

Department of Economics

Binghamton University

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

2007-2008
Revised 8/07

The requirements for the PhD are as follows:

i. Courses

The course requirements include a minimum of 60 credit hours. The core PhD courses (500, 501, 502, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 693 and 694) are offered every year. Generally about three elective courses are offered each semester, and an attempt is made to offer each elective course at least once every third semester. A complete listing of all graduate courses is given in [Appendix 8](#). Students are required to select two elective fields. For students in the Economics program, one of the electives may be finance; for students in the Economics and Finance program, one of the fields **MUST** be finance. A list of all fields of specialization, and the elective courses generally used to satisfy them, includes:

Econometrics	Two semesters of ECON 618 (A and B)
Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	ECON 682, ECON 683
Finance	FIN 581A, FIN 600, FIN 610
Labor Economics	ECON 641, ECON 642
Advanced Macroeconomics	ECON 618B, ECON 696G
Public Economics	ECON 636, ECON 637

ii. Comprehensive Examinations

All PhD students must pass comprehensive exams in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory. Students who do not pass an exam on the first attempt will be allowed another attempt to pass an exam in the failed subject, as scheduled by the department. If a student fails either theory exam the second time, that student is terminated from the economics PhD program. ***A third attempt is not allowed.*** If a comprehensive exam is not taken at the time specified, a grade of Fail is recorded.

Students with a field in finance may be required by the finance faculty to take a third comprehensive exam in finance.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.0 must apply in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies for permission to take any comprehensive exam.

iii. Third year paper

PhD students are required to complete a major research paper by the end of the summer following the third year in the program. Students who fail to present an acceptable paper by this time will be designated as not making satisfactory progress and terminated from the program.

iv. PhD Seminar

All PhD students must register for and attend ECON 693 and ECON 694 (2 credits each) in their third year of study and continue attending thereafter until a dissertation prospectus is presented and accepted. Registration is not required after each course has been taken once.

v. Dissertation

Once requirements (i)-(iii) have been satisfied, a dissertation chairperson and two committee members must be found from among the faculty. These three faculty members must sign "FORM A" ([Appendix 9](#)) which is then submitted to the Department Secretary. When this is done, the student is "Admitted to Candidacy" for the PhD in Economics. This status confers certain library and computer privileges.

Students usually start writing their dissertations in the required pre-dissertation research seminar, ECON 693 and 694, even before they are admitted to candidacy. Often there are false starts. Once a certain amount of progress has been made, and a preliminary version of the prospectus has been written, an oral presentation must be made in ECON 693 or 694. This presentation is normally made after the student has been admitted to candidacy. Some time after this presentation, and after the PhD candidate has had a chance to revise the prospectus, it must be presented to the entire department in the Economics Department Seminar. Faculty members vote on whether or not the prospectus is acceptable. If it is found unacceptable it must be re-presented until it is accepted. A description of the prospectus and the rules concerning its acceptance are given in [Appendix 10](#).

The dissertation may not be defended for at least six months after the presentation of the prospectus. A fourth member of the committee, selected from outside the department, is appointed for the defense. The dissertation defense is open to the public.

2) Grades and Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Graduate School policy on satisfactory academic progress may be found in the [Manual](#). In general, graduate students must maintain a cumulative average of "B" or 3.0 to remain in good standing. Courses graded S/U (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory) do not count in the official grade point average. It is absolutely necessary to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to receive funding.

3) Incompletes

The grade of "Incomplete" (I) is discussed in the *Manual* and the *Bulletin*. Graduate students who receive a mark of "I" are normally allowed six months to finish the work for a course and to receive a regular grade if they register the next semester. In exceptional circumstances Incompletes may be extended, with the approval of the instructor **and the Graduate School**, to a maximum of one calendar year. Students who do not register in the next semester have a calendar year to complete the course. When an "Incomplete" lapses the grade automatically becomes a "Withdraw" and cannot be changed. Students with assistantships should note that Graduate School policy now requires that any "Incomplete" be completed by the following August 1 if funding is to be continued.

