

Handbook of Graduate Studies: Economics 2025-26

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Introduction

We hope that this handbook will be helpful in answering your questions concerning the Graduate Programs in Economics. If you need further information, please contact the Graduate Director, Dr. Tobias Pfutze (email: tpfutze@fiu.edu).

Students are also encouraged to review the most recent Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual issued by the Division of Graduate Studies. It contains the official statement of University regulations. The manual and additional pertinent information may be found at the FIU Graduate Studies website, <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>

This handbook of graduate studies covers both the Master's and Doctoral Programs in Economics. The policies stated herein are not intended to supersede the policies of the College of Arts and Sciences, of the Division of Graduate Studies, or of the University.

1. About Our Programs

The Department of Economics has a group of faculty who are interested in a variety of applied and theoretical topics. The graduate programs in Economics place strong emphasis on exploiting synergies between fields such as international economics, applied microeconomics, political economy, and development economics. Issues are analyzed using modern economic tools from fields such as econometrics, game theory, and economic dynamics. These are the department's areas of greatest strength. Students also may pursue graduate course work in other fields. The department's graduate programs are enhanced by the presence of complementary graduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business Administration, the School of Policy and Management, and the Latin American and Caribbean Center.

The Master's Program provides additional training in economics beyond the undergraduate degree. It provides a degree of expertise that would not be obtained in an undergraduate education. This additional expertise enhances your prospects for a successful career in the private sector, and in governmental or international agencies. The objective of the Doctoral Program is to offer advanced training in economic research. It provides an excellent background for a professional career at academic institutions, in the private sector, or in governmental and international agencies.

The Master's Program

1. Admission Requirements and Procedures

The requirements for admission to the M.A. Program are:

- (a) **Bachelor's Degree:** A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- (b) **GPA, GRE, and TOEFL:** A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (out of 4) during

the last two years of undergraduate education. The GRE is required but no strict minimum score is imposed. International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or Duolingo. A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL, 6.5 overall on the IELTS, or 110 on Duolingo is required.

(c) **Three letters of recommendation** from people who are in a position to judge the applicant's suitability for graduate study in economics.

(d) **Prerequisites:** The following courses at the undergraduate level are required: Statistics, and Calculus I. Students who have not fulfilled these prerequisites may be admitted on a provisional basis. Unless specifically exempted, such students must take the courses as required, but graduate credit will not be given for these prerequisite courses.

(e) **Committee Approval:** The above are minimum requirements. All complete applications are evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Economics at FIU, which makes the final admission decision. Since admission to the program is competitive, the committee's requirements are normally higher than the minimum standards. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. The committee typically requires evidence of future indicators of success in the form of high GPA in the following undergraduate courses: Intermediate Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Calculus I, II, and III, Linear Algebra, and Intermediate Statistics.

(f) **Separate Admission to Ph.D. Program:** The M.A. Program is independent of the existing Ph.D. Program in Economics, and students in that program must apply separately for admission to the Ph.D. Certain courses taken in the master's program may subsequently be used to fulfill the requirements of the Ph.D. Program, with the approval of the Graduate Director. (These courses include the Master's core theory courses.)

2. Degree Requirements

To obtain the M.A. in Economics, students must successfully complete course work, and additionally fulfill the core and thesis requirements. To earn the degree, the student must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of course work at the graduate level (courses numbered 5000 or higher, except for ECP 6705 and ECP 6715). The specific requirements are:

(a) **Core Courses:** Master's students must obtain an average grade of B (3.0) or above in the 7 M.A. core courses. The common portion of the M.A. core consists of Fundamentals of Macroeconomic Theory (ECO 6204), Fundamentals of Microeconomic Theory (ECO 6112), Microeconomic Theory I (ECO 6174), Macroeconomic Theory I (ECO 6019), Mathematical Methods in Economic Analysis I (ECO 6405), Econometric Methods I (ECO 6420), and Econometric Methods II (ECO 6425). These core courses add to a total of 21 credit hours.

(b) **Research Requirement:** Master's students must either write an M.A. thesis for 6 credits (ECO 6971), or take an advanced course in applied economics approved by the Graduate Director which involves writing a research paper (3 credits).

