

**Economics Graduate Group
Ph.D. AND/OR MA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

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A. Introduction

1) Aims and Scope

Economics is a social science discipline focused on the study of human behavior, markets and the allocation of scarce resources. The discipline is increasingly problem-centered and evidence based, with the goal of informing policy decisions both in the private sector and the public sector. Consequently, contributing to the frontier of the discipline requires a mastery of an expansive economic theory incorporating insights from multiple perspectives in addition to rigorous training in state-of-the-art quantitative methods. The goal of the Ph.D. program in economics at UC Merced is to impart these skills and create researchers able to model complex real-world phenomena and marshal available evidence in order to advance our understanding of human behavior and facilitate efficient public and private policy. The program prepares students for careers in research or public policy.

The program consists of a core set of classes in economic theory and quantitative methods, followed by an econometrics-focused preliminary exam at the end of the first year. After the completion of coursework, students choose a field specialization in consultation with the Graduate Group Chair as well as a primary advisor. Field requirements are satisfied through additional coursework and, ultimately, a dissertation consisting of novel research which advances the frontier of scientific knowledge.

The Ph.D. program is designed to be full-time, and we do not accept students seeking to attend on a part-time basis. The M.A. degree is offered as an option for students admitted to the Ph.D. program, but we will not admit students seeking an M.A. as a terminal degree.

2) Admissions Requirements

All students seeking admission to the Economics Graduate program must complete a formal application for admission. Applicants will use an on-line application to streamline the process. Applications are reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee, which makes recommendations on admission to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education (VPDGE) (see Appendix B). The VPDGE makes final decisions on admission. The deadline for receipt of applications is December 15 for enrollment in the Fall semester. Enrollment in other semesters will not be typical, but may be considered on an individual basis.

Materials to be submitted include:

- Official application form
- Application fee
- Official transcripts from all prior university or college attendance
- An official Graduate Record Exam (GRE) score report (only the general tests are required)
- A statement of research interests and career goals

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- Three letters of recommendation from instructors or supervisors who can comment on the applicant's scholarly ability and promise as a researcher (letters from faculty are preferred).
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) (where applicable). Any applicant who spent the majority of their primary and secondary education in a nation/territory where English is not the primary language must take an approved English proficiency examination prior to admission. Proficiency in English may be demonstrated by passing standardized, internationally administered tests as stated in the UC Merced [Graduate Policy and Procedures Handbook](#) located on the Graduate Division website. Applicants will not be admitted if they lack an acceptable proficiency score.

The minimum requirement for graduate admission to UCM is a bachelor's degree with a grade point average of 3.0 or greater on a 4.0 scale. Performance on the GRE, undergraduate grades, courses taken, accomplishments in undergraduate research, and letters of recommendation will also be evaluated as important determinants of an applicant's potential for success in graduate education. Students with undergraduate degrees in Economics normally have a background that is well suited to the graduate study in Economics; however, applicants with other degrees (e.g., Mathematics, Engineering, Political Science, Psychology) are strongly encouraged to apply.

3) General Committees

a) Graduate Studies Committee

The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) serves as the Executive Committee for the Economics Graduate Group. As such the GSC subsumes the responsibilities of the Executive Committee, Membership Committee, Educational Policy Committee and the Admissions Committee. The GSC shall, in consultation with the Economics faculty, determine and implement policy for the good of the Group, establish and guide the educational requirements of the Group, and represent the interests of the Group to the University and other agencies. The GSC shall consist of three elected members (two core faculty members and the Graduate Group Chair). The GSC will make appointments to ad hoc committees (e.g., Preliminary Exam Committee and 3rd year paper committee) of the Group. The term of service to the GSC for each member will be three years. Members can serve multiple terms subject to the voting requirements for the GSC. The GSC will be chaired by the Graduate Group Chair. Voting rights for all matters pertaining the duties of the GSC will be retained by the three members.

The GSC shall have the following duties:

- Hear student grievances. Student grievances requiring adjudication may stem from disputed examination results, GSR appointment termination, or other issues. Students have the right to pursue grievances with the GSC, which will assemble, review pertinent information, and provide a written summary to the Graduate Group Chair within 30 calendar days of notification of the student grievance. Extensions may be granted in

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writing by the Graduate Group Chair when warranted by key parties on either side of the grievance (e.g., extended travel obligations, illness). GSC members who have a conflict of interest, for example if they are members of the examination committee that a student grievance involves, will recuse themselves from the review process, but may be interviewed by the remaining committee members. The Graduate Studies Committee will rule on the case. Students have the right to appeal this ruling to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education (VPDGE) within 30 calendar days. The VPDGE may request that the graduate group's Lead Dean and/or other appropriate parties investigate the student's concerns or grievances and determine appropriate resolutions. Ultimately, the final resolution of all disputes lies with the Dean of the Graduate Division as described in UC Merced's Graduate Advisors Handbook. In the event that the dispute involves the Graduate Dean in her/his role as a faculty member, then the final resolution of all disputes resides with the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor.

