

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

GRADUATE STUDY IN ECONOMICS

The University of Houston Department of Economics offers a program leading to the Ph.D. degree in Economics designed to provide students rigorous training in economic theory and quantitative skills as well as an intensive exposure to several specialized areas of Economics. The Ph.D. training provides skills needed in academic, government, or business careers.

Graduate students in the University of Houston Department of Economics are subject to all regulations of the Graduate School and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. The rules are found in the University of Houston Graduate Catalog, which can be found online at http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/. The requirements discussed below are additional requirements that apply to graduate students in Economics.

The following requirements apply to students starting in the program in Fall 2026 and after.

ADMISSION TO THE PHD PROGRAM IN ECONOMICS

All admitted students start their studies in the fall. Applications are not accepted for spring or summer enrollment. For information regarding the program and admission requirements, visit <http://www.uh.edu/class/economics/graduate/doctorate/>. For information on applying to the University of Houston, visit <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/prospective-students/how-to-apply/>.

To be admitted to the graduate program, a student

1. whose native language is not English must receive a score of at least 79 (internet-based) or 550 (paper-based) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or an overall score of 6.5 on the IELTS. This requirement is waived for students with a degree from a U.S. college or university,
2. must satisfy the requirements of the Graduate School and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences,
3. must be accepted by the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Economics.

Mathematical preparation is a significant factor in the faculty's decision to admit students, and is a crucial factor in student success. The department recommends the following courses (or the equivalent material be mastered) prior to enrolling. The courses are listed in order of importance.

1. Calculus I, II, and III (MATH 2413, 2414, 2415).
2. Linear Algebra (MATH 2318).
3. Probability (MATH 3338) and Statistics (MATH 3339).
4. Differential Equations (MATH 3331).
5. Introduction to Real Analysis (MATH 4331).

Credit will not be given toward the M.A. or Ph.D. for courses taken to satisfy mathematics deficiencies.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Ph.D. Requirements

1. 39 hours of course work composed of the following:
 - a. Core courses (21 hours)
 - i. Microeconomics sequence (ECON 7341 and 7342).
 - ii. Macroeconomics sequence (ECON 7343 and 7344).
 - iii. Statistics and Econometrics sequence (ECON 7330 and 7331).
 - iv. Either Microeconometrics or Macroeconometrics taken in Fall of second year; simultaneous enrollment in both classes requires the Graduate Director's permission.
 - b. Electives (18 hours) subject to the following restrictions:
 - i. 6 hours maximum in ECON 7390 (Independent Study).
 - ii. 6 hours maximum in courses taken outside the department.
 - iii. Additional hours outside the department or in independent study may be allowed subject to the discretion of the Graduate Director.
2. 18 hours in workshops ECON 8361/8362/8363:
ECON 8361, 8362 and 8363 are required in both semesters of the 3rd, 4th and 5th year, respectively. Sections of these workshops vary by subject matter.
3. 18 hours in seminars ECON 7301/7302:
Seminar enrollment is required in every semester beginning in the third year and continuing until the Ph.D. is awarded.
4. 15 hours in dissertation hours ECON 8399.
5. Grade point average in graduate classes of at least 3.0 (4.0=A).
6. Successful completion of the comprehensive exams at the Ph.D. level. A grade of "A minus" or better in both courses in a sequence exempts the student from the comprehensive exam in that sequence.
7. Successful completion of a 2nd year project.
8. Successful completion of the 3rd year paper.
9. Successful end-of-year presentation in the 4th year.
10. Successful completion and defense of the dissertation.

M.A. Requirements

For students who decide to leave the program before fulfilling the Ph.D., or do not fulfill the requirements to continue in the Ph.D. program, an M.A. degree will be awarded upon the completion of the following requirements.

1. 36 hours of course work composed of the following:
 - a. Core courses (21 hours)
 - i. Microeconomics sequence (ECON 7341 and 7342).
 - ii. Macroeconomics sequence (ECON 7343 and 7344).
 - iii. Statistics and Econometrics sequence (ECON 7330 and 7331).

- iv. Either Microeconometrics or Macroeconometrics taken in Fall of second year; simultaneous enrollment in both classes requires the Graduate Director's permission.
- b. Electives (15 hours) subject to the following restrictions:
 - i. 3 hours maximum in ECON 7390 (Independent Study).
 - ii. 3 hours maximum in courses taken outside the department.
 - iii. Additional hours outside the department or in independent study may be allowed subject to the discretion of the Graduate Director.
- 2. Grade point average in graduate courses of at least 3.0 (4.0=A).
- 3. Successful completion of the comprehensive exams at the M.A. level. A grade of "A minus" or better in both courses in a sequence exempts the student from the comprehensive exam in that sequence.
- 4. Doctoral research hours do not count toward the 36 hours of course work.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAM

