# Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 3  
Program Requirements .................................................................................................................. 4  
Summary ........................................................................................................................................ 4  
Important milestones ...................................................................................................................... 4  
Timetable ......................................................................................................................................... 5  
Academic Requirements for the Ph.D. .............................................................................................. 6  
  Core courses and qualifiers: ......................................................................................................... 6  
  Field courses, exam and research paper: ...................................................................................... 6  
  Workshop program: ....................................................................................................................... 8  
  Third year progress report: .......................................................................................................... 8  
  Dissertation: .................................................................................................................................. 8  
Advising ............................................................................................................................................. 10  
Financial Aid Policies ................................................................................................................... 10  
  Continuation of support: .............................................................................................................. 10  
  Departmental service: ................................................................................................................... 10  
Outside Employment and Leave of Absence Policies .................................................................... 11  
Probationary Status ....................................................................................................................... 11  
Petitions, Appeals, Grievances and Problem Resolutions ............................................................. 11
Introduction

The following departmental rules and regulations govern the graduate program in economics. In addition to being in agreement with the regulation stated in this departmental handbook, students must also be in agreement with the General Announcements and the Code of Conduct.

In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over research group-wide regulations.

In doubt, students should seek help first at the departmental level (graduate coordinator, director of graduate studies, advisor, and/or department chair) and then at the central administration level (office of graduate and postdoctoral studies).

The doctoral degree offered by the economics department is a research degree. The purpose of all courses and exams is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and tools for research.

The Ph.D. program is designed to enable students to complete all requirements within four years. The four years goal is attainable if students stay focused on the need to develop a research interest for their dissertation in the first two years of the program. If this goal cannot be met, students may remain in the program; however financial support beyond the fourth year is only possible through teaching or research fellowships, and such opportunities are not guaranteed.

A master’s degree may be obtained only after the student has satisfied all requirements for the candidacy for the Ph.D.
Program Requirements

Summary

Candidates for the doctoral degree must in their first three years:

1. Complete an approved program of at least eighteen courses (including approved courses in other departments), no more than four of which are research workshops. At least two years of full-time study must be in residence at Rice.
2. Perform satisfactorily on the written general examinations in microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in a major field by taking a written exam in that field if required by the field.
4. Write and present a research paper.
5. Report on their progress toward the choice of a dissertation topic. The fourth (and possibly subsequent) year(s) is (are) devoted to the completion of the dissertation.

Important milestones

First year: Complete core courses with a grade point average of no less than 2.67. Pass microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics qualifier exams.

Second year: Complete 509, field courses. Enroll in a workshop.

Third year: Complete field coursework, pass a field exam if required by the field coordinator, write and present a research paper, complete third year progress report.

Fourth year: Select a dissertation committee chair, write a prospectus, petition for candidacy.

Fifth year: Complete the job market paper, present job market paper, final oral examination.
## Timetable

### Sample progression – Timeline to degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Exams</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Paperwork Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall: 501, 502, 504, 507, 510 Spring: 505, 508, 511</td>
<td>End of May/ first week in June: Econometrics, Macroeconomics and Microeconomics qualifier exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall: 509, field course(s), workshop Spring: complete field courses, workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>May 15th: Field exams if required by the field coordinator</td>
<td>Write and present a paper by the end of Spring semester</td>
<td>Third year progress report due in the third week of August prior to the start of the fourth year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Select dissertation committee chair no later than the middle of the fourth year</td>
<td>Petition for candidacy before the start of 9th semester (5th year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar presentations, mock interviews, job market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Requirements for the Ph.D.

Core courses and qualifiers:

1. The nine core courses are mandatory (in rare cases, students may submit a request for waiver to the Graduate Committee). They are in the Fall of the first year: mathematical economics (507), microeconomics 1 (501), macroeconomics 1 (502), statistics (504), econometrics 1 (510); in the Spring of the first year: microeconomics 2 (508), macroeconomics 2 (505), econometrics 2 (511); in the Fall of the second year: microeconomics 3 (509).