- Establish and maintain documentation on the Economics Graduate Group Curriculum.
- Prepare and execute all reviews of the Economics Graduate Group program, including the seven-year review, WSCUC substantive changes, and other evaluations specified in this document.
- In consultation with the program faculty, coordinate and document proposed changes in programmatic requirements of the Economics Graduate Group program, and presenting proposed changes to the voting body, Graduate Council and WSCUC as needed. All changes to the programmatic requirements of the Economics Graduate Group curriculum and associated requirements must be approved by vote of the eligible Graduate Group Faculty.
- Review applications for admissions. The GSC will make recommendations for admissions to the Dean of Graduate Studies and explore graduate student support mechanisms.
- Recommend the allocation of intramural financial assistance, fellowships, and awards for new and continuing students. The GSC will create and staff additional committees as needed. Responsibility for the GSC duties may be delegated to an ad hoc committee (e.g., Preliminary Exam Committee and 3rd year paper committee) as GSC members see fit.

b) Duties of the Chair

Duties of the Chair:

- Oversee the progress of graduate students through the program, including satisfaction of degree requirements and advancement to candidacy, in coordination with group advisors, faculty and staff.
- Represent the group faculty in all matters related to the degree program(s) to the Lead Dean, the Graduate Dean (VPDGE), the Graduate Council, and School Executive Committee(s).

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- Determine resource needs and administer program budget, in consultation with group faculty, Lead Dean, and Graduate Dean.
- Oversee graduate student recruitment, graduate program website, admissions, and financial aid, in consultation with group faculty, Lead Dean, and Graduate Dean.
- Determine graduate course offerings each semester, including curriculum changes, in consultation with group faculty, and school staff and faculty involved in course scheduling and teaching assignments.
- Determine graduate course resource needs for equipment, staff support, and other resources, in consultation with faculty and Lead Deans.
- Serve as graduate group Faculty Accreditation Organizer by overseeing annual program assessments and periodic program review, to monitor and maintain academic excellence.
- Consult with Deans in selecting and reviewing graduate support staff.
- Coordinate participation of the graduate group in School and University program activities, including graduate student fellowship and award programs.
- Develop and maintain a plan for promoting diversity among matriculated graduate students.
- Manage and respond to program feedback and inquiries from faculty, students, staff, and reviewers.

B. Master's Degree Requirements

1) Degree Plan II- Non-thesis

The Economics Graduate Group does not offer a Degree Plan I (thesis) option. The Master's of Arts in Economics (Type II) is not intended as a stand-alone degree, but rather as an option for students admitted to the Ph.D. program. The optional M.A. serves as recognition of advancement in the degree program, though it is not a prerequisite for advancement. Ph.D. students will have the option to obtain a Master's of Arts in Economics (Type II) degree, either en route to a Ph.D. degree (non-terminal), or in lieu of a Ph.D. degree (terminal) if a student exits the graduate program prior to fulfilling the Ph.D. requirements. The recipient of an M.A. degree is understood to possess knowledge of a broad field of learning that extends well beyond that attained at the undergraduate level but is not expected to have made a significant original contribution to knowledge in Economics or to be able to use sophisticated methodological tools to conduct independent research.

Requirements to receive the optional M.A. are:

- Complete at least two semesters of academic residency at UC Merced.
- Complete ECON 201A, ECON 201B, ECON 230A, ECON 230B, ECON 204/247/269 and any other ECON 2XX course. Alternative equivalent courses may be substituted with the approval of the Graduate Group Chair.
- Complete 24 units of graduate coursework, all taken for a letter grade.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Receive a "Master's level pass" on the Economics Preliminary Exam.

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- Complete a Capstone paper and receive a grade of “Pass” from all members of the Capstone Review Committee. For students who have advanced to the third year of the program, they may use successful completion of the 3rd year paper to satisfy this requirement, as long as they obtain an overall grade of at least Intermediate on the 3rd year paper from all members of the 3rd year paper Committee.

a) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Recipients of the M.A. degree will demonstrate a thorough understanding of a broad field of knowledge and provide evidence of accomplishment in the economics discipline. In keeping with this goal, M.A. recipients will:

1. Have demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in economic theory and econometrics.
2. Be able to communicate economic information verbally in a clear and concise manner to expert and non-expert audiences.
3. Have demonstrated the professional skills required to participate in the intellectual and organizational aspects of the economics profession.

b) Course Requirements

i) Core Courses (total 24 units)

Course Number	Course Name	Units
ECON 201A	Microeconomics I	4
ECON 201B	Microeconomics II	4
ECON 230A	Econometrics I (or equivalent approved by Graduate Group Chair)	4
ECON 230B	Econometrics II	4
ECON 247 or 269 or ECON 204*	Advanced Topics in Macroeconomics or Topics in International Trade (or equivalent approved by Graduate Group Chair)	4
	Economic History	
ECON 2XX	Any course ECON205 to ECON290 or equivalent graduate level course approved by the Graduate Group Chair	4

Note: These courses are offered in alternate years.

ii) Summary

Students wishing to receive the M.A. in Economics degree must complete all six core courses listed above. In total, students must complete 24 units of coursework, each for a letter grade, and be in residency at UC Merced for at least two semesters. No more than 12 units of graduate-level coursework may be completed in any one semester. The student must enroll in at least 12 units of coursework each semester.

c) **Advancement to Candidacy**

Students who choose the M.A. degree *en route* to their Ph.D. (non-terminal) should complete the relevant portions of the Graduate Division form Application for Advancement to Candidacy and then the Final Report for the Master's Degree following the successful completion of the Capstone paper (or the 3rd year paper may substitute for this requirement). These forms must be submitted to Graduate Division. M.A. requirements will have been met at this point and the M.A. degree will be awarded, provided they meet the above criteria and have filed the paperwork with the Office of the Registrar. Students must be advanced to candidacy for their degree prior to the beginning of the final semester of enrollment.