(c) **Electives:** The remaining required credits consist of electives. The graduate director must approve courses taken outside the department. ECP 6705 and ECP 6434 do not count as electives.

(d) **Academic Performance:** Students must maintain at least a B (3.0) average in their course work and receive a grade of C or higher in each course. Moreover, a B average must be maintained in Fundamentals of Macroeconomic Theory (ECO 6204), Fundamentals of Microeconomic Theory (ECO 6112), Microeconomic Theory I (ECO 6174), and Macroeconomic Theory I (ECO 6019). Students writing an M.A. thesis must receive a P (pass) in ECO 6971.

(e) Students who enter the MA through the BA/MA route can only transfer credit for up to four MA-level courses in which they obtained a grade of B or higher.

All requirements must be completed within 6 years of initial enrollment in the M.A. program. Students transferring from another graduate program may transfer a maximum of 6 semester hours, subject to the approval of the Graduate Director.

The Ph.D. Program

1. Admission Requirements and Procedures

The requirements for admission to the Ph.D. Program are:

(a) **Bachelor's Degree:** A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

(b) **GPA, GRE, and TOEFL:** A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (out of 4) during the last two years of undergraduate education is required. Every candidate must take the GRE, unless waived by petition of the Graduate Program Director. International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or Duolingo. A total score of 80 on the IBT TOEFL or 6.5 overall on the IELTS or 110 on Duolingo is required.

(c) **Prerequisites:** The following courses at the undergraduate level: Statistics, two semesters of Calculus, and one semester of Linear Algebra. Promising students who have not fulfilled these prerequisites may be admitted on a provisional basis. Unless specifically exempted, such students must take the courses as required, but graduate credit will not be given for these prerequisite courses.

(d) **Recommendations:** Three letters of recommendation from persons who are in a position to judge the applicant's suitability for graduate study in economics.

(e) **Committee Approval:** The above are minimum requirements. All complete applications are evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Economics at FIU, which makes the final admission decision. Since admission to the program is competitive, the committee's requirements are normally higher than the minimum standards. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. The committee typically requires evidence of future indicators of success in the form of high GPA in the following undergraduate courses: Intermediate Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Calculus I, II, and III, Linear Algebra, and Intermediate

Statistics.

(f) **Separate Admission to Ph.D. Program:** The Ph.D. Program is independent of the existing Master's Program in Economics, and M.A. students must apply separately for admission as Ph.D. students. Certain courses taken in the Master's Program may subsequently be used to fulfill the requirements of the Ph.D. Program, with the approval of the Graduate Director. (These courses include the Master's core theory courses.)

2. Degree Requirements

To obtain the Ph.D. in Economics, students must complete course work, and additionally fulfill certain requirements. To earn the degree, the student must complete a minimum of 75 credit hours. These 75 hours must include at least:

(a) **Coursework:** 42 semester credit hours (14 courses) of graduate level course work.

(b) **Advanced Workshop:** 15 credits in the Advanced Workshops (5 seminar courses).

(c) **Dissertation Credit:** 18 credits of dissertation.

(d) **Transfer Students:** Students transferring from another PhD program, or those who have completed a Master's degree, may have at most 18 of their previous graduate level credits accepted toward the Ph.D. course work. All transfer credits must be approved by the economics department's Graduate Program Director. At the discretion of the graduate studies committee, transfer students may be asked to pass an exam on the relevant subject matter to have their credits accepted.

In addition, the formal requirements for graduation also include:

(e) **Qualifying Exams and Third-Year Paper:** Passing the qualifying examination in core theory, and one third-year paper requirement.

(f) **Residency:** The university residency requirement (18 credits in a 12-month period) must be satisfied prior to registering for dissertation credit.

(g) **Dissertation Defense:** Successful completion, defense, and acceptance of your Ph.D. dissertation.

All requirements, including the dissertation defense, must be completed within nine years of initial enrollment in the Ph.D. program.

The following sections describe the requirements in more detail.

2.1. Course Work

Students must complete 42 hours (14 courses) of graduate level course work. Supervised research (independent study), seminars, and dissertation credit do not count toward this objective.

