

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Academic Year 2021-2022



**Department of Economics
8283 Bunche Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90095**

Welcome to the Ph.D. Program in Economics at UCLA

The Ph.D. Program in Economics at UCLA prepares students for careers as economists in academia, business, and government. The program combines rigorous work in economic theory and careful study of real-world problems and institutions. Graduates from our program work at major universities around the world. They also work at national and international government agencies, banks, research centers, and private businesses. Some of our graduates have achieved great prominence, such as William Sharpe, who earned both his B.A. and Ph.D. degrees at UCLA, and was co-recipient of the 1990 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the capital asset pricing model.

The Department includes internationally recognized scholars in many areas of economics. These outstanding scholars form one of the foremost departments of economics in the world.

The Economics Department is situated within one of the world's most youthful and vibrant universities. Founded in 1919, UCLA first developed into a major university in the 1950's. After so short a history, the university was ranked second in the United States among public research universities by the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils in 1982. Many of UCLA's Ph.D. programs are currently ranked in the top 20 in their respective fields.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

MAJOR FIELDS OR SUBDISCIPLINES

Econometrics; Economic History; Industrial Organization; International Economics; Labor Economics; Macro and Monetary Economics; Theory; Population and Public Sector Economics; Asset Pricing

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

None.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In the student's first year of study, students are required to enroll in the Mathematics of Economics course (Econ 200) and three first-year graduate core sequences in Microeconomic Theory (Economics 201A, 201B, 201C), Macroeconomic Theory (Economics 202A, 202B, 202C), and Quantitative Methods (Economics 203A, 203B, 203C). All courses applied toward the degree must be taken for a letter grade.

Starting in the second year, students take coursework in three fields (or two fields and a breadth option) of their choosing from the following list: Econometrics; Economic History; Industrial Organization; International Economics; Labor Economics; Macro and Monetary Economics; Theory; Population and Public Sector Economics.

Breadth option: Students may substitute one and only one of the three fields by course work, defined as three graduate-level courses taken in that field. Courses used to satisfy this requirement cannot include any courses that are part of the first-year graduate core sequences. The breadth option must include Economics 207, 241, or 242 (see general catalog for course descriptions). Students may apply courses at the graduate level (200-series) outside the Economics Department on written pre-approval by the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies. Only courses in which a minimum grade of B is earned may be used to satisfy this requirement.

After successfully completing all course requirements, first-year core written comprehensive exams, and second-year written qualifying examinations, students must enroll in and regularly attend a departmental workshop and dissertation proseminar for each of their remaining quarters in the doctoral program.

Every term, graduate students are responsible for registering and for enrolling in the correct courses and in the correct number of units; for making sure that their fees and tuition are paid; and for making any necessary changes in their registration and enrollment by the appropriate deadlines listed here: <http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Calendars/Term-Calendar>.

TEACHING REQUIREMENT

None.

FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Registration and enrollment is done online through [My.UCLA](#). Please refer to the Graduate Division [Orientation Handbook](#), which contains information on registration, enrollment, and other services on campus that are designed to make student life easier. For the most up-to-date enrollment information, visit the [Schedule of Classes](#) website at <https://sa.ucla.edu/ro/public/soc/>.¹

First-year Ph.D. students should enroll in the following four (4) courses in the Fall quarter:

- 200. Mathematical Methods in Economics (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading basis)
- 201A. Microeconomics: Theory of the Firm and Consumer
- 202A. Macroeconomics: Dynamics and Growth Theory
- 203A. Quantitative Methods: Probability and Statistics for Econometrics

In addition to these four courses, students are required to enroll in a two-week “Math Camp,” a prerequisite for Econ 200. Math Camp typically begins two weeks before the first day of the Fall quarter. This year, Math Camp will be from September 8 through September 18. Please refer to the Econ 200 [course website](#) for complete information.

First-year Ph.D. students should enroll in the following three (3) courses in the Winter quarter:

- 201B. Microeconomics: Basic Concepts and Techniques of Noncooperative Game Theory and Information Economics
- 202B. Macroeconomics: Business Cycles
- 203B. Quantitative Methods: Introduction to Econometrics II

First-year Ph.D. students should enroll in the following three (3) courses in the Spring quarter:

- 201C. Microeconomics: Game Theory with Asymmetric Information and Applications
- 202C. Macroeconomics: Topics in Macroeconomics
- 203C. Quantitative Methods: Introduction to Econometrics III

First year students are required to take and pass all core courses with a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B).