Students who opt for a terminal M.A. degree in lieu of the Ph.D. degree should inform their Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Group Chair of this decision as soon as possible and complete a change of degree form. Students must then complete the relevant portions of the Graduate Division form Application for Advancement to Candidacy.

d) **Preliminary Examination**

The Preliminary Exam proctored for those students wishing to obtain a Master's of Arts in Economics (Type II) is the same as the Preliminary Exam proctored for the Ph.D. program. The Exam is based on the identical set of courses (ECON 230A and ECON 230B) and will be taken at the end of their 1st year of study. When students take the Preliminary Exam they must be registered or in current filing fee status.

This exam consists of statistics/econometrics components and is graded by the Preliminary Exam Committee. The exam will be offered at least once per year at the end of the Spring semester; special additional offerings may be provided at the direction of the Graduate Group Chair. First year students must take the Preliminary Exam offered at the end of the first year. A grade of "master's pass" of the Preliminary Exam requires agreement by all members of the Preliminary Exam Committee.

The Preliminary Exam Committee will grade all exams using the rubric outlined in Appendix E5 of the approved proposal. A "master's pass" will require less command of the material than a "(Ph.D.) pass" and the Preliminary Exam Committee must decide the appropriate level of performance. A student must receive a grade of "master's pass" grade from all of the Preliminary Examination Committee members to satisfy the (Master's) Preliminary Examination requirement. A student who fails the exam will be allowed to retake it once, prior to the start of the Fall semester. A student who fails the (Master's) Preliminary Examination twice will not be awarded the M.A. degree and will be unable to continue in the program.

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e) Capstone Paper

The final requirement to receive a M.A. degree is to complete a capstone paper. Appendix E3 describes more fully the nature of the capstone and Appendix E10 provides the rubric by which it will be graded. The capstone is not required to be an original research project but to demonstrate a mastery of the economics literature on a particular topic, including the methods used in that field. The faculty advisor aids the student in choosing a topic and the final product can be in the form of a literature review, replication or partial replication of an existing academic paper or other computational exercise. While not a requirement, the Capstone may develop from a paper prepared in a core or elective course. It is envisaged that students will draw on the material learned in the core or elective coursework, and demonstrate their ability to synthesize knowledge and apply it to a particular topic.

Students who pass the preliminary exam only at the master's level and who wish to switch to a terminal master's degree will work on the capstone in the Summer after completing the first year courses and submit it on a date set by the Graduate Chair before the start of the next academic year. Students who wish to and are eligible to continue on in the PhD program and receive the master's en route may complete this requirement at a later date and may also use successful completion of the 3rd year paper, obtaining at least a grade of Intermediate from all of the 3rd year paper committee members, to satisfy the Capstone requirement for the M.A.

2) Advising Structure and Mentoring

a) Faculty Advisor

Each incoming student is assigned to the Graduate Group Chair for advising. At the end of the first year, students choose a Faculty Advisor and complete the Change of Advisor form. The Faculty Advisor must be a member of the Economics Graduate Group. The Faculty Advisor is expected to offer guidance in course selection and research foci. A graduate student must have a recognized Faculty Advisor at all times.

The faculty recognizes that under certain circumstances there may be valid reasons for a graduate student to want to change Faculty Advisor. Examples may include personality conflict, changes in research interests, and resignation of the Faculty Advisor from the faculty. If a student requests a change in Faculty Advisor, the faculty members in the Economics Department are expected to ensure a smooth transition that takes into account the needs of both the student and the faculty involved.

When a student decides a change in Faculty Advisor is in his/her best interest, he/she must obtain a clear commitment by the new Faculty Advisor to take on this responsibility. The new Faculty Advisor then needs to inform the former Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Group Chair of this change. A student should typically have an advisor at all times but, in unusual circumstances during a

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transition period, the student may nominate the graduate group chair to serve as their advisor for a period of no more than two months. After this time, if the student cannot find an advisor, they will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress in the program.

b) Graduate Group

The Graduate Group Chair, who is appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, is a resource for information on academic requirements, policies and procedures, and registration information. The Graduate Group Coordinator assists students with navigating university resources and general university policies. The Economics Graduate Group has adopted the Mentoring Guidelines approved by the UC Merced Graduate Council, which can be found at:

https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/sites/graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/ucm_mentoring_guidelines-gc_approved_9_23_14-2_1.pdf

3) Master's Degree Committees

a) Preliminary Exam Committee

The Preliminary Exam Committee is a three-member committee appointed by the Graduate Group Chair. Each member of the committee must grade the exam on a pass/master's pass/fail basis. A student must receive a grade of "master's pass" or higher from at least two members of the Preliminary Exam Committee to satisfy the Preliminary Exam requirement. Preliminary Exam performance is considered by the faculty as part of the first annual review of the student's progress in the program.

b) Capstone Review Committee

The Capstone Review Committee is a three-member committee appointed by the Graduate Group Chair and will comprise Senate voting members of the Economics Graduate Group. Each member of the committee must grade the exam on a pass/ fail basis. A student must receive a passing grade from all members of the committee to be awarded the Master's degree.

