

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIELD PAPER IN LABOR/POPULATION AND PUBLIC ECONOMICS, 2020-2021

Students seeking to complete the Labor/Population field at UCLA are required to write a research paper. The paper will be judged in terms of its demonstration of competency in the application of economics to address questions in labor/population, broadly defined, and also in terms of its contribution to the literature. Ideally students will aim at writing papers that can eventually be used as job market papers and, in the best of cases, published in top journals. Our standard for a passing paper is that it should be good enough to eventually be accepted at a third-tier field journal (with additional work). That is, it should be a careful empirical (or theoretical) analysis that represents a small contribution to our understanding of an economic phenomenon. The paper should be well-motivated in the context of the existing literature and should display the author's understanding of the estimation strategy and results. The paper must use primary data sources and must represent the author's original work. The evaluation process will roughly follow the review process in a journal.

Please note that Field Papers cannot be co-authored.

Fall Quarter

At the end of the Fall quarter students will submit a 2-page memo describing the outline of a rough idea for their second-year paper. Students must find 2 faculty members in the applied group that are willing to sign off on their projects.

This memo is due December 4, 2020 and must be sent to Chiara Paz (chiara@econ.ucla.edu) along with the names of the two faculty members that have approved of the project.

Students who cannot obtain faculty approval by December 4, 2019 will have until January 8, 2021 to come up with a viable idea. Students that cannot obtain faculty approval for their project idea by this date will have failed the Labor/Population and Public field.

Winter Quarter

At the end of the winter quarter, the student will submit a short paper, up to 12-pages long, that describes the topic to be addressed, provides a compelling motivation for the study in terms of the specific question(s) that will be examined. The proposal should also include details of the data to be used, the empirical approach as well as a full literature review and an explanation of how the proposed project furthers that literature.

This First Draft must be submitted to Chiara Paz by March 21, 2021 (via email).

The paper proposal will be reviewed by the labor faculty who will provide written comments and one of the following two grades:

- “*Revise and Resubmit*” will signal that the student should proceed with the paper, taking into account the comments of and questions raised by the faculty.

- “*Reject*” will signal that the student should think very seriously about whether it is prudent to continue with this project. The latter “grade” should be construed as indicating that the faculty are extremely skeptical that it will lead to a productive line of research.

Students receiving a “reject” will need to decide whether they should continue with their topic, start a different one, or not pursue labor as one of their fields. Students need to understand that the decision to pursue their initial topic represents a risky strategy in terms of the likelihood of having their field paper accepted by the faculty in June.

The faculty member assigned to the paper will help the student interpret her or his comments and will help identify the issues the student needs to address in the revision.

Spring Quarter

In the spring quarter, each student will present his or her work in the Applied Microeconomics proseminar. This is a requirement of the field. Students must email Till von Wachter to reserve a slot in the Proseminar during the Spring quarter. Dates will be awarded on a first come first served basis. The Proseminar presentations will last ½ hour.

The final draft of the Labor field paper must be submitted to Chiara Paz by June 23, 2021 (via email).

Each paper will be reviewed by at least 2 faculty and will be assigned a grade of Honors Pass, PhD Pass or Master’s Pass. An Honors Pass or a PhD Pass are considered passing grades. A Masters Pass is a failing grade. Papers that are not submitted on time will automatically be given a Master’s Pass.

It is expected that a student who received a 'Revise and Resubmit' at the end of the winter quarter will submit a substantially revised version of the paper which fully addresses all the issues raised in the prior review by the faculty. Students should also attempt to incorporate as many comments from the Proseminar as possible in their Final Draft.

A student who does not achieve a Ph.D. pass in the June round will have failed the Labor/Population field (recall that a passing grade in the field exam is also required for completion of the Labor/Population field). However, the student may still submit a revised version of the paper which fully addresses all faculty comments by September 15, 2021. Submission of the paper at this time should be construed as equivalent to a second attempt at a field examination. The paper will be reviewed by at least 2 faculty. If the paper does not meet the standard of a Ph.D. pass, the student will have failed the Labor/Population field and will have exhausted all options for demonstrating competency in Labor/Population Economics at UCLA.

Important Deadlines

- December 4, 2020: two-page Memo containing preliminary paper idea due
- March 21, 2021: First Draft due.
- Spring quarter: Paper to be presented at the proseminar. Students need to sign up in advance to guarantee they will have a slot.
- June 23, 2021: Final draft due.
- September 15, 2021: Resubmission of paper for students with a failing grade.