Course descriptions of all Economics courses are available in the UCLA General Catalog [Current Course Descriptions](#).

¹ **NOTE:** If you are unable to enroll in a course through my.ucla.edu, please contact the course instructor for permission before requesting to be added to the course by the Academic Coordinator.

ESL PLACEMENT EXAMINATION (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY):

You must take the [ESL Placement Examination \(ESLPE\)](#) at UCLA if you are a non-native speaker of English and are new to the United States. If you are a non-native speaker of English but are not new to the United States, you may also be required to take the ESLPE. For example, if you were required to submit a TOEFL score when you applied to UCLA, you will need to take the ESLPE.

EXEMPTION NOTE: If you enter UCLA with a score of 100 or above on the TOEFL iBT or at least a 7.5 on the IELTS exam; **OR** hold a Bachelor's or higher degree from a university in a country where the official language is English and in which English is the spoken language and the medium of instruction **you do not need to take the ESLPE.**

The test is offered four times during Fall, once in Winter, and once in Spring. Test dates are found at the UCLA Writing Programs website: [ESLPE Exam Schedule](#). Please do not delay—this test is **MANDATORY**. ESLPE is designed to facilitate your studies here at UCLA. Visit [ESL Requirements for International Graduate Students](#) for details about registration.

NOTE: Students may only take the ESLPE once. If students do not receive an 'exempt' score on the exam, they will be required to take up to two graduate academic writing courses: ESL 300* and ESL 301.

ESLPE Contact Information:

Tara Contreras
tara@humnet.ucla.edu
(310) 206-1145
146 Humanities Building

ESTABLISHING CALIFORNIA RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES (US CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS ONLY):

Establishing California Residency for Tuition Purposes:

Domestic students who are not California residents will need to establish residency before their second year to avoid assessment of nonresident tuition. In order to establish your residency, certain requirements must be met. Please refer to the Registrar's web page at:

<http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Fees-Residence/Residence-Requirements/Classification-as-a-Resident> or call the Residence Deputy at (310) 825-1091 for the complete details on establishing California Residency. If you do not establish your California residency, you are required to pay non-resident tuition during your second year, which is currently \$15,102 per year.

SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Three courses (or 12 units) per term are considered the normal enrollment for graduate students and are required for a student not in doctoral candidacy to be counted for full-time status in the University's official enrollment.²

In the second year, students are expected to enroll in all of the required courses for their chosen doctoral fields and to pass each course with a minimum grade of B. Students will be informed of the specific field requirements in each of the fields before the beginning of their second year. At the end of the second year, students are required to pass (with a P or better) the qualifying examinations in three doctoral elective fields (or two fields plus the breadth option).³

AWARDING OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE

Doctoral students must pass the doctoral comprehensive examinations in all three of the standard First-year core sequences – Microeconomic Theory, Macroeconomic Theory, and Quantitative Methods with a Ph.D. pass or higher before starting the Fall quarter of their third year. Students who do not pass the doctoral comprehensive exams will not be able to continue in the Ph.D program.

During the second year, students can petition to be awarded a Master of Arts degree if they have met certain requirements. They will be awarded a Master of Arts degree if the following requirements are satisfied by the end of their second year:⁴

- Complete eight out of the nine following courses:
 - Econ 201A, 201B, 201C, 202A, 202B, 202C, 203A, 203B, 203C
- Complete one Economic History course (Econ 207, 241, or 242).
- Master's-level (M) passes in comprehensive examinations for the three First-year sequences.

Students must earn at least a B average in all courses applied toward the Master of Arts degree. Upon successful completion of these requirements, the Master of Arts (MA) degree is awarded.

² **NOTE:** Econ 375 and Econ 495 for teaching assistants, and independent studies at the 500-level (596) for graduate student researchers, may be included in reaching the twelve-unit load requirement.

³ For further information on the breadth option, see page 3, "Program Requirements".

⁴ **NOTE:** If admitted to the PhD program having already been awarded an academic Master's in Economics (MA or MS) from another institution, the University's duplication of degree policy prevents the awarding of another Master's degree.