4) Normative Time to Degree

Students should complete all coursework requirements for the Master's degree in two semesters total. Students who have switched to a terminal master's will complete one year at UC Merced and should complete a Capstone paper and have passed the prelim exam at least at the master's level by the deadline ahead of the subsequent Fall semester, making it a 12-month program. Students applying for a master's along the way will have fulfilled all requirements at the end of the Fall semester of their third year, upon successful completion of the Third Year paper course.

5) Typical Timeline and Sequence of Events

<i>Year One</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
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	<i>ECON 201A – Microeconomics 1</i>	<i>ECON 201B – Microeconomics II</i>
	<i>ECON 230A – Statistics / Econometrics I</i>	<i>ECON 230B – Econometrics II</i>
	<i>ECON 247 – Macroeconomics and Growth *or* ECON 204 – Economic History *or* ECON 269 – Topics in International Trade</i>	<i>ECON 2XX– Economics graduate elective</i>
		<i>Preliminary Exam – two attempts</i>
		<i>For terminal master's students: Complete Change of degree & Advance to Candidacy Forms. Then complete the Capstone Paper before Fall semester</i>

6) Sources of Funding

All students admitted to the Ph.D. program who are in good standing may be eligible for year-round financial support, including payment of fees and tuition. Teaching assistantships normally provide initial funding that can be supplemented by research assistantships, fellowships or other forms of financial assistance including travel awards.

C. Doctoral Degree Requirements

1) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Recipients of the Ph.D. degree will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of a broad field of learning and provide evidence of distinguished accomplishment through an original contribution to the knowledge within the discipline. Consistent with this goal, Ph.D. recipients will:

1. Have demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in economic theory and econometrics at a level to make an original contribution to the discipline.
2. Apply their knowledge of the relevant theories and methodologies used in the student's major and minor specialization to critically evaluate the literature and identify productive research questions.
3. Be able to communicate economic information verbally in a clear and concise manner to expert and non-expert audiences.
4. Be able to conduct independent research in the economics discipline that makes an original contribution to the literature.
5. Have demonstrated the professional skills required to participate in the intellectual and organizational aspects of the economics profession.

2) Course Requirements - Core and Electives (total 52 units)

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a) Core Courses (total 36 units)

Course Number	Course Name	Units
ECON 201A	Microeconomics I	4
ECON 201B	Microeconomics II	4
ECON 247 or ECON 269	Macroeconomics and Growth Topics in International Trade	4
ECON 230A	Statistics/Econometrics I (or equivalent approved by the Graduate Group Chair)	4
ECON 230B	Econometrics II	4
ECON 204	Economic History	4
ECON 270	Applied Econometrics	4
ECON 297	Research Practicum	4
ECON 294	Research Paper	4

Six of these courses must be taken in the first year unless otherwise approved by the Graduate Group Chair. While courses taken toward a graduate degree at another institution cannot be transferred for credit toward a Ph.D. at UCM, a course requirement may be waived if an equivalent course was completed satisfactorily at another institution. Students may petition the Graduate Group Chair to waive any of these requirements. The General Petition form should be used for all requests for waivers of course work. Core courses may be replaced by equivalent, graduate-level, 4-unit classes that are taken for a letter grade, with approval from the Graduate Group Chair.

b) Elective Courses (total 16 units)

Students must take at least four ECON 2XX-level elective 4-unit courses, from the offerings ECON 205-290, each for a letter grade. With the approval of both the Graduate Group Chair and the student's primary advisor, however, some electives from outside the Economics department's offerings may be used to satisfy these requirements, as long as they are 4-unit graduate classes taken for a letter grade. Enrollment in courses outside of the Economics department will require approval of the host department's Graduate Group Chair as well as the faculty member teaching the course.

c) Summary

In total, the Ph.D. program requires 52 total units of coursework: 36 units of required core courses are common to all students in addition to 16 units of elective field courses. Courses that fulfill any of the program's core or elective course requirements must be taken for a letter grade. Moreover, no course resulting in a grade of lower than B- can be used to satisfy these requirements. Once course requirements are completed, students can take additional classes as needed, although the 12 units per semester are generally fulfilled with a research class (ECON 295, ECON 299) and seminars (ECON 291). Students in their third year and above should usually be enrolled in the 4-unit class ECON 291 each semester

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and attend research seminars in person (exceptions from this norm can be made when students have planned to work on their research at another location for an agreed period of time not to exceed one month, in consultation with their Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Chair). A seminar course in professional development for economists, ECON296 may be offered periodically, depending on the graduate chair's availability and students in third year and above may take it. Note that Graduate Division requirements stipulate that graduate students who receive TA/GSR support must be enrolled in at least 12 units of upper division or graduate-level units per semester and that per UC regulations students cannot enroll in more than 12 units of graduate level courses per semester. Students may plan for full semesters not in residence (through In Absentia or the UC Intercampus Exchange Program), in most cases not registering for the classes mentioned above, upon completing the appropriate paperwork and receiving approvals from Faculty Advisor, Graduate Group Chair and Graduate Dean.