4) Course Repeat Policy

The Graduate School's policy on repeating courses is given in the [Manual](#) and the [Bulletin](#). Any course with a grade of B- or lower may be repeated if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. The original grade stays on the transcript along with the new grade, but only the new grade is used to compute the grade point average. A memo to this effect must be requested from the Director of Graduate Studies by the student.

5) Provisional Status

Students are admitted provisionally by the Dean of the Graduate School when they cannot be certified for regular degree status. This might be a deficiency in academic background or preparation, including TOEFL scores, or perhaps a credential is missing from the application file. It is the **student's responsibility** to learn the reason for the provisional status, take the necessary steps to achieve regular matriculated status and advise the Director of Graduate Studies when such steps have been completed.

6) Computer Literacy

All graduate students are expected to use the Binghamton e-mail address assigned to them, and to become familiar with commonly used software such as Microsoft Office, a web browser, SAS, STATA, E-Views, GAUSS, Mathematica, etc. The University offers non-credit instruction in various statistical software programs.

7) Graduate School Time Limits

The Graduate School imposes certain time limits for completion of graduate degrees. MA candidates must complete their degree within five years of the date they enter graduate school. PhD candidates must be admitted to candidacy within five years of admission to the Graduate School or within five years of the award of a Binghamton master's degree, must present their prospectus within six months of entering candidacy, and must complete their degree within five years after they are admitted to candidacy. These time limits apply in addition to other Graduate School and department requirements (for example, GPA and successful completion of comprehensive exams).

8) Advisors

The Director of Graduate Studies is the advisor for all students during their first year. Students in their second and later years will choose their own advisors, generally based on relationships have established with faculty whose research interests are similar to their own. Advisors for students admitted to candidacy are their dissertation chairs. The department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies are available to give advice to all students.

9) Transfer Credit

The graduate school's policy on transfer credit is given in the [Manual](#). Credit is not given for courses used to get another degree (such as an MA). However, the number of courses required for a PhD may be reduced, and some specific course requirements waived, on the basis of prior work. It should be noted that PhD students will still usually want to take the PhD theory courses as preparation for comprehensive exams. In all cases the University residency requirement of 24 units in residence must be fulfilled. All requests for approval of transfer credits, and any waivers of course requirements, must be approved in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

10) Courses Overloads and Courses Outside the Department

Economics graduate students wishing to take more than 12 credits in any semester (13 for first semester students with assistantships) must obtain the prior written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies ([Appendix 11](#)). **Self-funded students** wanting more than 16 credits in any semester also require Graduate School approval (form available in the Economics Department office).

FIN 581A, FIN 600, and FIN 610 may be counted as electives for both MA and PhD degrees. Other 500-level finance courses (including (MGMT 505) and designated courses in the Public Administration program may be counted as electives towards the MA but not PhD degrees. Use of other courses outside the department as electives for either degree requires the written consent of the Director of Graduate Studies ([Appendix 11](#)).

11) Funding Renewal Policies

The Economics Department's policies covering the initial awarding of assistantships and the criteria for renewal can be found in [Appendix 12](#).

12) Graduate TA Training

All funded graduate students are required to take ECON 591, Seminar on the Teaching of College Economics, during their first semester in the department or their first semester of funding.

13) Graduate Levels, Full-time Status, Course Loads, OverloadsGraduate Levels

Level 1	New MA/PhD students with a bachelor's degree who have completed fewer than 24 credits at Binghamton University
Level 2	MA or PhD students who have either entered with a graduate degree or completed at least 24 credits of graduate work at Binghamton University
Level 3	PhD students who have completed the requirements for the master's degree and have begun to complete doctoral coursework
Level 4	PhD students who are "ABD" (completed all of the doctoral coursework, passed all comprehensive exams and admitted to candidacy)

Full-Time Status

The state-recognized full-time course load is 12 credits per semester for Level 1 and nine credits per semester for Level 2 and beyond. However, because nearly all regular courses at Binghamton University carry four credits, most students will take 12 credits each semester during their first two years. New York State policy also states that **funded graduate students** at levels 2, 3 or 4 (see above) must apply for permission to take more than nine credits. Therefore the following guidelines apply:

First Year –

Funded students at Level 1 must register for 12 credits.