STUDENT ADVISING

A. FIRST YEAR STUDENTS & FACULTY ADVISORS

Entering students are primarily advised by the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies and the First Year Adviser. First year students are encouraged to consult these advisers whenever doubts or questions arise about their proposed program or academic goals. Throughout their first year, students should initiate conversations with the department's faculty to learn about their research interests in preparation for selecting a primary advisor in their second year. As the student becomes more familiar with the faculty, the adviser initially assigned by the department may be replaced, at the student's initiative, by a faculty member in the student's area of interest and specialization.

B. SECOND YEAR STUDENTS & FACULTY ADVISORS

Students are encouraged to begin exploring their research interests as early as possible. During the second year, students should be deciding which faculty will comprise their dissertation committee and most importantly, who will be the Chair (or Co-Chairs) of their committee. By the end of the second year, it is ideal that students have identified their dissertation topic and officially nominated a dissertation committee. A student's Dissertation Chair will be their primary advisor throughout their time in the program. Although students are allowed to reconstitute their committee and change its members, many students keep the same committee throughout their studies.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

During the first year, students' progress is tracked by the Graduate Committee and the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies. If a student is identified as making slow or unsatisfactory progress, they will be asked to meet with a committee member to assess the factors that may be hindering their progress and to implement a feasible academic plan.

The Graduate Committee meets periodically to review the performance of each graduate student in the program. A student making slow or unsatisfactory progress is interviewed by a committee member and is provided with guidelines for successful completion of the program. The Vice Chair for Graduate Studies (who also serves as the Chair of the Graduate Committee) likewise meets with students who are failing to meet University and/or departmental minimum standards. Students who are found to be consistently performing unsatisfactorily may be recommended for termination by a vote of this committee. The Graduate Committee meets whenever necessary to address ongoing issues within the program.

For advanced graduate students who have begun dissertation work, dissertation chairs are tasked with evaluating their satisfactory progress. The student's quarterly report submitted to the dissertation chair is essential for the faculty to accurately evaluate the progress of the student. It is highly recommended that students set routine meetings with their advisors.

UCLA requires at least a 'B' (3.0) average in all courses taken in graduate status at the University, and in all courses applied toward advanced degrees. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to be in good academic standing and to be eligible for any university funding. A student is considered in probationary status and subject to dismissal if the cumulative scholarship in all work attempted in graduate status fall below a 'B' (3.0), or if the student's work in any two consecutive terms falls below a 'B' (3.0) average. The Dean of the Graduate Division determines a student's eligibility to continue graduate study. If allowed to continue in probationary status, the student is required to make expeditious progress toward improvement in scholarship. If a student is allowed to continue as a graduate student, this action does not constitute an exception to policies governing any other situation in which a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required (e.g., being employed as a teaching assistant or research assistant).

The departmental policy states that if a student's GPA falls below a 3.3, the awarding of any departmental funding is discretionary.

FIRST-YEAR CORE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

To be eligible to continue in the doctoral program, students must pass the first-year core written comprehensive exams (with a Ph.D. pass or better) in all three first-year core sequences by the end of their second year. The comprehensive exams are offered twice a year, at the end of the Spring quarter and at the end of the summer. These exams are graded H (Ph.D. honors pass), P (Ph.D. pass), M (M.A. pass), or F (fail).

Students have three opportunities to pass their first-year comprehensive exams: after the Spring quarter in their first year, at the end of that summer, and a final attempt after the Spring quarter in their second year. If a student fails to pass the three comprehensive examinations with Ph.D. pass or better by the end of their second year, they are ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program and will be recommended for academic disqualification. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

A student can claim exemption from one and only one comprehensive exam if the student receives at least a B in all three courses in that sequence, AND an average grade of B+ (3.3 GPA) in the three courses in that sequence. The student does not have to select which comprehensive exam they would like to be exempt from until after they receive the exam results. For example, should a student receive an average grade of B+ in the microeconomics and macroeconomics sequences, they can still choose to take both sequences' comprehensive exams. After they receive their exam results, they can select which sequence they wish to apply their exemption to.

Students who are intending to not sit for a comprehensive exam must inform the Graduate Advisor at least one week prior to the examination date.