2. To continue in the Ph.D. program, a student needs a grade point average of no less than 2.67 (that is, an average grade of B-) by the end of the first year.

3. At the end of May of the first year, students sit for a qualifying exam, which comes in three parts: econometrics, macroeconomics and microeconomics. All exams must be taken by the end of the first week in June. The qualifying exam is intended to test the general competency of students in each of the three fields. Questions will include, but are not limited to, the material covered in the first year graduate courses. A file of previous exams is available from the Graduate Coordinator. These exams provide excellent review questions as well as one indicator of the format and breadth of coverage of the exams.

Qualifier rules are as follows:
   a. Students cannot take any part of the qualifier more than twice.
   b. Students must obtain a pass on all parts of the qualifier to continue in the program.
   c. Students may be required to re-take either one or two parts of the qualifier after their first attempt; a second session of the relevant qualifier exam is then scheduled (date to be determined) before the start of the second year.
   d. Students who fail all three parts of the qualifier in their first attempt will not be permitted to retake them. They will be dismissed from the program. The Graduate Committee reviews exceptional and marginal cases.

Field courses, exam and research paper:

1. During their second and (part of their) third year, students should plan on completing the remainder of the non-workshop courses. In addition, students must enroll in at least one of the workshops (discussed below) in each semester. Students must maintain a GPA of 2.67 to remain in the program.

2. Each student must demonstrate proficiency in at least one field of specialization by satisfying the following two requirements by May 31st during their third year of residence.
   a. The first requirement is completion of the relevant coursework in their field of specialization. This coursework has to be approved by a field coordinator in advance of their third year. A field coordinator may also
require the student pass an exam by May 15th of their 6th semester to ensure that the student has gained the needed background for research in their major field.

i. The field coordinator determines the relevant courses, supplemental reading and format of the exam (take home, or limited time assignment, or research paper, etc.).

ii. Students may make two attempts to pass any single field exam. In special circumstances, the field coordinator may grant permission for the student to attempt a field exam in the same field a third time.

iii. Continuation of fellowship support in the fourth year will be limited to students who have taken the field exam prior to the last day of the third year. Students who have not taken the field exam by the end of the third year will be given a grade of unsatisfactory (and hence probationary status) in Econ 800. A second grade of unsatisfactory, resulting in the exclusion from the program, will be given for the subsequent semester if the field exam is not taken by the end of the fall semester in the fourth year.

b. The second requirement is completing a research paper and presenting it in a seminar environment prior to the end of the last day of the Spring semester classes of their third year in residence. This paper need not be (and often is not) a polished piece of research. It should, however, have the clear potential to become one.

i. The field coordinator and a faculty member selected by the department chair, will grade the paper. These two evaluators must sign a form attesting to their willingness to evaluate the student’s third year paper; this form must be turned in to the department chair no later than January 31st during the student’s third year. An additional grader for the 3rd year paper, appointed by the department chair, will be used if there is a disagreement among the two evaluators.

ii. The work will be marked as follows:
   A  Exceptional
   B  Satisfactory
   F  Unsatisfactory

iii. The students who obtain a grade of A or B for their 3rd year paper will be given priority in future funding. Those students obtaining an F will be deemed as not making satisfactory progress. A student with a departmental guarantee of funding therefore loses that guarantee upon receiving an unsatisfactory grade. However, those students will have the opportunity to revise their paper and resubmit it once, with a deadline of the end of the fall semester of their 4th year. After resubmitting, the grade is either changed to an A or a B, or it remains an F. In the latter case, the student will be dismissed from the program.
Workshop program:

Three workshops are offered: Applied Microeconomics, Econometrics and Macroeconomics. Students must take at least four semesters of workshops during their second and/or third years. Students may take any combination of workshops but it is wise to concentrate on the workshop closest to the field in which one is planning to write a dissertation. Naturally, regular attendance to at least one workshop in the fourth year is an important component of the dissertation work. Taking a workshop course entails attending weekly seminars and possibly meeting the seminar organizer (or other relevant faculty members) for explanation and discussion of seminar material.

