

Department of Economics PhD Candidacy Examination^{1,2}

1. Candidacy Examination Requirements

Candidacy examinations in the Department require passing two written comprehensive examinations and an oral examination of the dissertation proposal. Candidacy must be completed within 30 months of registration and no later than 6 months before the final oral examination. PhD students are required to register continuously for ECON 693 until the examinations are completed and a decision on candidacy has been submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

In exceptional circumstances, a student's supervisory committee, with the approval of the Department's Graduate Committee, may modify the Candidacy requirements described here.

2. Comprehensive Examinations

Two comprehensive examinations are selected by the student's supervisor and committee members at the time of registration into the PhD program from the topics of microeconomic theory, macroeconomic theory and econometrics.

- a. **Timing.** Students entering the program in September are normally expected to take the comprehensive examinations in their first year. Comprehensive examinations are offered when required and announced in advance to allow students to plan.
- b. **Committees and Grading.** A comprehensive examination committee composed of a minimum of two faculty members is formed for each comprehensive exam. Each committee is responsible for setting and grading the examination under its responsibility. Grading is anonymous and committees work independently.
- c. **Structure and Content.** Past examinations are available on Brightspace. The committee communicates: (i) A Syllabus of the examinable material within 2 weeks of its composition;³ and (ii) The structure of the examination (duration, number of questions, material allowed...) a couple of weeks before the examination. Students are responsible for the preparation of the Syllabus.
- d. **Results.** The comprehensive examination committees provide the Graduate Advisor with comprehensive examination results of Pass, Deferred or Fail for each student. Comprehensive examination results are reviewed by the Department's Graduate Committee, who then approves one of the following decisions:
 - i. **PASS.** This outcome can be expected if the student achieves a Pass or Good result in each of the two comprehensive examinations.
 - ii. **DEFERRED.** At least one comprehensive examination is to be re-taken. This outcome can be expected if it is the first attempt at the comprehensive examinations and if the student receives a Fail on one or both of the examinations. Only failed examinations are re-taken.
 - iii. **FAILED.** This outcome can be expected when a student has failed one or both comprehensive examinations for a second time. Failure of the comprehensive

¹ Appendix to the Graduate Student handbook. See also candidacy examinations requirements in the Graduate Studies Calendar.

² Approved by Graduate Committee in September 2021. Replaces 2011 regulation with similar title.

³ See material on Brightspace.

examinations results in a failure of the candidacy exam and the Faculty of Graduate Studies is informed of the student's result.

- e. **Feedback.** The Graduate Advisor informs the student's supervisor of the results of the comprehensive examinations. Each student is informed in confidence of their performance on each of the two comprehensive examinations by their supervisor and/or the Graduate Advisor. In event of failure, the committee writes a brief explanation for the negative decision, possibly mentioning important shortcomings and specific problematic areas. Beyond this, it is up to each committee member to decide whether to circulate an answer key and/or meet with a candidate. There is no expectations that they should, but candidates must be treated equally. Prior to sending a script to the Committee, the department makes a copy, which can be reviewed by the candidate after the results are announced.

3. Oral Examination of the Dissertation Proposal

The precise format, requirements and timing of the oral examination are set by the student's supervisor in consultation with supervisory committee members.

- a. **Format.** Typically, the dissertation proposal oral examination committee consists of the supervisory committee. However, other members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies may form part of this examination committee, as deemed appropriate by the supervisory committee. The supervisory committee determines the format and the requirements of the oral examination of the dissertation proposal and communicates this information to the student in writing.
- b. **Chair.** The supervisor arranges for the oral examination to be chaired by a Departmental member who is not part of the oral examination committee. The Chair ensures that the examination proceeds in the usual manner for oral defenses. Oral examinations are open to members of the public, who may be granted, at the discretion of the Chair of the defense, the privilege to ask questions.
- c. **Result.** The oral examination of the dissertation proposal has one of three possible results: PASS, FAILED, DEFERRED. A deferral can be granted by the oral examination committee when a student's performance did not deserve a pass, but when it is judged that a second attempt at the oral examination is appropriate.
- d. **Feedback.** The student's supervisor informs the Graduate Advisor in writing of the timing and structure of the oral examination and reports the results to the student and Graduate Advisor.

4. Results of the Candidacy Examination

A PhD student who has passed both the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation proposal oral examination has passed the candidacy examination. Failure of the comprehensive examinations or failure of the oral examination results in a failure of the candidacy examination. Once it has been determined that a student has passed or failed the candidacy examination, the Faculty of Graduate Studies is informed of the results and the student is given the corresponding grade for ECON 693. In the event the candidacy examination is failed, the student will leave the PhD program.