SECOND YEAR QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

A. Written Examinations

All Ph.D. qualifying examinations are intended to determine competency in the overall field. While the courses offered are intended to prepare students for the field examinations, and while the professors of the courses are normally also the examiners, the qualifying examination is not restricted solely to the material explicitly presented in course lectures or assigned exercises. Course reading lists which consist of recommended supplementary and complementary literature are provided to students to help them acquire further knowledge of the overall field. Doctoral field qualifying examinations are offered at least once a year, normally after the end of Spring quarter.

The Department offers written field qualifying examinations in the areas listed below:

Econometrics; Economic History; Industrial Organization; International Economics; Labor Economics; Macro and Monetary Economics; Asset Pricing; Theory; Population and Public Sector Economics.

Students must take and pass (with a Ph.D. pass or better) the second-year written qualifying examinations in three doctoral elective fields, or two fields plus breadth option, usually by the end of the second year. Examinations are graded H (Ph.D. honors pass), P (Ph.D. pass), M (M.A. pass), or F (fail). Written qualifying examinations may be retaken once, but no later than the end of the student's third year.

International students who pass their qualifying exams and advance to doctoral candidacy will have their Nonresident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) reduced by 100 percent for 9 quarters starting on the first academic term following their advancement to candidacy. Due to this university policy, most international students aim to advance at the end of their second year.

B. Field Paper

Fields that require a field paper must receive at least a grade of "Pass" before advancing to doctoral candidacy. A particular paper can only be submitted to one field. If a student's specialty is in more than one field that requires a paper, then a different paper should be submitted to each field of study, unless pre-approved by the Faculty Committee in the field.

C. Seminar Paper Requirement

Before taking the University Oral Qualifying Examination, students are expected to present a paper in a departmental proseminar. It is recommended that this be completed by the end of Spring quarter of the second year.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Students are advanced to doctoral candidacy and awarded the Candidate in Philosophy (C.Phil.) degree upon successful completion of the written and Oral Qualifying Examinations.

All students should have advanced to doctoral candidacy by the end of the Spring Quarter of their third year. Most international students aim to advance to candidacy at the end of their second year in order to take advantage of nonresident supplemental tuition fee reduction.

Students who have advanced to candidacy must submit an academic progress report by the end of each quarter to their Dissertation Committee chair. This report should be delivered no later than the end of the second week of each quarter.

Students who advanced to doctoral candidacy before the beginning of the Fall quarter of their third year should present their progress toward their dissertation at a proseminar held at the end of their third year and in front of the internal members of the student's (possibly reconstituted) doctoral committee.

A student's doctoral committee will meet with the student at the end of the third and fourth year to determine if the student's progress in their dissertation research is satisfactory. Prior to this meeting, the student will submit a written progress report on the proposed topic that describes the work completed to date and includes a detailed outline of the plan for completing the project.

With the consent of the student's committee, completed papers may be submitted as part of, or in lieu of, the academic progress report.

ORAL QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The University Oral Qualifying Examination, administered by the student's doctoral committee, is scheduled after the successful completion of all first-year core written examinations as prescribed, successful completion (i.e., a Ph.D. pass) of the second-year written qualifying examinations of three doctoral elective fields (or two fields plus breadth option), and the submission of a written dissertation proposal. The oral examination focuses on, but is not limited to, the dissertation proposal.

A student should attempt the oral examination before the beginning of the third-year of study. Students must have been registered in the immediately preceding Spring term in order to take the examination in the summer. If a student fails the oral qualifying examination, they are entitled to one retake; however, the oral exam must be completed before the student begins their fourth year.

Academic Senate regulations require all Ph.D. students to complete and pass the University Oral Qualifying Examinations prior to doctoral advancement to candidacy. Under Senate regulations the University Oral Qualifying Examination is open only to the student and appointed members of the doctoral committee.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY FOR THE DOCTORATE DEGREE

Before students can advance into doctoral candidacy, they must fulfill the following requirements:

- Pass (with a P or better) all written qualifying examinations.
- Form a doctoral committee.
- Submit a completed Nomination of Doctoral Committee Form to the UCLA Graduate Division for approval. <https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/docnomin.pdf>
- Submit a written dissertation proposal to the doctoral committee.
- Pass the University Oral Qualifying Examination.