Funded students at Level 2 or 3 must register for 12 credits AND file a "Course Overload Petition" (available in the Economics Department office).

Self-funded international students at Level 1 must register for 12 credits to be full-time.

Self-funded international students at Level 2 or 3 must register for at least nine credits to maintain full-time status and will normally register for 12 credits to assure timely completion of the degree.

Self-funded domestic students at Level 1 will normally want to register for 12 credits to be considered full-time and to assure timely completion of the degree.

Self-funded domestic students at Level 2 will also normally want to register for 12 credits to be considered full-time and to assure timely completion of the degree.

Second Year and Beyond –

Funded students will normally register for 12 credits AND file a "Course Overload Petition" (available in the Economics Department office) each semester until coursework is complete.

Self-funded international students must register for at least nine credits to maintain full-time status and will normally register for 12 credits until coursework is complete to assure timely completion of the degree.*

Self-funded domestic students will normally still want to register for 12 hours to assure timely completion of the degree.*

* As stated above most students will want to take 12 credit hours each semester during their first two years. However, **self-funded** students at level 2 and beyond who need to maintain full-time status may register for fewer than nine hours if they take at least one hour of ECON 599, 693, 694, 698, 699, or 700. The student will then need to file a "Certification of Full-time Status" form (available in the Economics Department office) with the Graduate Office.

Changing Levels and/or Status

Level 1 students are automatically changed to Level 2 when they complete 24 credits. Students who enter Binghamton University with an MA degree are already classified as Level 2. PhD students who meet the requirements and wish to change their status to Level 3 must file a “Student Request for Change in Status” form ([Appendix 13](#)). Level 4 status is automatically conferred when a student is admitted to candidacy.

Funded PhD students who have completed all of the required courses may use the “Student Request for Change in Status” form to request a designation of “CC” (Courses Complete). This will reduce some of the required fees.

14) Adding and Dropping Courses

Students desiring to add or drop a course must consult the Director of Graduate Studies and the Administrative Assistant, who will verify that the change is appropriate according to the student's assistantship status and/or standing in the department. Students are also expected to discuss this with the professor(s) of the course(s). All adding and dropping of courses must be done within the first two weeks of class. Late adds (after the deadline) are discouraged, and late drops will result in a grade of W on the transcript.

15) Assistantship Assignments

All students in economics receiving financial aid as assistantships should expect to serve both as teaching assistants and graduate (research) assistants at some time during their assistantships. Assignment to teaching or research will depend on the department's assessment of its needs during each semester. Both teaching and research assignments offer valuable training in skills that enhance students' attractiveness and fitness for their intended careers.

Recipients of assistantships should be aware that the continuation of aid depends upon performance both in coursework and in assistantship assignments. Unsatisfactory work in teaching or research assignments can be grounds for termination of aid.

One implication of these rules is that non-native speakers of English should work to polish the language skills required for effectiveness in the classroom. Failure to do so risks not only an unrewarding experience when assigned as a teaching assistant but also the termination of aid as a result of unsatisfactory performance. Besides the informal practice that comes with reading, speaking, and listening in English, students should consider taking advantage of formal training offered by the English as a Second Language Program, especially ESL 725, Oral Communication in College Teaching, offered each spring semester.

16) Guidelines on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

The [Manual](#) gives information on graduate students rights and responsibilities and University grievance procedures. The University also publishes the [Student Handbook](#). An outline of Economics Department grievance procedures is given as [Appendix 14](#) and [Appendix 15](#). The procedures of the Economics Department for handling complaints involving gender sensitivity and/or sexual harassment are given as [Appendix 16](#).

ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT STAFF

PROFESSOR CLIFFORD KERN, Chair

The Economics Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) are both available for questions, complaints, and issues requiring clarification. In general, most issues involving graduate students should be directed first to the DGS, although any questions students do not want to address to the DGS may go to the Chair. The Chair is the primary person to contact about:

- Financial aid
- Assistantship assignments
- Any business, complaints or suggestions relating to the department

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER HANES, Director of Graduate Studies

The DGS can assist you with information regarding any of the following:

- Degree/program requirements
- Permissions
- Approval of any transfer credits
- Signatures
- Explanations and clarifications of policy
- Exceptions to policy
- 'Leave of Absence' Requests

JOANNE ARDUNE, Administrative Assistant

- Adding and dropping any and all courses
- Clarification of some rules, regulations and procedures
- Room and class scheduling
- Most records

PATRICIA SWEET, Secretary to Chairman and Graduate Program

- All address and telephone changes
- Building keys
- Building passes
- Copies of old comprehensive examinations
- Graduate student files
- Blank forms

DENISE ASHER, Secretary to Faculty and Undergraduate Program

PLEASE NOTE: *Denise is only available afternoons and Friday morning.*

- TAs - classroom copying for quizzes only
- Arranges web posting of classroom materials
- Book orders
- Reading list, syllabus and exam typing

MARY ANN MARTIN, Computer Consultant

- Questions, problems and repair requests relating to departmental computer equipment, computer accounts, software and POD usage.

ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT OPERATING PROCEDURES

1) Department Office Hours

Administrative Assistant:	8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Graduate/Department Secretary:	8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Undergraduate/Faculty Secretary:	M-R: 1:30 to 4:30 PM F: 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Computer Consultant	8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

NOTE: The staff offices are generally closed from noon to 1:00 PM for lunch.

2) Department Rooms

The Economics Department has four rooms that are available for use by any faculty, staff or graduate student. It is asked that the following general rules be followed:

- Please do not leave or store any personal items, since the rooms are not private offices. As such, it is inappropriate to “live” in these spaces. Personal items such as lamps, microwaves, coffee makers, blankets, etc. are not allowed.
- Since these are public rooms, keep them neat and **please clean up any spills.**
- Please do not add, move or remove any furniture without first checking with the office.
- If it appears that you are the last one leaving, please **shut the windows and lock the door.**

Conference Room - LT 907

This room contains the mailboxes and is largely a social area unless reserved for another purpose. Students are welcome to use the refrigerator, microwave, and toaster oven during office hours (above). If it is necessary to reserve the room, see the graduate secretary (LT 909) to do so. The following are general rules for this space:

- Refrigerator - label and date anything put in the refrigerator. If you leave something in the refrigerator for everyone to use - thank you! - and label that too. Do NOT take items that you have not placed in the refrigerator unless they are labeled as “help yourself”.
- Books/journals/papers - anything left on the table is presumed to be free to whoever wants it (unless it is a labeled package), so please take anything that is of interest. The department tries to throw everything out every Friday.
- The area **MUST BE KEPT CLEAN**, it is not the responsibility of the staff to do so. Clean up after yourselves and do not leave a mess in the oven or microwave. If you need materials to clean up please ask the staff

Joint Political Science/Economics Computer POD

A jointly managed computer POD for graduate students in the Political Science and Economics departments will be up and running by Spring 2008. It will be furnished with 18 machines with internet connections and software appropriate for research. More information will be available by the end of 2007.

Economics Department Library - LT 1007

This is a library of various economics journals and publications that currently may be checked out using the honor system. PhD dissertations are also stored here. Journals may circulate for as long as you need them, but we do request that they be returned as soon as you are finished with them; **HOWEVER**, dissertations should **NOT** be taken from the room.