3) Special Requirements

a) Teaching Requirement: N/A

b) Language Requirement: N/A

c) Preliminary Examination Requirement

All students must pass the Preliminary Exam before the Fall semester of their 2nd year. This exam consists of written questions covering statistics/econometrics and is graded by the Preliminary Exam Committee. The exam will be offered at least once per year at the end of the Spring semester; special additional offerings may be provided at the direction of the Graduate Group Chair. First year students must take the Preliminary Exam offered at the end of the first year. A grade of at least "(Ph.D.) pass" requires agreement by all members of the Preliminary Exam Committee.

d) A graduate student must obtain a grade of (Ph.D.) pass on the Preliminary Exam by the end of their 1st year in order to continue in the program. If a student fails to pass the exam on the first offering, it will be offered a second time before the Fall semester of their 2nd year. Failure to obtain a grade of (Ph.D.) pass on the exam at its 1st offering will result in the student being declared as making potentially unsatisfactory progress in the program and has one further attempt to correct this issue. Failure to obtain a (Ph.D.) pass on the exam after two attempts will result in the student being recommended to the graduate dean for disqualification from the Ph.D. program (students may still receive a M.A. passing grade on the Preliminary Exam and obtain an M.A. degree as described above). Students may appeal the decision rendered by the Preliminary Exam Committee with all final decisions rendered by the Graduate Group Chair.

e) 3rd Year Paper Requirement

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All students must enroll in ECON294 in Fall semester of their third year, a 4-unit class. They will submit a proposal for their paper at the start of the Fall semester. Satisfactory progress during the Fall semester involves submission of a final paper by the end of that semester. It is envisaged that this paper will form the core of the dissertation proposal which is used to advance to candidacy by the end of Spring of the 3rd year but this is not a requirement. Students must receive a mark of "Advanced" or better from all members of the paper committee in order to advance in the program. Grading of the 3rd year paper will be conducted by the 3rd year Paper Review Committee appointed by the Graduate Group Chair.

Students submit the 3rd year paper proposal to their Faculty Advisor at the beginning of Fall semester of their 3rd year. It is the Faculty Advisor's Responsibility to ensure that the student is making progress throughout the semester towards successful completion of the paper.

f) GPA Requirement

All students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Following the first semester a student does not meet this standard, he or she will receive a Notification of Unsatisfactory Performance and may be subject to academic disqualification if satisfactory progress is not achieved within one semester. In addition, students who have not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress are not eligible for any academic appointment/employment and may not receive fellowship support or other awards.

4) Dissertation Plan

In accordance with University of California policy, a minimum of four semesters in academic residence is required prior to awarding the Ph.D. Typically, a longer period of study, four to six years, is required for completion of all degree requirements. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Group to inform the student upon admission to the program of the expected degree time. All graduate students are considered resident graduates not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy after completion of all candidacy requirements and approval by the Graduate Division after formal application. A student advances to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon successfully demonstrating a high level of scholarship at the Ph.D. level, and upon completing all preparatory work and demonstrating readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase.

5) Advising Structure and Mentoring

a) Faculty Advisor

Each incoming student is assigned to the Graduate Group Chair for advising. At the end of the first year, in consultation with students and faculty, the Graduate Group Chair will assign each student to a Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor must be a member of the Economics Graduate Group. The Faculty Advisor is expected to offer guidance in course selection and research foci. A graduate student must have a recognized Faculty Advisor at all times. In the event that a graduate student loses his or her Faculty Advisor for any reason, the Graduate

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Group Chair will serve in this capacity until a new Faculty Advisor is appointed, for a period of up to two months.

Student progress will be evaluated on a biannual basis. To this end, each student and their Faculty Advisor will fill out a Progress Report at the end of the Fall and Spring Semesters (see Appendix E8). It is expected that the Faculty Advisor will consult with the faculty teaching courses in the sequence prior to preparing the students biannual Progress Report. In the Spring semester of each year the Graduate Studies Committee will also review the student's Progress Report. Biannual Review continues until the student has completed an approved Doctoral Dissertation.

A meeting is convened between the student and his/her Faculty Advisor prior to the end of each semester, in which feedback is provided to the student both orally and in writing. As part of each review, a determination must be made whether the student's progress on the whole is Satisfactory, Potentially Unsatisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. This determination is then clearly communicated in written form and signed by the Faculty Advisor. The student also signs the evaluation indicating understanding of the evaluation and is given a copy of the evaluation. In the Spring semester the Graduate Studies Committee must also sign off on the Faculty Advisor's assessment of the student's Progress Report. In the case that the Graduate Studies Committee feels changes need to be made to the student's Progress Report, these changes will be made in consultation with the Faculty Advisor. The original is retained in the Economics Graduate Group files.

The faculty recognizes that under certain circumstances there may be valid reasons for a graduate student to want to change Faculty Advisor. Examples may include personality conflict, changes in research interests, and resignation of the Faculty Advisor from the faculty. If a student requests a change in Faculty Advisor, the faculty members in the Economics Department are expected to ensure a smooth transition that takes into account the needs of both the student and the faculty involved.