Third year progress report:

All students who have successfully completed three years in the program will submit a typewritten report of not more than eight pages which carefully covers progress made toward choice of a dissertation topic, such as selection of a relevant bibliography, of the methodology of research, etcetera. Students must obtain approval of their progress report by at least one faculty member, and mention his/her name in the report. Typically this faculty member will be asked to chair the dissertation committee later on. The reporting date is the third week of August just before the beginning of the fourth year. The Graduate Committee must approve the reports no later than September 15; it can grant an extension of the deadline for those reports it views as unsatisfactory. Students who have not completed a satisfactory report before December 10 (of the same year) will receive an unsatisfactory grade on Econ 800 and hence be put on probation.

Dissertation:

1. The Dissertation Committee:
   The Dissertation Committee consists of:
   i. A chair from the department
   ii. A second member from the department
   iii. An outside member from another department.
   The student takes the initiative to ask a professor to chair his or her dissertation committee. The student should propose a thesis topic, or an original piece of work that could be developed into a thesis, and the (prospective) chair should agree to supervise the proposed work. Students should make their selections of dissertation committee chair no later than the middle of the fourth year.

2. The Prospectus:
   The student should then write a prospectus, describing in 10 to 20 pages the background and goals of the proposed dissertation as well as its methodology, data sources, etc. Alternatively, the student can submit a substantial piece of original research that can form the core of, and is capable of being further developed into, a complete dissertation. After the prospective dissertation committee chair has approved the prospectus, at least two copies should be placed in the departmental
office for the faculty to examine. There will be a 10-day period during which the prospectus is under the scrutiny of the rest of the faculty. After any problems resulting from faculty suggestions are resolved, it is for the student to form the entire thesis committee. At this point the department automatically grants approval to the thesis topic developed in the prospectus.

3. Ph.D. Candidacy:
Advancing to Ph.D. candidacy requires:
   i. Completion of required coursework
   ii. Satisfactory performance on the qualifier exams on microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, and a field exam if the field coordinator requires it
   iii. Satisfactory completion of the third year paper
   iv. Approval of the prospectus

The University requires a petition for candidacy, naming the committee and the thesis topic. This must be completed prior to October 31 to permit granting of the degree at Commencement the following spring or before the start of ninth semester (whichever comes first). Students who achieve candidacy are automatically eligible for a master’s degree, however, they must formally apply for the degree. Approval of candidacy for the Ph.D. is valid for four years. If the dissertation is not completed within the four years, a time extension must be requested and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Upon approval by the department chair and the relevant faculty members, the department may file a petition for candidacy before the departmental procedure for forming a committee and accepting a prospectus is complete. This is done as a convenience for the student (who may face the University October 31 deadline), and in this case the filing (and/or approval) of a petition for candidacy is not a substitute for the process described above to assemble a thesis committee.

Students who have not achieved candidacy by the end of their eighth semester will be given a grade of unsatisfactory in Econ 800 and will be put on probation. University rules require that students must achieve candidacy by the beginning of the ninth semester of their residency at Rice or be dismissed from the program. Students with exceptional circumstances may petition the University Graduate Council for a waiver from this rule.

4. Dissertation Seminar:
Each doctoral student must present a seminar on his thesis research sometime prior to the final oral examination. The dissertation committee chair arranges the timing and content of the seminar.

5. Final Oral Examination:
The dissertation committee chair schedules the final oral when the dissertation is substantially complete. Since the oral exam may specify substantial rewriting, it is prudent to schedule it several weeks prior to Commencement to permit time for necessary revision. The deadline for the oral examination is the last day of classes in the spring semester. It is the responsibility of the student to keep all member of the committee informed as to the progress of the dissertation. In order to give them
sufficient time to prepare for the defense, the applicant must give members of the committee a copy of the relevant version of the dissertation no less than one month before the date of the defense. An additional copy must be given to the graduate secretary at least one week before the defense. This copy will be made available to members of the faculty and students who may wish to attend the defense. The time, date and place of the defense must be posted and announced in the Rice News prior to the defense. Students must notify the graduate secretary at least 15 days prior to the defense so that this requirement can be satisfied. The defense is open to all members of the university community. In the oral exam or thesis defense the candidate presents her thesis and is then questioned by the committee. The result is then announced. A student may be asked to revise or alter some parts of the dissertation; the committee may recommend that the candidate retake the oral exam if the needed revisions are substantial.

