



Graduate Program Policies & Procedures

2016-2017

Department of Agricultural and
Consumer Economics

Graduate Program Policies and Procedures, 2016-2017

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The M.S. program offers considerable flexibility to fit students' educational goals. If students use the degree as a foundation for a doctorate, they will emphasize economic theory and analytical research tools. If students seek a terminal professional degree, they will focus their studies on the concepts and analytical techniques used by analysts and managers in industries, governments, and other organizations.

Advising

Academic Advising

Each student is assigned an initial academic advisor when they arrive in the program. A student may change their academic advisor at any time by completing an advisor selection form, securing the concurrence of the new advisor, and submitting the form to the Department Office. Each student should meet with their advisor at least twice a year to review their progress.

Each candidate for the Master's degree must complete at least 24 hours of graduate course work. This course work should be carefully selected in consultation with their academic advisor to meet their educational goals and interests and to satisfy the M.S. degree requirements.

Thesis Advising

An M.S. student writes a thesis under the supervision of a thesis committee. This committee consists of at least three UIUC professors. At least two of them must be members of the Graduate Faculty. One member of the committee serves as the student's thesis advisor and chairperson of the committee. Each student should select a thesis advisor from among the ACE faculty by completing and submitting a thesis advisor selection form by the end of their second semester of study. Prior approval from the Head of the department is required for the advisor and chairperson of a committee to be a faculty member who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty.

Thesis

Thesis Defense/Final Oral Examination and Seminar

An M.S. student must defend their thesis in an oral examination which coincides with an open departmental seminar. The oral examination is administered by the thesis committee. The thesis advisor, in consultation with the student, will request the Head of Department formally to appoint the thesis committee. This request should be made in writing at least one month before the student wishes to defend their thesis. At least a week prior to the examination, the student should submit the thesis to the thesis committee members. The advisor will arrange for the topic, time, and place of the open seminar to be announced to departmental faculty and graduate students at least 10 days prior to the seminar.

Following the final examination, the chairperson of the thesis committee reports in writing to the Head of the Department whether the student was awarded a "pass" or a "fail." If the committee awards a "fail," it will specify the additional work necessary to earn a "pass" or will recommend to the Head of the Department that the student's continuation in the program be terminated.

Thesis Deposit

An M.S. student is responsible for preparing and depositing their thesis in accordance with the Graduate College Thesis Requirements (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis>) and departmental formatting requirements. The Graduate College requires that master's theses be approved by a member of the Graduate Faculty. After the thesis is approved, the student must provide an electronic copy (PDF format) for format review to the Department thesis reviewer at least two weeks before it must be deposited in the Graduate College. The student must also provide to the Department a final copy of the thesis as accepted by the Graduate College.

M.S. degrees are awarded in May, August, and December. Students must apply to be on the degree list and deposit the thesis by the deadlines established by the Graduate College. These deadlines are available from the *Graduate College Academic Calendar* (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/general/calendar/current>) and the Department Office.

Non-Thesis M.S. Degree

Only rarely and in exceptional circumstances may the M.S. thesis requirement be waived. As described in the Programs of Study, a student who has been admitted into either the standard AAE M.S. program (requiring a thesis) or the AAE Ph.D. program and has completed the doctoral core sequence may transfer into the non-thesis MS program. Application for admission to the non-thesis option is by petition to the Department after at least two semesters of graduate coursework have been completed.

Assessing Progress

Milestones to Completion of Degree

The following guidelines and limits are intended to result in the expeditious completion of the M.S. degree requirements. If a student finds it necessary to extend one or more of the limits, they must request approval of the Head of the Department. The request, endorsed by the student's advisor, should indicate the reasons for the delay and include a plan and a specific date for completion.

M.S. Milestones	Normal Progress	Limit
Select thesis advisor	End of 2 nd semester	18 months
Final examination	End of 3 semesters and contiguous summers	3 years*
*Graduate College limit for completion of degree is 5 years from initial registration in the Graduate College.		

Reporting Progress towards Degree

Master's students are required to submit a report of progress toward degree each year. Reports follow a template provided by the department. These annual reports are reviewed by the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Based on this report the student's advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies communicate with them about their progress in the program.