The required minimum of 14 courses consists of (i) 10 courses in the "core", (ii) four advanced economics field courses. The core contains the following 10 courses:

ECO 6112 Fundamentals of Graduate Microeconomics
 ECO 7115 Microeconomic Theory I
 ECO 7116 Microeconomic Theory II
 ECO 6204 Fundamentals of Graduate Macroeconomics
 ECO 7206 Macroeconomic Theory I
 ECO 7207 Macroeconomic Theory II
 ECO 7405 Mathematical Methods in Economic Analysis I
 ECO 7424 Econometric Methods I
 ECO 7425 Econometric Methods II
 ECO 7426 Econometric Methods III

Students must attain at least an overall B average (3.0) in the seven core courses (Fundamentals of Graduate Microeconomics, Microeconomic Theory I and II, Fundamentals of Graduate Macroeconomics, Macroeconomic Theory I and II, and Mathematical Methods in Economic Analysis I). Otherwise, they will be dismissed from the PhD program. The average will be assessed after all seven courses have been taken.

Students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 (out of 4) in their coursework. If a student drops below that level, the Graduate Assistantship will be revoked. In order to continue in the PhD program, the overall GPA may drop below 3.0 for at most one single consecutive semester. Otherwise, the student will be dismissed from the program.

No credit toward a graduate degree is given for any course in which a grade of C or less is obtained. A Ph.D. student who receives a grade lower than B- in a course must retake that course; if a retake also results in a grade lower than B-, the student will not be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. Program. A graduate student who receives a grade lower than B- in more than two courses will not be allowed to stay in the Economics Ph.D. Program.

Core Coursework and the Core Theory Exam.

In their first year, students are required to take the following core courses.

| | First Year Fall | First Year Spring |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
| First Module (A) | Fundamentals of Graduate Macroeconomics | Macroeconomic Theory I |
| | Mathematical Methods in Economic Analysis | Econometric Methods II |
| Second Module (B) | Fundamentals of Graduate Microeconomics | Microeconomic Theory I |
| | Econometric Methods I | Econometric Methods III |

At the end of the second semester, students must pass a comprehensive qualifying examination on core theory (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics).

The two parts of the Ph.D. qualifying examination, Microeconomic Theory and Macroeconomic Theory, are considered independent. Students who pass only one part of the examination need only retake the part they failed. However, a student who fails the same part twice will not be permitted to continue in the Economics Ph.D. Program.

Students will continue taking their remaining two core courses (Macroeconomic Theory III and Microeconomic Theory III) in the first module of the second year Fall term.

Field Course Requirements. During the third and fourth semester, students continue their course work. At minimum, students will be required to complete course work in four field courses. They will take two of their field courses in the second module of the second and the remaining two field courses in the Spring term of the second year.

The fields of specialization offered by the Department of Economics vary, depending on demand and faculty interest. The following are being offered, or have recently been offered.

Recent Fields

International Economics
International Trade
Macroeconomics
Development Economics

The Third-Year Paper. The third-year paper must be completed, presented in a workshop, and accepted by the dissertation committee by the end of the third year. Students having to redo the third-year paper must complete it by the beginning of the fourth year.

The third-year paper is intended to get Ph.D. students started on serious research. Focusing on a project that is smaller than a dissertation smoothens the transition to research work. In many cases, the third-year paper will turn out to be a major component of the dissertation. Students should select their third-year paper topic by the Spring term of their second year.

The third-year paper will be due by the end of the third year, must be written in LaTeX (or a LaTeX based document processor, such as LyX), and delivered in pdf format. LaTeX source files will need to be handed in on request by the committee. This gives you the Spring semester to focus your attention on the third-year paper project. The third-year paper is intended to represent a serious work of scholarship that would be publishable in an academic journal. It should be written in the style of a formal academic research paper. It should include an abstract and an introduction, which describes the results (in words, with or without diagrams) and explains how they fit into the literature. The body of the paper will present models, theorems, and/or empirical results. There should be a concluding section that includes suggestions of possible extensions or of other developments of your ideas.

Your third-year paper must be presented to and approved by your dissertation committee before the start of your fourth year (i.e. at the end of the spring term, or during the summer). If it is deemed not to be of sufficient quality, the student will be put on probation during the fourth year. Financial aid will not be extended to the fifth year if the third-year paper has not been approved by the end of the fourth year. Independent of approval, the student must apply to be admitted to doctoral candidacy by the end of the Fall term of the second year to register for dissertation credit (ECO 7980).