Copy Room - LT 910

The copy machine in this room is available for use by anyone with a copy card during office hours (above). These copy cards are different from the library copy cards and can be purchased at the Copy Center (in the basement of the Library Tower). The fee includes 250 copies and the card can be "refilled" at the Copy Center. Any problems with the copy machine should be addressed to the graduate secretary in LT 912. **Please note that this room is locked at 4:30 when the staff leaves for the day.**

A scanner for use by faculty, staff and graduate students is also in this room. However, since this room also is the office for work/study students it is expected that the desk space will be kept clear at all times and that the computer and scanner will not be used when the student is working.

3) Addresses and Contact Information

It is **vital** important that the department have the current address and telephone number, as well as a permanent contact, on file for all students. Changes and updates should be given to the graduate secretary as soon as they occur.

4) E-Mail

The department requires all students to obtain and use a Binghamton electronic mail address. Students with questions or issues concerning their Binghamton e-mail should contact the computer consultant.

Nearly all of the important information the department has for students will be sent through e-mail. It is the student's responsibility to check their e-mail **daily**, as this is often the only way the department can reach them with important messages. The University policy regarding electronic communications specifies that the Binghamton e-mail account will be the official channel for all e-mail communications, and that students will be responsible for all information sent to that address. If a student prefers to use an alternate account (such as gmail, hotmail or yahoo) they may arrange to have their e-mail forwarded from their Binghamton account. Be aware that forwarding is an imperfect system and that students are still responsible for information sent to their Binghamton account.

5) Campus Mail

For convenience, campus inter-office mail will be placed in mail slots in LT 907. Students with assistantship assignments have an individual slot marked with their name. Others are grouped in alphabetical categories (A-F, G-M, etc.).

Students **SHOULD NOT** use the department as a mailing address for personal mail from off-campus. All personal off-campus mail should be sent to the student's home, or they may obtain a free mailbox by applying at the campus post office.

One reminder: It is **illegal** to remove mail, magazines or anything else from a mailbox that is not the student's own.

6) University Smoking Policy

Smoking is permitted only in those areas that have been specifically designated as "Smoking Areas. Smoking is NOT permitted anywhere in the Library Tower, including: all offices (private and otherwise), halls, stairways, the conference room, and the library. These regulations are set forth by New York State public health law 13-E and the Occupational Safety and Health office. Students should be aware that, according to the office of Occupational Safety and Health, University Law Enforcement may be called if a person fails to comply with these regulations.

7) Office Space, Keys and Building Passes

Offices – TA/GAs are provided with office space to prepare course material, to hold office hours, and/or to work on research assignments. Since this space will be shared with other TA/GAs it is often not practical to use for personal study.

Office Hours – Teaching assistants should ask their faculty supervisor what kind of office hours they should have, then they should check with any other students sharing the space to make sure that office hours do not conflict. Office hours should be given to the administrative assistant as soon as possible after the start of classes.

***NOTE:** Students should not use nails or tape to attach items to the walls of the office space - use adhesive mounting putty or Command® hooks instead.*

Keys – Keys for assigned offices and the building are available from the graduate secretary in LT 909. A detailed copy of the key policy is available upon request. **For security reasons, if a key is lost, the student may be responsible for paying for the re-keying of the room and for all keys needed for that particular room or rooms.** The graduate secretary also has the combinations for all the department cubicles.

Building Passes – Students planning to be in the department after hours and/or on weekends will need to obtain a building pass from the graduate secretary. Campus Police will confiscate all University keys from anyone who does not have a valid pass.

8) Telephones, Faxes, Messages, etc.

Department telephones are for faculty and staff use. The office staff will, of course, take emergency messages and arrange for students to make emergency local calls using departmental phones; however, such calls should be kept to an absolute minimum.

FAXes may be sent and received from the Telecommunications Office located upstairs in the Student Union. The University's FAX number is 607-777-4000. The departmental FAX machine is for administrative and placement use **only**.