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
1st Year	ECON 7341 – Micro I	ECON 7342 – Micro II	Comprehensive Exams
	ECON 7343 – Macro I	ECON 7344 – Macro II	
	ECON 7330 – Quantitative Economic Analysis	ECON 7331 – Econometrics	
2nd Year	Either Microeconometrics or Macroeconometrics	Elective	2 nd year project
	Elective	Elective	
	Elective	Elective	
3rd Year	ECON 8361	ECON 8361	Dissertation research
	ECON 7301/02 - Seminar	ECON 7301/02 - Seminar	
	Elective	ECON 8399 - Dissertation	
		3 rd year paper due in May	
4th Year	ECON 8362	ECON 8362	Dissertation research
	ECON 7301/02 - Seminar	ECON 7301/02 - Seminar	
	ECON 8399 – Dissertation	ECON 8399 - Dissertation	
		Presentation in end-of-year workshop	
5th Year	ECON 8363	ECON 8363	
	ECON 7301/02 – Seminar	ECON 7301/02 – Seminar	
	ECON 8399 – Dissertation	ECON 8399 – Dissertation	
		Dissertation Defense	

COURSE LOAD

All graduate students receiving financial aid from the department are required to register for nine hours each semester during the regular academic year and six hours in the summer (if they are funded for the summer).

Full-time graduate students not receiving financial aid must register for a minimum of 9 hours each semester during the regular academic year.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Written examinations in micro theory (covering Econ 7341 and 7342), macro theory (covering Econ 7343 and 7344), and statistics/econometrics (covering Econ 7330 and 7331) are required after the completion of the second regular semester of full-time course work. A student who has achieved a grade of "A minus" or better in both courses in a sequence is exempt from the comprehensive examination requirement for that sequence and automatically receives a grade of "Superior" for that sequence (for example, a student who has achieved a grade of "A minus" in both Econ 7341 and 7342 is exempt from the Micro comprehensive exam and automatically receives a grade of "Superior" for the Micro comprehensive exam). The first set of exams is given in May or June. Each exam is graded anonymously according to the following scale:

1. "Superior." The student demonstrates mastery of the material examined.
2. "Good." The student demonstrates understanding of the material examined, but there are some deficiencies.
3. "Poor." The student demonstrates significant deficiencies in their understanding of the material examined.
4. "Fail." The student does not take the test, or demonstrates no understanding of the material examined.

Following the first set of exams, the Graduate Committee, acting on recommendations from the Graduate Director, will make a determination of each student's status as follows:

1. If the student achieves a Superior on all required exams, the student has completed the comprehensive exam requirement at the Ph.D. level.
2. If the student has not achieved a Superior on all required exams, the Graduate Committee may determine that the student's totality of work, including grades, is sufficient to warrant advancement and that the student has completed the comprehensive exam requirement at the Ph.D. level.
3. If the student has not achieved a Superior on all required exams, and the Graduate Committee does not feel the student's body of work warrants advancement, it will inform the student of which individual exams must be retaken in order to advance.

A second set of examinations are given in the week before classes begin in August. These exams are graded on the same scale as above. Following the second set of exams, the Graduate Committee, acting on recommendations from the Graduate Director, will make a final determination of each student's status as follows:

1. If the student has, accounting for both sets of exams, achieved a Superior on all required exams, the student has completed the comprehensive exam requirement at the Ph.D. level.
2. If the student has not achieved a Superior on all required exams, the Graduate Committee may determine that the student's totality of work, including grades, is sufficient to warrant advancement and that the student has completed the comprehensive exam requirement at the Ph.D. level.

3. If the student has not achieved a Superior on all required exams, and the Graduate Committee does not feel the student's body of work warrants advancement to Ph.D. candidacy, but did show sufficient understanding at the M.A. level, it will inform the student that they have completed the comprehensive exam requirement at the M.A. level. The student is allowed to continue taking courses in their second year and can receive the M.A. degree, if they fulfil the remaining requirements.
4. If the student does not fall into any of the first three categories, then the student has not completed the comprehensive exam requirement at either Ph.D. or M.A. level and will not be awarded a degree.

No further attempts at the examinations are allowed after August following the first year of study at UH.

2nd YEAR PROJECT

By the end of May following their 2nd year, each student must have a written project proposal signed by a faculty advisor, who has agreed to oversee the project. The proposal should be created in collaboration with the faculty advisor and specifies the required work to be completed over the summer following the 2nd year. The exact nature of this work is up to the faculty advisor and student and could include, but is not limited to, the following: a detailed presentation of core papers in a given field, replication of an existing empirical or quantitative paper, collection of new data, or a paper based on an original idea.

The project is due prior to the first day of classes in August following the student's 2nd year of study. The project will be evaluated by the faculty advisor, who will inform the Graduate Director if the student has successfully completed the project.