A. Regulations Governing the Nomination of Doctoral Committees

The following are regulations governing the nomination of doctoral committees:

- Doctoral committees consist of a minimum of four faculty members from UCLA of the following academic ranks:
 - a. Professor
 - b. Associate Professor
 - c. Assistant Professor
- Three of the four doctoral committee members must hold an appointment at UCLA in the Department of Economics. The fourth member can either be from the Department of Economics or another academic department.
- Two of the four doctoral committee members must hold the rank of Professor or Associate Professor.
- The Chair of the doctoral committee must hold a UCLA appointment in the Department of Economics as Professor, Associate or Assistant Professor.
- Additional members (above the minimum number of four) may be nominated and, if appointed, have the same voting rights and responsibilities as the other committee members. They may also serve as Co-Chair of the Committee.
- By petition, **one** of the minimum four members may be a faculty member from outside of UCLA who holds an appropriate appointment as listed above.

B. Dissertation Proposal

Students must submit a written dissertation proposal to their committee at least one week prior to their scheduled oral qualifying examination.

C. University Oral and Written Qualifying Examinations

Preparing for the University Oral Qualifying Exam:

- Pass (with a P or better) all written qualifying examinations and/or papers.
- Obtain a committee nomination form: <https://grad.ucla.edu/academics/doctoral-studies/nomination-of-doctoral-committee/>
- Invite four faculty to be part of your doctoral committee.
- Return the completed “Nomination of Doctoral Committee” form to your Graduate Advisor **at least 5 weeks before your oral qualifying exam**. Please aim to do this in the early part of summer.
- Wait for the e-mail confirmation of your committee approval from the Graduate Division. The preliminary oral exam cannot take place until the committee has been approved by Graduate Division.
- Schedule the oral exam. Coordinate a feasible day and time with all your committee members and make a room reservation through Ed McDevitt [mcdevitt@econ.ucla.edu].
- Provide a finalized dissertation proposal to your committee members + a copy to your Graduate Advisor **at least 7 days** prior to the date of the oral qualifying examination.
- One or two days before your orals, remind committee members and the Graduate Advisor of the time and location of your exam. The exam cannot proceed if any members are not present.
- The Graduate Advisor prepares the student’s academic file, including the “Report on the Oral Qualifying Examination” form. The student’s faculty advisor/dissertation chair will pick up these materials from the Graduate Office prior to the oral exam.
- After the exam, the committee members sign the “Report on the Oral Qualifying Examination” form. The chair of the committee returns the form and student’s file DIRECTLY to the Graduate Advisor.
- The student “advances to candidacy” when a successful “Report on the Oral Qualifying Examination” form is received and processed by the Graduate Division. **Two doctoral candidacy fees totaling \$90 are billed to the student’s Bruin Bill account and must be paid in a timely manner.**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Every doctoral degree program requires the completion of an approved dissertation that demonstrates the student's ability to perform original, independent research and constitutes a distinct contribution to knowledge in the principal field of study.

FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION (DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION)

Not required for all students in the program. The decision as to whether a defense is required is made by the doctoral committee.

TIME-TO-DEGREE

The department has established a six-year (18 quarters) normative time-to-degree plan which is divided into a two-year pre-candidacy period and a four-year candidacy period. This projection is suggestive, and it should be recognized that the amount of time necessary to complete the degree has been found to vary widely among students due to differences in previous training and other factors. All requirements for the Ph.D. degree, however, must be completed within seven academic years (21 quarters) after entering the program.

DISSERTATION PREPARATION AND FILING

A. Dissertation Preparation

All policies and procedures for dissertation preparation, including manuscript construction and formatting instructions, are available at <https://grad.ucla.edu/academics/graduate-study/file-your-thesis-or-dissertation/>.

B. Dissertation Filing

Students who are not registered for the term in which the manuscript is filed must follow the steps below to determine eligibility:

- A doctoral candidate must be registered during the immediately preceding term in order to be eligible to pay the Filing Fee in lieu of registering for the current term (note: Spring term is considered to be the term which immediately precedes both summer and Fall terms). Candidates who were not registered during the immediately preceding term must register for the current term in order to file the dissertation.
- A student who was registered for the immediately preceding term and who does not need to be registered for the current term for any other reason (e.g., an academic apprentice personnel appointment), obtains the Filing Fee Application Form at <https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/etd/filingfee.htm>. The application must be signed by the Department Chair and the Committee Chair and be electronically submitted to Graduate Division. If approved, the fee is billed through the Billing and Receivables System (BAR).