2.2. Dissertation Work

Students will be required to select a specific area of doctoral research in consultation with faculty members who have expertise in that field and may serve as potential advisors. The current standard in the profession is of three essays in a single field rather than a single monolithic dissertation, but either path is acceptable. Each student will choose a primary advisor (the main professor), who will chair the student's dissertation committee. The committee will also consist of three other members, one of whom should be from outside the department of economics. These steps should normally be completed in the Fall of the third year. At that time, the corresponding UGS form is filed to officially form the dissertation committee. Once formed, the members of the dissertation committee shall meet with the student to outline the dissertation plan, establish goals and intermediate accomplishments, and all other procedures to be followed up to the time of the defense. The forms that need to be submitted can be found at <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>. The deadlines for these forms are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>

During the dissertation work phase, which normally lasts about two years, the student will:

- (a) Conduct research and complete a dissertation. The student will be expected to work closely with the chair and other members of his/her dissertation committee. The dissertation must be a significant contribution to economics. The document must be prepared in accordance with the Division of Graduate Studies' Regulation for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual, which is available from the Graduate Studies webpage, <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>
- (b) Continue taking courses to complete a minimum of 12 credits of Advanced Workshop (by enrolling in ECO 7925 in the Dissertation area) and 18 credits of dissertation.
- (c) Enroll for at least 3 credits per term (including the summer) until the dissertation requirement has been completed. Doctoral students must complete their degree within nine years of first enrollment.

The dissertation proposal should be defended at the latest at the end of the fourth year for full-time students. The proposal must be submitted to and approved by the dissertation committee members and defended orally. Synchronous participation of all committee members and the student is required.

2.3. Dissertation Defense

When the dissertation is completed, a copy is to be given to the Graduate Director. This copy will be available for any interested graduate faculty to read before the final oral defense of the dissertation. The oral defense will then be scheduled using the appropriate UGS form. Be sure to adhere to the official deadlines (for the current deadlines, check the web page at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>), and allow at least one week notice.

The decision regarding the acceptance of the dissertation will be made by the candidate's dissertation committee. Synchronous participation of all committee members and the

student is required. The student and the committee chair need to be physically present for the entire duration of the defense at a FIU location.

3. Academic Performance and Progress

The doctoral student is expected to complete at least one course per calendar year, and has a maximum of six years to complete all course requirements. In addition, students who are receiving any kind of financial assistance are expected to be enrolled as full time students (at least 9 credit hours per semester) to be eligible for financial aid.

Financial Aid and Housing

1. Financial Aid

Financial aid by the Economics Department to qualified students is available in the form of graduate assistantships, non-resident tuition waivers, registration fee waivers, and/or graduate tuition stipends. It is granted on the basis of academic performance, and it is always subject to review at the end of each semester. Assistantships are subject to passing the qualifying exam, course performance, and satisfactory progression.

U.S. residents may be eligible for other types of financial aid from FIU. Financial aid forms may be obtained directly from Financial Aid Office: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-graduate-funding.shtml>

2. Housing

For information about on-campus housing, contact the University Housing Office: <https://housing.fiu.edu/> or call (305) 348- 1050.

Policies Affecting Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistantships are initially awarded by the Graduate Director, following the recommendations of the Graduate Studies Committee. Before being awarded an assistantship, a student must first be admitted to an Economics Graduate Program. First priority is given to Ph.D. students.

Graduate assistants are expected to be present throughout the semester, including the first day of classes. Absence during a portion of the semester could result in revocation of your assistantship. You should contact any professors you are assigned to as soon as possible after receiving your assignment.

Graduate assistantships will normally be renewed for up to three years (i.e. for a total funding of four, provided students continue to make satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory academic progress entails maintenance of a GPA of at least 3.0, and for Ph.D. students, passing core theory and other requirements at the designated times. The assistantships may be renewed for a fifth year only if the student enters the program without prior studies at the graduate level.

First-year teaching assistants must register in ECO 6076, Teaching Economics. Normally,

this will be offered during the Fall semester.

