding is in the form of a Fellowship in Fall and Winter Quarters, and TA funding for Spring Quarter.#  
#Non-job-market sixth years are generally not funded  
*Students in years 7 and above are generally not funded, and are not eligible for Dissertation Year Fellowship funding* |
| 7+ Years | Certification by Committee Chair by July 31 of “good progress” on dissertation required each year.@ | |

*Students in years 4 and 5 can convert their Spring Quarter TA funding to a Fellowship in the year before they go on the job market.  
*Students cannot receive more than three quarters of Dissertation Year Fellowship funding.  
*Students failing to demonstrate “good progress” are placed on probation and have two quarters to resume satisfactory progress.
Economics   Ph.D. Student Developmental Benchmarks

First Year
- Form study groups and identify effective study strategies
- Utilize resources (TA office hours, Faculty, CAPS)
- Demonstrate proficiency in spoken English by July 31*
- Achieve Candidacy
- Apply for Master’s Degree according to University deadlines

Second Year
- Explore fields via field course sequences and seminars
- Attend ECON 501 seminars to gain an understanding of paper and presentation expectations
- Start to build relationships with faculty that could serve on committee and identify a potential committee Chair
- Write ECON 501 paper #1 by July 31
- Complete teaching requirement by serving as a Teaching Assistant (in one or a later year)

Third Year
- Complete field sequences
- Enroll in ECON 501 in Fall and Spring and give two presentations
- Create committee of faculty, including identification of the committee Chair
- Defend Prospectus by August 31

Fourth Year
- Dissertation Research
- Attend Job Market Practice Presentations
- Write Job Market Paper
- Declare intent to enter the job market for the following year by February 15
- Get certification by dissertation Chair of good progress for funding in the fifth year by July 31

Fifth Year & Beyond
- Practice Job Market Presentation
- Practice interviewing skills through mock interviews
- Finalize Job Market Paper
- Defend Thesis successfully; submit final copy of thesis to ProQuest
- Apply for degree and submit final dissertation according to University deadlines
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>ECON 410-1</td>
<td>ECON 410-2</td>
<td>ECON 410-3</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECON 411-1</td>
<td>ECON 411-2</td>
<td>ECON 411-3</td>
<td>English Proficiency by July 31, if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECON 480-1</td>
<td>ECON 480-2</td>
<td>ECON 480-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Field Courses &amp; Economic History</td>
<td>Field Courses &amp; Economic History</td>
<td>Field Courses &amp; Economic History</td>
<td>ECON 501 Paper #1 (by July 31)</td>
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<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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<td>ECON 590 (P/N)</td>
<td>ECON 590 (P/N)</td>
<td>Audit some ECON 501 ECON 590 (P/N)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>ECON 501</td>
<td>Write ECON 501 Paper #2</td>
<td>ECON 501</td>
<td>Prospectus (by Aug 31)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Field Courses</td>
<td>Complete Field Courses</td>
<td>Complete Field Courses</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>ECON 590 (P/N)</td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
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<td>ECON 590 (P/N)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>Dissertaton Research</td>
<td>Dissertation Research</td>
<td>Dissertaton Research</td>
<td>Job Market Paper (by July 31)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
<td>Field Seminars</td>
<td>Job Market Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Year</td>
<td>Job Market Presentations &amp; Interviews</td>
<td>ASSA Annual Meeting Interviews</td>
<td>Defend Thesis</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Job Market</td>
<td>Fly-out Interviews</td>
<td>TGS 500 (TGS 512 if unfunded)</td>
<td>Fame and fortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TGS 500 (TGS 512 if unfunded)</td>
<td>TGS 500 (TGS 512 if unfunded)</td>
<td>TGS 500 (yr 5 if funded and not graduated)</td>
<td>TGS 500 (yr 5 if funded and not graduated)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Forms can be found at [https://www.economics.northwestern.edu/graduate/student-resources/forms.html](https://www.economics.northwestern.edu/graduate/student-resources/forms.html), printed and submitted to the Graduate Program Manager, Alison Stoute.

**Forms can be found in GSTS at [https://gsts.northwestern.edu](https://gsts.northwestern.edu). Login with NET ID and password → TGS Forms tab → Create New Form dropdown → Select form type, complete and submit. These forms must be submitted by University deadlines in the Academic Calendar.