**Advising**

The director of graduate studies is an official advisor to all graduate students and is available to consult with students about progress and help them select courses. The DGS also monitors the progress of students during their first three years. Once students start working on their dissertation, the thesis advisor becomes the main advisor. A formal thesis advisor form must be filled at the beginning of the 7th semester.

**Financial Aid Policies**

Students must enroll in a minimum of six hours of Econ 800 during the summer to remain on the university payroll.

**Continuation of support:**

1. *Students entering with some funding from Rice University:* Financial awards are generally renewed so that students are funded up to the end of their fourth year. Renewal is contingent upon adequate performance: a GPA of 2.67 (B-) or higher, passing qualifiers, timely completion of the field exam, passing the third year paper requirement, and the third year progress report. Renewal is also conditional on university budget constraints although the department has never terminated or reduced funding for this reason.

2. *Students entering without funding from Rice University:* In some cases the department has been able to arrange support for such students; this is based on their scholarly performance and contingent upon the departmental resources. Support is then given on a year-to-year basis.

**Departmental service:**
All students on Rice University fellowships or scholarships are required to perform departmental service. In the first year, students are typically assigned to grade for an undergraduate class. This work is not to exceed 10 hours per week. In subsequent years students are required to perform 15 hours/week of departmental service. The director of graduate studies determines their assignment. Students who receive 10.5 months fellowships, specifically August 16th – June 30th are required to be here in the Economics Department available for grading and other services during these 10.5 months. Exceptions require the approval of both the director of graduate studies and the student’s advisor.

Outside Employment and Leave of Absence Policies

1. Students receiving full stipends are not to accept any regular employment outside the department.
2. No full-time student may accept outside work of more than 20 hours per week. The student must consult with the department chair or the director of graduate studies before undertaking any outside employment.
3. A leave of absence for one or more semesters will be granted for valid reasons to students in good standing. Leave must be requested well in advance of the semester in question. The university upon return charges a reactivation fee.
4. Non-registration without an approved leave of absence is considered withdrawal from the program. Such students will not be readmitted without reapplication and recommendation by the department, as well as the approval of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies. A readmission fee is charged.

Probationary Status

1. A student is considered to be on probationary status whenever the GPA for a semester falls below 2.67, or if they have not taken the field exam by the end of the third year, or they have not passed the third year paper requirement, or when a grade of unsatisfactory (U) is given in Econ 800 (thesis research), or they have not achieved candidacy by the end of the fourth year. Students are permitted only one semester of probationary status. Automatic dismissal by the Graduate Office occurs whenever a student is put on probation a second time.
2. Students with exceptional circumstances may petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of probationary status.

Petitions, Appeals, Grievances and Problem Resolutions

Students are encouraged to download and read the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies’ guidelines for dismissal, petitions, appeals, grievances and problem resolution, that can be obtained from the web site: http://graduate.rice.edu/dismissals/.
In accordance with these guidelines, petitions, appeals, grievances and problems for which it is appropriate in the first instance to be handled at the departmental level will be submitted to the Department’s Grievances Committee. The committee will look at every case, and if the case involves the advisee of one or more of the committee members, then they will recuse themselves from this particular case and be replaced for that purpose by other members of the departmental faculty selected in consultation with the department chair. The committee will conduct an investigation of the circumstances and reach a decision regarding the case. Their written report to the director of graduate studies, and the department chair will describe the circumstances, the decision, and the rationale for the decision. The director of graduate studies or the department chair (or the Dean) will convey the final decision to the student and include the committee report. (Redaction from the report is allowed to protect the privacy of other students.)