During the first year of graduate study, assistants are usually assigned to assist regular faculty members. By participating in the teaching process, you will get some of background you need when you start teaching your own class. Responsibilities may include grading exams and assignments (under the professor's guidance), and holding office hours (some of this may be done virtually for online courses). Assistants may also be expected to attend the classes they are assigned to. Graduate assistant's duties should not exceed 20 hours per week. Some students will be assigned as Digital Assistants (DA) for online classes. In that capacity, they may not teach nor grade assignments.

Once Ph.D. students pass their core courses, they may be assigned the responsibility of teaching an introductory class. Advanced teaching assistants, who have satisfied their third-year paper requirement and were granted an MA, may be assigned to teach a more advanced class.

The Faculty

Mihaela Pinteau, Associate Professor and Department Chair
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Ph.D., University of Washington, 2003. Joined the faculty in 2003.
Fields: Macroeconomics, Growth and Development

Berrak Bahadir, Associate Professor
Phone: 305-348-3400 Email: Bbahadir@fiu.edu
Ph.D., Emory University, 2008. Joined the faculty in 2020.
Fields: Macroeconomics, International Macroeconomics, and Financial Economics.

Mahadev G. Bhat, Professor (joint appointment with Environmental Studies)
Phone: 305-348-1210 Email: bhatm@fiu.edu
Ph.D., University of Tennessee, 1991. Joined the faculty in 1997.
Fields: Environmental Economics.

Prasad Bidarkota, Associate Professor
Phone: 305-348-6362 Email: bidarkot@fiu.edu
Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1996 Joined the faculty in 2003.
Fields: Econometrics.

Jesse Bull, Associate Professor
Phone: 305-348-3893 Email: jesse.bull@fiu.edu
Ph.D., University of California at San Diego, 2001. Joined the faculty in 2002.
Fields: Economics of Information, Economics of Legal Institutions

Joel Carton, Teaching Professor
Phone: 305-348-2682 Email: Joel.Carton@fiu.edu
PhD., University of Oregon, 1999. Joined the faculty in 2006.
Field: Macroeconomics.

Ji Gu, Associate Teaching Professor

Phone: 305-348-3893 Email: jesse.bull@fiu.edu

Ph.D. University of Oklahoma, 108. Joined the faculty in 2018.

Fields: Economics of Innovation, Regional Economic Development, and Industrial Organization.

Sheng Guo, Associate Teaching Professor and Undergraduate Program Director

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Ph.D. University of Chicago, 2008. Joined the faculty in 2008.

Fields: Applied econometrics, income and consumption, household finance, intergenerational mobility.

Cem Karayalcin, Professor

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Ph.D., Columbia University, 1989. Joined the faculty in 1989.

Fields: Open Economy Macroeconomics, Political Economy.

Norihiko Matsuda, Assistant Professor

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Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018. Joined the faculty in 2018.

Fields: Development Economics, Labor Economics

Kaz Miyagiwa, Professor

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Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 1985. Joined the faculty in 2012.

Fields: International Trade, Industrial Organization, Microeconomics, Development Economics

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Ph.D. University of New Mexico, 2005. Joined the faculty in 2009.

Fields: Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Tobias Pfütze, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs

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Ph.D. New York University, 2008. Joined the faculty in 2015

Fields: Development Economics, Political Economy, and Labor Economics.

Alfonso Rodriguez, Teaching Professor

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Ph.D. Florida International University, 2011. Joined the faculty in 2011

Fields: Microeconomics, Health Economics

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Ph.D. University of New South Wales, 2011. Joined Faculty in 2018.

Fields: Development Economics, Randomized Control Trials

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Ph.D. The Pennsylvania State University, 2023. Joined Faculty in 2023.
Fields: Game Theory, Mechanism Design, Organizational Economics, and Industrial Organization

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Ph.D. George State University, 2019. Joined the faculty in 2022.
Fields: Education, Public Health, and Development

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Fields: Game Theory, International Trade, Microeconomics

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Ph.D. Vanderbilt University, 2009. Joined the faculty in 2011.
Fields: International Economics, Macroeconomics, Monetary Economics, Regional Economics, Growth and Development.