Note: Students who are registered during the term in which the dissertation is to be filed do not submit a Filing Fee application.

The dissertation must be filed online as an Adobe PDF file. It is not necessary to be physically present on campus to submit the dissertation; only access to the internet is required. To begin the submission process, visit www.grad.ucla.edu/etd/ and log in with your UCLA Logon ID.

Submissions on the day of the deadline will be accepted until 5:00 pm PST. To count as submitted, the following steps must have been completed:

- All required dissertation committee members have approved and signed
- Dissertation committee has certified student has passed the final oral exam (if applicable)
- Student has uploaded submitted a final PDF via ProQuest
- Student has completed the online Graduate Division process

For detailed instructions for electronic dissertation filing, please visit

<https://grad.ucla.edu/academics/graduate-study/thesis-and-dissertation-filing-requirements/>

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

The following are the main sources of financial support available to incoming/first-year students:

A. Departmental Fellowships

The Department awards fellowships (which may provide tuition, registration fees, and/or a stipend) to some of the entering students. The primary criterion for the departmental fellowship is the academic strength of the incoming student's application.

B. Graduate Division Fellowship Programs and Support From UCLA Centers

There are a number of campus-wide fellowship programs. Some of the available fellowships (specifically the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship and Graduate Opportunity Fellowship programs) are intended to help ensure access to graduate study for students who have experienced significant socioeconomic disadvantages or have overcome other major educational or physical disadvantages in their pursuit of higher education. Others are privately endowed fellowships with specific eligibility requirements.

For a list of University fellowships and grants for entering graduate students, visit <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/entsup/fellgrnt.htm>

C. Extramural Funding

There are several extramural agencies that provide fellowships for graduate students. We strongly urge all students to research external funding opportunities and apply for every fellowship for which they are eligible.

The UCLA Graduate Division has an on-line database of extramural funding opportunities called GRAPES, available at: <https://grad.ucla.edu/funding/>. The GRAPES database catalogs over 500 private and publicly funded awards, fellowships, and internships and allows searches by field, academic level, award type, award amount, and other criteria.

In addition, directories of extramural support may be found at most university libraries. Students can access a list of these directories at <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/entsup/extramrl.htm>.

FINANCIAL AID FOR US CITIZENS AND U.S. PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Applicants who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. may apply for aid (such as loans, work-study funds, and grants) based on financial need. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid may be completed via <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS

The following are the main sources of financial support available to continuing students:

A. Teaching Assistantships (TA)

Teaching Assistants lead discussion sections for undergraduate students, hold office hours, proctor exams, and grade exams and assignments. Teaching assistantships are awarded to continuing students with priority to students in their earlier years. Subject to “Satisfactory Academic Progress” with respect to program requirements (including a minimum 3.30 GPA), all students are eligible to receive a Teaching or Research Assistant position.⁵ Teaching Assistant re-appointments also require satisfactory quarterly teaching evaluations by the course instructor and by the students enrolled in the course.

TOP Examination Requirement (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY):

Students who plan to work as a teaching assistant (TA) at UCLA and are non-US citizens must pass the TOP before working as a TA in any department at UCLA. All non-citizens are considered international students. This includes permanent residents. However, international students who have earned a bachelor’s degree from a U.S. university are exempt from taking the TOP.

International students MUST pass the Test of Oral Proficiency (TOP) examination with a minimum score of 7.1 before working as a TA in the Economics Department.

No alternatives to the TOP examination are accepted. The examination should be taken in the academic year before the student will work as a Teaching Assistant. Students may take the exam during their first quarter as a Teaching Assistant by exception. Because examination slots fill up quickly, students should schedule the exam as early as possible.

International students who do not pass TOP by the time they are scheduled to be a teaching assistant will not be eligible to serve as a TA and will most likely receive a readership offer instead. For more information about the TOP exam, please visit the UCLA Office of Instructional Development (OID) at <https://www.teaching.ucla.edu/top>.