If the Graduate Committee, acting on the recommendation of the faculty advisor and Graduate Director, deems the project satisfactory, the student is admitted to Ph.D. candidacy. If the project is not satisfactory, the Graduate Committee may, at their discretion, issue a "revise and resubmit" to the student. In this case, the student has until the last day of classes of the fall semester of their 3rd year to complete a new version of the project. If the Graduate Committee, acting again on the recommendation of the advisor and Graduate Director, find the new version satisfactory, the student will be admitted to Ph.D. candidacy. If the Graduate Committee, either at the initial submission in August, or at the revised submission, decide that the project is not satisfactory, then the student will not be admitted to Ph.D. candidacy, but can complete their 3rd year courses and remain eligible to graduate with the M.A. degree.

3rd YEAR PAPER

This paper is due by May 15th following the student's 3rd year of study. The paper will be evaluated by a reading committee of three faculty members selected by the student and approved by the Graduate Director. The 3rd year paper must be original research done by the student on a topic of their choice.

If the Graduate Committee, acting on the recommendation of the reading committee, deems the paper satisfactory, the student is allowed to continue as a Ph.D. candidate. If the paper is not satisfactory, the Graduate Committee may, at its discretion, issue a "revise and resubmit" to the student. In this case, the student has until the first day of class in August of that year to complete a new version of the paper. That paper will be evaluated by September 10th. If that

new version is satisfactory to the Graduate Committee, the student will be allowed to continue in the program.

If the paper is deemed unsatisfactory at either the initial submission in May, or at the revised submission in August, the student may remain in classes for their 4th year, and is eligible to graduate with the M.A.

4th YEAR PRESENTATIONS

In their 4th year, students will be expected to give a presentation of their current research in progress to the graduate faculty. The time allotted for the presentations will be set by the Graduate Director.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The dissertation will be supervised by a committee agreed upon by the student, the primary faculty dissertation advisor, and the graduate director. The committee must include one member from outside the department. The committee is typically composed of the primary faculty advisor (committee chair), two other faculty advisors from the department, and the member from outside the department. The Ph.D. degree is awarded, when the student has successfully defended the dissertation before the Graduate Faculty of the department and turned in the completed dissertation to the appropriate university office.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student may apply for a leave of absence, if he or she intends to withdraw from the department for a specific period of time after which studies will be resumed. A leave of absence is only granted for a stated time period, not to exceed one year, except for military service. A previously enrolled student, who is not currently registered in the Department and has not applied for a leave of absence, will be automatically dropped from the program. To resume academic work, the dropped student must apply for reinstatement to the graduate program. The university may also impose a financial penalty.

CHANGE IN REQUIREMENTS

Students may petition the Graduate Director for permission to deviate from particular program requirements. Such petitions must be in writing and should include a justification for the proposed change.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

The Department of Economics allows a maximum of 6 hours to be transferred from graduate courses taken at other schools toward an M.A. in Economics. The Graduate Director will determine the transferability of credits. The university allows more credits to be transferred toward a Ph.D. at the discretion of the Graduate Director.

The Department encourages students who have received their M.A. elsewhere to enroll in the

Ph.D. program. If a student has an M.A. in Economics from another university, equivalent courses may be waived and credit transferred toward a Ph.D. However, the doctoral transfer student is still subject to the comprehensive examination requirement.

Transfer students who have successfully completed first-year courses at another Ph.D. program are allowed to take the comprehensive examinations in the summer prior to their enrollment at the University of Houston. If they receive a grade of Superior on an examination, they do not have to complete the first-year courses in that sequence. This attempt at the comprehensive examinations does not count towards their two formal attempts.

FINANCIAL AID

The Department offers several assistantships for academic support, research, or teaching in the first year. These positions pay a monthly stipend and allow tuition to be waived and fees to be paid at in-state rates. These stipends cover the 9-month school year and very often some or all of the summer months. Summer support, however, is not guaranteed. All financial support is allocated by the Graduate Director and is contingent upon available funding.

In return for financial support, and as part of graduate training in economics, graduate assistants help with instruction and research. Teaching assistants work 20 hours per week supporting faculty teaching and research. Teaching fellows teach a section of an introductory or intermediate economics course. All assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis under the following guidelines:

Entering Students. Only students with outstanding transcripts, GRE scores and other favorable credentials are offered aid in the first year. The Graduate Committee allocates these assistantships. Supplemental funding is also available on a competitive basis from the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Second through Fifth Year. Any full time student on financial aid making satisfactory progress in the program is assured partial aid in the second through the fifth year.

A student who was awarded aid in the first year will receive aid in the second year, if the student has taken the required comprehensive exams and maintained a 3.0 grade point average. Students who receive a superior on the required comprehensive examinations and maintain good progress will receive financial aid in their third, fourth, and fifth years.

Responsibilities and Progress. Students are expected to perform their research and teaching responsibilities in a professional manner. Poor performance can result in the loss of financial aid.