When a student decides a change in Faculty Advisor is in his/her best interest, he/she must obtain a clear commitment by the new Faculty Advisor to take on this responsibility. The new Faculty Advisor then needs to inform the former Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Group Chair of this change. A Change of Advisor Form will also need to be completed and submitted to the Graduate Division for approval, before taking effect.

b) Graduate Group

The Graduate Group Chair, who is appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, is a resource for information on academic requirements, policies and procedures, and registration information. The Graduate Group Coordinator assists students with identifying university resources and general

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university policies. The Economics Graduate Group has adopted the Mentoring Guidelines approved by the UC Merced Graduate Council, which can be found at:

https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/sites/graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/ucm_mentoring_guidelines-_gc_approved_9_23_14-2_1.pdf

6) Doctoral Degree Committees

a) Preliminary Exam Committee

The Preliminary Exam Committee is a three-member committee appointed by the Graduate Group Chair from among the Senate faculty with at least a 50 percent appointment in the Economics department at UC Merced. Each member of the committee must grade each exam on a pass/master's pass/fail basis. A student must receive a grade of "pass" from all three members of the Preliminary Exam Committee in order to satisfy the Preliminary Exam requirement for the Ph.D. program. Preliminary Exam performance is considered by the faculty as part of the first annual review of the student's progress in the program.

b) 3rd Year Paper Review Committee

This committee will be formed by the Graduate Group Chair and consist of 3 faculty members from the graduate group. They will review submissions from students enrolled in ECON294 at the end of the Fall semester. Appendix E6 provides a rubric for their grading. If all members award an overall grade of Intermediate, then the student has satisfied requirements only at the M.A. level, and if all members award an overall grade of Advanced or better, then the student is making satisfactory progress towards the PhD.

c) Dissertation Committee (DC)

The student, in consultation with the Graduate Group Chair, must form a Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee must be composed of three members. Two of the three members are to be selected from among the Senate faculty of the Economics group, with one of them serving as the Dissertation Committee Chair. Either of these two members may be the student's Faculty Advisor. The third member of the DC must either be from another UC campus or from another academic unit at UC Merced. The purpose of the third member is to introduce the flexibility of providing input from another discipline and/or to provide additional input on the research from leaders in the discipline outside of UC Merced.

The first member to be selected is the Dissertation Committee Chair (DCC), who will work in conjunction with the student to assemble the other two members of the DC. The members of each student's DC must be approved by the Graduate Group Chair in Economics and the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to the Dissertation Proposal Defense (Qualifying Exam). Requests are formalized

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using the Request for Constitution of Committee Membership form, which must be reviewed by the Graduate Group Chair and Graduate Dean for approval.

The Dissertation Committee (DC) is charged with determining the readiness of the student to proceed with the Doctoral Dissertation. The DC will review a proposal of the student's dissertation, conduct an oral examination of the student's competence in the area, and upon approval of the proposal and assurance that all other requirements have been completed, recommend the student for advancement to candidacy. This is the Qualifying Exam needed to Advance to Candidacy.

The composition of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee may be changed over time to accommodate changes in the student's research interests and available faculty expertise. Any changes in the composition of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee after its initial formation must be approved by the student's Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair, the Graduate Group Chair and the Graduate Dean. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair may also be changed subject to the approval of the Graduate Group Chair and the Graduate Dean. Requests are formalized on the Graduate Division form Request for Reconstitution of Committee Membership and must be filed with the Graduate Group Chair and the Graduate Dean.

Following successful defense of the Dissertation Proposal and advancement to candidacy, the Doctoral Candidate undertakes and completes the proposed research under the supervision of their Dissertation Committee Chair.

d) Advancement to Candidacy

Before advancing to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have completed all core and elective required coursework, must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all course work undertaken and must have passed the Preliminary Exam (see Preliminary Examination Requirements, below) and successfully completed a third year paper. In addition, the student must form a Dissertation Committee, submit a Dissertation Proposal to this committee and then pass a Dissertation Proposal Defense (henceforth referred to as the Qualifying Exam).

The Dissertation Committee must consist of two UC Merced Economics Graduate Group faculty and one external member, as detailed above. The DC is charged with determining the readiness of the student to proceed with the Doctoral Dissertation. The DC will review a proposal of the student's dissertation, conduct the Qualifying (oral) Examination of the student's competence in the area, and upon approval of the proposal and assurance that all other requirements have been completed, recommend the student for advancement to candidacy.

The Dissertation Proposal provides at a minimum:

- a review of the relevant literature in the topical area;

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- a clear, actionable statement of the research hypotheses to be investigated in the Dissertation; and
- a defensible outline of the methodology used to address their research hypotheses in the Dissertation.

The Dissertation Proposal should be no longer than 40 pages (double spaced) not including references and appendices. Prior to conducting the Qualifying Exam, the student should work jointly with the Dissertation Committee Chair until the student and the Dissertation Committee Chair deem the Dissertation Proposal sufficient to pass. The student is encouraged to submit the Dissertation Proposal to the other Dissertation Committee members for informal review, feedback and revisions prior to the proposal defense. When the finalized Dissertation Proposal is submitted, the Dissertation Committee should have at least 14 days to review the Proposal prior to the Qualifying Exam.