TA TRAINING COURSE

All students must complete the TA training course (Econ 495, Teaching College Economics) to become eligible to TA in the Department. Students typically begin the TA training course a few weeks before the beginning of the second year because the second year is when most students start to TA. Students are advised to make summer plans accordingly to ensure that they do not miss this mandatory TA training course. The training continues during Winter and Spring quarter, although meetings are less frequent. All new TAs are required to enroll in Econ 495 every quarter during the first year that they are employed as a TA. In subsequent years, students are required to enroll in Econ 375 every quarter they are employed as a TA.

⁵ NOTE: Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0, based on the minimum university standard. However, the departmental standard requires a 3.3 GPA to be eligible for employment. Students who fall below a 3.0 GPA are not eligible for any type of funding. Teaching Assistants (TAs), Readers, and Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) are required to be registered and enrolled in at least twelve quarter units throughout their appointments.

B. Readerships

Readers serve as graders of exams or assignments for a course. Readers are paid on an hourly basis; the number of total hours allocated to a reader is dependent on the number of students enrolled in their assigned course.

C. Graduate Student Research Positions (GSR)

Graduate Student Researchers are hired by faculty members with research funds. Advanced students may apply for GSR positions with faculty members in the Economics Department and in other academic units such as Anderson Graduate School of Management, the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UCLA Public Policy, UCLA School of Law, among others. Students are encouraged to approach faculty who they wish to work with.

D. Conference Travel Reimbursement

After students have advanced to candidacy, they are eligible for Conference Travel funding once every fiscal year [July 1 through June 30]. A student can be reimbursed for up to \$500 if they present at a conference or up to \$300 if they attend a conference without presenting. Students interested in utilizing this funding should reach out to the Graduate Advisors for details **before** they travel.

E. Graduate Division Fellowships

There are a number of campus-wide fellowship opportunities. For a list of University fellowships and grants for continuing graduate students please visit <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/stusup/contspprt.pdf>.

Various fellowship/award announcements are also distributed periodically by email by the Economics Graduate Advisors and by the Graduate Division.

The Department encourages all eligible students to apply for the following awards: **Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program (GSRM)** and the **Graduate Research Mentorship Program (GRM)**. These programs are open to doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences who: (1) will have completed at least one year but no more than three years of UCLA doctoral study by the beginning of the summer, with priority given to students in year one or two of the doctoral study; (2) have not yet advanced to candidacy. All students are eligible to apply for the GSRM. Only U.S. citizens or permanent residents are eligible to apply for the GRM. These programs are designed to assist students in acquiring and developing advanced research skills under the mentorship and guidance of a faculty member. The GSRM program provides funding for the summer and allows students to devote time on their research. The GRM program provides funding for one academic year and allows students to focus on their research without the need to work as a TA or GSR.

F. Extramural Funding

There are many extramural agencies that provide fellowships for graduate students. See the links above under “Financial Support for First Year Students” for more details.

G. Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF)

The Department recommends that students who have one year left to complete their dissertation apply for the **Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF)**. This program is intended for students who will be in their FINAL year of graduate school. Award recipients must complete all degree requirements within 12 months of activating their Dissertation Year Fellowship and submit a report of their progress midyear. Students apply for this award during their penultimate year, typically in February. A DYF awardee is not eligible to receive university funding after their DYF year concludes.

H. A Friendly Reminder:

When students are admitted into the Economics PhD program, they are offered a unique financial package. Financial packages vary from student to student. If a student is not offered financial support, the department will attempt to employ the student as a TA or GSR, as long as they meet academic and professional requirements. The department strives to offer financial support (via employment or fellowship) to each student for four out their six years in the program. If a student obtains external funding for a portion of their time in the program, they may shift their guaranteed departmental funding to a later year.

Working off campus

International Students:

Based on your visa type, there are different policies for holding employment off campus. Please see below for details and always consult with the Graduate Advisor and your faculty advisor before accepting outside employment.

Working during your PhD program

International students interested in working off campus, in a job related to their field, should apply to obtain approval through the Dashew Center. F-1 students will apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and J-1 students will apply for Pre-Completion Academic Training. The Econ Graduate Advisors should be consulted for assistance in the beginning stages of these procedures.

A. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Eligibility Requirements (FOR F-1 STUDENTS):

1. Valid F-1 status for at least one academic year
2. Course Requirement
 - a. Students who have NOT advanced to candidacy must enroll in a 596 course
 - b. Students who have advanced to candidacy are not required to enroll in a course, but must submit a letter to The Dashew Center from their department.

