Successful completion of the MA in Economics requires either completion of an MA Thesis (Econ 599, 4.5 units, along with completion of 10.5 units of coursework) or an MA Extended Essay (Econ 598, 3 units, along with completion of 12 units of coursework). As detailed in the Graduate Calendar (p72):

- “The thesis is based on a major research project, the topic of which is determined by the student in consultation with his or her advisory committee. The expected length of the thesis will vary with the nature of the work, with more technical theses generally being shorter than those with more literary content. Each candidate shall defend their thesis in a final oral examination, in accordance with the regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.”

- “The essay is based on an independent research project and may consist of an extended version of a course project. The topic is decided by the student in consultation with the student’s supervisory committee. ... The expected length of the essay will vary with the nature of the work, with more technical essays generally being shorter than those with more literary content. Each candidate shall defend their essay in a final oral examination, in accordance with the regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies."

Irrespective of whether a thesis or an essay is decided upon, the schedule to be followed is:

1. By March 31 of the student’s first year, students, who have not already arranged a supervisor, will email the Graduate Advisor (egrad@uvic.ca), providing information on their thoughts with regard to their essay/thesis, even if this is merely a broad area of interest (e.g., labour economics, economics of the household, development economics, econometric theory, macroeconomics, industrial organization, financial econometrics and so on). Students are encouraged to submit a brief research proposal (up to one page in length). Should the student have one or more supervisors in mind, this information shall also be provided in the email. Should a student already have a willing supervisor then this information needs to be emailed to the Graduate Advisor.

2. The Graduate Advisor, with assistance from members of the Graduate Committee and the Departmental Chair, will put together a list of students and three possible supervisors. Aside from student preferences, this list will take account of current supervisions of faculty members and the need to spread supervision amongst faculty. Students and faculty will be emailed this list.

3. By May 31 of the student’s first year, students are required to have met with each of the named three potential supervisors, and will email the Graduate Advisor a ranked preference ordering of supervisors. Faculty will also email the Graduate Advisor with a ranked preference ordering of students, including an indication of whether they are willing/qualified to supervise any of them.
4. The Graduate Advisor, with assistance from members of the Graduate Committee and the Departmental Chair, will produce a matched list of students and supervisors, taking account of the ranked preferences of students and supervisors, current supervisory loads and availability of faculty members and the need to spread supervision among faculty members.

5. Once a student has been appointed a supervisor, it is expected that the student will work with the supervisor on their essay or thesis, in addition to undertaking approximately 15-20 hours of research assistance for the supervisor as part of learning how to undertake research.

6. By September 30 of the student’s second year, the supervisor will have submitted a completed essay or thesis topic form to the Graduate Secretary. The essay form can be downloaded from http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/assets/docs/graduate/MA%20Extended%20Essay%20Registration%20Form%202016.pdf whereas the thesis form is available at http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/assets/docs/graduate/MA%20Thesis%20Registration%20Form%202016.pdf.

7. Students are expected to complete all requirements for the MA (including co-op, as relevant) within 26 months of enrolment. This limit may be extended for up to one year with the permission of the Graduate Advisor.

Supervisory Committees

- An MA thesis supervisory committee consists of at least two members: a supervisor and a second member, who may be a co-supervisor or a committee member. An external (to Economics) examiner (determined by the supervisory committee) is appointed to examine the thesis and the oral defense. The supervisor will arrange these details. Information is provided by FGS at http://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/resourcesfor/students/thesis/oral/guidelines.php.

- An MA essay supervisory committee consists of at least two members: a supervisor and a reader. The role of the reader is to review the penultimate draft of the essay, suggesting changes and revisions that are limited to making the essay minimally acceptable for proceeding to defense. The reader is not expected to contribute to the supervision or writing of the essay, but will, along with the supervisor, examine the essay and the oral defense. Two joint supervisors may be substituted for the supervisor and reader, if appropriate.

Formats

- FGS provides guidelines for a thesis at http://www.uvic.ca/graduatestudies/resourcesfor/students/thesis/index.php. There is also a link to a Word template. Please ensure that your thesis follows the guidelines.
- MA essays are expected to have a title page, table of contents, section numbering and references. The length is expected to be between 30 and 40 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. Explicit guidelines and templates are available from various links at http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/graduate/home/current-students/ma/index.php.

Examples of Acceptable Scope for an MA Essay

- A critical review and synthesis of a narrowly defined literature (reviewing fewer than five papers).
- An economic critique of a recent government authored or commissioned report (published within the past three years).
- An economic critique of a narrowly-defined government policy (with no requirement for novel empirical or theoretical modeling).
- A modest, but novel, variation on an existing empirical or simulation study using the original data (such as application of a new method or a variation on the underlying model).
- An application of an existing empirical study to a new data set.
- A modest, but novel, variation on an existing theoretical study.

More substantive, original, research should be undertaken via a thesis rather than an essay.