The student must consult with their Dissertation Committee Chair to schedule a Qualifying Exam meeting, at which all members of the Dissertation Committee must be present in person. The Graduate Group Chair is authorized to waive the in person requirement should mitigating circumstances (i.e., sabbaticals or for the external committee member) prevent faculty participation. Graduate students are responsible for securing a room for the meeting with a minimum of two hours for the meeting. The Qualifying Exam is open to the public and the student is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate announcements are made regarding their scheduled Qualifying Exam.

The Qualifying Exam is overseen and administered by the Proposal Defense Chair, who is a member of the Dissertation Committee but cannot be the Dissertation Committee Chair. This individual will oversee not only the execution of the Qualifying Exam, but also be responsible for the completion of all required documentation following the Qualifying Exam.

The Qualifying Exam shall consist of an oral presentation of the proposed Dissertation research conducted by the student, followed by questions from the Dissertation Committee and possibly other audience members. At the conclusion the Qualifying Exam (not to exceed two hours) the graduate student and all non-Dissertation Committee members will be asked to leave the room to allow the DC members to make one of the following recommendations:

Pass: The proposal is passed and the student may commence with the proposed research; or

Fail: The proposal requires major or minor revision

The vote must be unanimous in order for a student to pass the Qualifying Exam. If the student fails the Qualifying Exam they are required to revise the Dissertation Proposal and resubmit the proposal within three months. A student

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may conduct the Qualifying Exam only twice. Failure to pass the Qualifying Exam on the first attempt may result in the student being deemed to not be meeting satisfactory progress in the program. If they do not pass the Qualifying Exam on their second attempt they will be dismissed from the graduate program. However, additional attempts can be granted by the Graduate Group Chair should they deem the student to be capable of success on a future attempt. If the proposal is passed the Dissertation Committee immediately extends its deliberations to determine if the candidate should advance to candidacy.

The Qualifying Exam must be conducted before the end of a student's 6th semester in the graduate program in order for a student to maintain satisfactory progress in the Economics graduate program. In practice, this means completing the QE in March or April of the third year, to maximize faculty and peer attendance at the QE. The student must file the appropriate paperwork (Advance to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor Philosophy Form and Conflict of Interest Form) with the Graduate Division and pay the candidacy fee in order to be officially promoted to Ph.D. Candidacy. Students must be advanced to candidacy for their degree prior to the beginning of the final semester of enrollment.

8) Dissertation Requirements

a) General Requirements

The Doctoral Dissertation is the culmination of the Ph.D. program. In the Doctoral Dissertation the Doctoral Candidate demonstrates the capability to conduct independent research that makes an original contribution to the knowledge base in their discipline and is of a quality that can be published in a reputable peer reviewed outlet. The Dissertation Committee, headed by the Dissertation Committee Chair, is charged with guiding the student in research and in the preparation of his or her dissertation.

The successful completion of this final requirement is demonstrated through the production of a dissertation document, describing the research project and its results, and the defense of the project from challenges offered by the members of the student's Dissertation Committee. The quality of the dissertation and the defense of its thesis are evaluated by the Dissertation Committee in order to determine if the student has successfully completed this final requirement for the Ph.D. degree in Economics.

While working on the Dissertation students must enroll in ECON 295 or ECON299. Students are expected to complete the dissertation by the end of their 5th year of study and encouraged to complete by the end of their 4th year if feasible.

b) Dissertation

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Following successful defense of the Dissertation Proposal and advancement to candidacy, the Doctoral Candidate undertakes and completes the proposed research under the supervision of their Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair.

There are no set criteria for dissertation length or content. Students are expected to produce a body of work that contains a thorough review of the relevant literature, is firmly grounded in economic theory and represents a substantial contribution to the existing knowledge base in Economics. One of two formats is typically used. Dissertations should be convertible to three separable articles or represented as one topically related thesis. The format of the Dissertation manuscript should be approved by all members of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee, subject to any requirements made by the Economics Graduate Group, the Graduate School, and the University Archives.

Once the Dissertation document is deemed satisfactory for circulation by the student's Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair, the candidate will circulate the dissertation among the other Doctoral Dissertation Committee members. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee members should provide comments, possibly leading to another revision before the final submission and the scheduling of the Dissertation Defense. These comments should be provided in a timely fashion to ensure that the candidate has sufficient time to make the suggested changes. The completed dissertation must be provided to the entire Doctoral Dissertation Committee at least 14 days prior to the scheduled defense date.

c) Final Examination

Once all members of the Dissertation Committee have read the dissertation and agreed that it is ready to be defended, the student is expected to coordinate with the members of the Dissertation Committee and schedule a date and time for the Dissertation Defense. All members of the Dissertation Committee must attend the Dissertation Defense in person or, under extenuating circumstances and with Graduate Chair approval and upon successful petitioning to the Graduate Dean, via conference call, Skype or Zoom. Graduate students are responsible for securing a room for the Dissertation Defense with a minimum of two hours for the meeting. The Dissertation Defense is open to the public and the student is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate announcements are made regarding their scheduled Dissertation Defense.