For more details on CPT visit:

<https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/Portals/104/Documents/Forms/F1Visa/CPT/CPTGuidelines.pdf>.

B. Pre-Completion Academic Training Requirements (FOR J-1 STUDENTS):

1. Valid J-1 status for at least one academic year
2. Course Requirement
 - a. Students who have NOT advanced to candidacy must enroll in a 596 course
 - b. Students who have advanced to candidacy are not required to enroll in a course
3. Must maintain full-time enrollment during the academic year.

For more details on Pre-Completion Academic Training visit:

<https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/Portals/104/Documents/Forms/J1Visa/AcademicTraining/Academic%20Training%20-%20Degree%20Students.pdf>.

Working after completing your PhD program

These programs allows students to work in the United States in an occupation directly related to their area of study following graduation. F-1 students should apply for OPT and J-1 students should apply for Post-Completion Academic Training.

A. Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) Eligibility Requirements (FOR F-1 STUDENTS):

1. Maintained valid F-1 status for at least one academic year
2. Must not have accrued 12 months of full-time CPT or OPT for the same degree level

For more details on OPT visit:

<https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/Portals/104/Documents/Forms/F1Visa/opt/OPTGuidelines.pdf>.

B. Post-Completion Academic Training Eligibility Requirements (FOR J-1 STUDENTS):

1. Work must begin within 30 days after the last quarter end date or, if on filing fee, within 30 days after the end of your filing fee usage period.
2. Any period of Academic Training taken before graduation is deducted from the total allocation of Post-Completion training.
3. Minimum of 20 hours of work per week required for Post-Completion Academic Training.

For more details on Post-Completion Academic Training visit:

<https://www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu/Portals/104/Documents/Forms/J1Visa/AcademicTraining/Academic%20Training%20-%20Degree%20Students.pdf>.

Domestic Students:

Students who are interested in working off campus, should consult their faculty advisor, but do not need to obtain university permission to do so.

TERMINATION OF GRADUATE STUDY AND APPEAL OF TERMINATION

UNIVERSITY POLICY

A student who fails to meet the program requirements may be recommended for termination of graduate study. A graduate student may be disqualified from continuing in the graduate program for a variety of reasons. The most common reason is failure to maintain the minimum cumulative grade point average (3.00) required by the Academic Senate to remain in good standing. Other examples include failure of examinations, lack of timely progress toward the degree, and poor performance in core courses. Probationary students (those with a cumulative grade point average below 3.00) are subject to immediate dismissal upon the recommendation of the Department. University guidelines governing termination of graduate students, including the appeal procedure, are outlined in *Standards and Procedures for Graduate Study at UCLA*, available at <https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/spintro.htm>.

SPECIAL DEPARTMENTAL OR PROGRAM POLICY

Students who fail to pass all three first-year core written comprehensive examinations (with a Ph.D. pass or better) by July of their second year are ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program. Students who do not earn Ph.D. passes in the second-year written qualifying examinations by the end of their third year are ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program. Students who do not pass the oral qualifying examination by the beginning of their fourth year are ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program.

A student who is not making satisfactory progress toward the degree is notified to meet with the Vice Chair of Graduate Studies, who determines whether to recommend academic disqualification to the Graduate Committee. Academic disqualification is normally recommended in cases where a student has failed to: (1) maintain a 3.00 grade point average; (2) pass the first-year core written comprehensive examination by July of the second year; (3) pass all second-year written qualifying examinations by the end of the third year; (4) pass the oral qualifying examination by the end of the third year; (5) advance to candidacy by the end of the third year; or (6) complete all requirements for the degree by the end of the seventh year.

The Appeal Process

Students who are subject to academic disqualification are informed of the Vice Chair of Graduate Studies' recommendation, have a right to appeal the termination decision, and have an opportunity to provide written materials in support of their continued enrollment in the Ph.D. program. The appeal must be addressed to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee thoroughly reviews the student's record as well as the supplementary materials provided by the student and makes a final recommendation to the Graduate Division.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

Should a student need to take a leave of absence for any reason, they can apply to do so through Graduate Division. Information on eligibility requirements, limitations, and the approval process may be found here: <https://grad.ucla.edu/academics/graduate-study/leave-of-absence-request/>. Students should notify the Graduate Advisor when considering taking a leave of absence.