The Final Examination is overseen and administered by the Final Examination Chair who is a member of the Dissertation Committee other than the Dissertation Committee Chair. The Final Examination Chair can be the same individual who served as the Proposal Defense Chair for the Proposal Defense. This individual will oversee not only the execution of Final Examination, but also be responsible for the completion of all required documentation following the Final Examination.

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The Dissertation Defense is a capstone event in the student's graduate career. It consists of an oral presentation highlighting the research methodology and the academic contribution of the student's Dissertation. During the oral presentation questions from the Doctoral Dissertation Committee and other audience members will be fielded by the candidate. The candidate is tasked with responding to the questions clearly, concisely and coherently to reflect their expertise. This portion of the meeting is open to the public. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that announcement of the Dissertation Defense time and location is made in the appropriate forums.

At the conclusion of the candidate's presentation and questions the public portion of the defense will conclude. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee will excuse the candidate and all non-Doctoral Dissertation Committee members to discuss the candidate's performance during the defense. Each member of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee makes one of the following recommendations:

Pass: The dissertation and defense are of sufficient quality to warrant the awarding of a Ph.D. degree from the University of California; or

Fail: The dissertation does not meet the standards of a Ph.D. degree from the University of California.

In order for the candidate to pass their Dissertation Defense the committee recommendation for passage must be unanimous. If the Doctoral Dissertation Committee recommends awarding the Ph.D. degree, the committee members must sign the Graduate Division form Report on Final Examination for the Ph.D. Degree, recommending conferral of the Ph.D., subject to final submission of the approved dissertation for inclusion in the University Archives (see Graduate Policies & Procedures Handbook, Section VII. B.9).

d) Normative Time to Degree

Normative Time to Advancement to Candidacy: Students making satisfactory progress should advance to candidacy by the end of their sixth semester in the program.

Normative Time in Candidacy: After advancing to candidacy, students should schedule their Dissertation Defense by the end of their tenth semester in the program, i.e., within four semesters after advancing to candidacy.

e) Typical Timeline and Sequence of Events

For example:

<i>Year One</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring (first year exam completed)</i>
	<i>ECON 201A - Micro economics I</i>	<i>ECON 201B -Microeconomics II</i>

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	<i>ECON 247 – Macroeconomics and Growth *or* ECON 204 – Economic History</i>	<i>ECON 2XX— Elective 1</i>
	<i>Econ 230A – Statistics / Econometrics I</i>	<i>ECON 230B – Econometrics II</i>
		<i>Preliminary Exam (1st attempt & retake as needed before Fall of 2nd year)</i>
Year Two	Fall	Spring
	<i>ECON 270 – Applied Econometrics (or equivalent approved by graduate chair)</i>	<i>ECON 2XX – Elective 2</i>
	<i>ECON 297 Research Practicum</i>	<i>ECON 2XX – Elective 3</i>
	<i>ECON 247 – Macroeconomics and Growth *or* ECON 269— Topics in International Trade *or* ECON 204 – Economic History</i>	<i>ECON 2XX – Elective 4</i>
Year Three	Fall	Spring (advancement to PhD candidacy)
	<i>ECON 294 – 3rd Year Paper</i>	<i>ECON 2XX—Elective course</i>
	<i>ECON 291 – Research Seminar</i>	<i>ECON 291 – Research Seminar</i>
	<i>ECON 295 – Graduate Research</i>	<i>ECON 295 – Graduate Research</i>
		<i>Dissertation Proposal Defense (QE); Advance to Candidacy</i>
Year Four-Five	<i>Write dissertation; enroll in ECON 291 (Research Seminar) and ECON 295 (Graduate Research) and ECON 296 Professional Seminar as needed.</i>	

f) Sources of Funding

All doctoral students in good standing are eligible for year-round financial support, including payment of fees and tuition. Teaching assistantships normally provide initial funding that can be supplemented or substituted by research assistantships, teaching fellow positions, fellowships or other forms of financial assistance including travel awards. Students must have a master's degree and/or have advanced to candidacy and have 2 years cumulative teaching experience in order to be a teaching fellow.

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Non-resident international Ph.D. students who have not advanced to candidacy are eligible to receive a Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) award for their first four semesters to specifically cover the NRST fee charged to their student account based on the criteria below. They are also eligible for an additional two semesters of NRST award that may either be used before candidacy, or be used three or more years after advancing to candidacy (NRST is waived for the first three years post-candidacy for international students). Ph.D. students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents classified as non-California residents are eligible only during their first two semesters of graduate study at UC Merced. Please note that NRST awards are not guaranteed and are subject to available funds.

g) Leaving the Program Prior to Completion of the PhD Requirements

A student admitted for the Ph.D. degree, which, in the judgment of the Economics Department's Graduate Studies Committee, should not continue past the master's degree must be notified in writing by the Graduate Group Chair. A copy of the letter must be sent to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. In some cases a doctoral student may choose to leave the program with a master's degree only. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Group unit to notify the Graduate Division via the Change of Degree form so that the student's record may be updated to reflect the student's degree status. This notice must include the student's written permission to have his/her degree objective changed officially from doctorate to master's.

D. General Information

1) PELP, In Absentia and Filing Fee status

Information about PELP (Planned Educational Leave Program), In Absentia (reduced fees when researching out of state), and Filing Fee status can be found in the UC Merced Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook available on the Graduate Division website.