Continuing for the Ph.D. Degree

If an M.S. student wishes to continue for the Ph.D. degree, that student must apply for the Ph.D. program in the regular application cycle (though the application will technically be a transfer application.) The Department will evaluate the student's credentials and inform them in writing of the decision regarding admission to the Ph.D. program and financial assistance. Enrollment does not become official until all requirements for the M.S. degree are complete.

Standard M.S. Requirements Summary

Credit: 32 hours of graduate credit.* A maximum of 8 hours of thesis may count towards the total.

500-level Courses: 8 hours of ACE 500-level course work, not including independent study or thesis credit. Required quantitative methods courses and ACE 566 do not satisfy this requirement.

Quantitative and Research Methods: (a) 4 hours in applied econometrics and (b) at least 2 hours in non-econometric quantitative methods selected from among:

(a) Econometrics

ACE 562 Applied Regression Models I, 2 hours

ACE 564 Applied Regression Models II, 2 hours

Equivalent or more advanced quantitative methods courses can be used to satisfy this econometrics requirement if requested by petition to the Director of Graduate Studies and approved. Examples of such courses are: ECON 535, ECON 536, STAT 420, SOC 485, and CRPS 541.

(b) Non-Econometrics:

ACE 563 Math Program App Econ I, 2 hours

Non-ACE classes: UP 555, UP 418, NRES 454, GEOG 480

Equivalent or more advanced quantitative methods courses can be used to satisfy this non-econometrics requirement if requested in advance by petition to the Director of Graduate Studies and approved.

Theory: 4 hours in microeconomic theory selected from:

ACE 500 Applied Economic Theory, 4 hours

ACE 592ME Microeconomics, 4 hours

ECON 500 General Microeconomic Theory, 4 hours

Independent Study: Independent study may count toward total credit hours (no more than 8 hours) but shall not be used to satisfy specific degree requirements except in unusual circumstances and with approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Grade Point Average (GPA): A minimum overall graduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. All courses taken to fulfill a specific requirement must be taken for a letter grade.

Thesis: Students register for ACE 599, Thesis Research, complete an approved thesis supervised by an advisory committee, defend the thesis in an oral examination administered by the thesis committee, and present an open departmental seminar (concurrent with oral exam) reporting on the thesis.

*Graduate credit is given for courses at the 400-level (unless the Catalog or Course Schedule specifies undergraduate credit only) and 500-level only. 100- 200- and 300-level courses do not earn credit toward a graduate degree in ACE.

Summary of Requirements for Non-Thesis M.S. Option

The differences between the two MS Degree options are summarized in the table below from

<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/graduate-majors/ag-cons-econ/#text>

Required Courses	Thesis option - Required Hours	Non-thesis option - Required Hours
ACE 500, ACE 592-Microeconomics, or ECON 500	4	
6 hours in quantitative and research methods from departmental list (these do not count toward the 500 level course requirement)	6	
24 hours selected from the ACE doctoral core sequence, including at least 12 hours in applied economic theory and 8 hours in quantitative methods		24
Thesis Hours Required–ACE 599 (min/max applied toward degree):	8 max	NA
Total Hours	32 (only 2 hours of ACE 566 may count towards total)	32 (including not more than 2 hours in ACE 566)
Minimum Hours Required Within the Unit:	8 at the 500 level, not including 566, 599 or independent study	20 at the 500 level, not including ACE 566, 599 or independent study
Minimum 500-level Hours Required Overall:	12	20

Entering M.S. students with exceptional academic backgrounds whose goals include a Ph.D. degree may wish to consider the straight-through Ph.D. option. In this option, students are admitted as M.S. candidates but begin taking doctoral courses in their first year. If they perform well in these courses, they will be considered for transfer directly into the Ph.D. program without completing the M.S. degree. Those who successfully pursue this option generally do not receive an M.S. degree.

To be considered for the straight-through Ph.D. option, within three semesters of enrolling in the ACE M.S. program, students must complete the following requirements:

1. At least two courses from among:
 - ACE 592ME Microeconomics, 4 hours *or*
 - ECON 500 General Microeconomic Theory, 4 hours
 - ACE 501 Risk and Info: Theory and App, 4 hours
 - ACE 502 Demand/Supply/Firms/Households, 4 hours
 - ACE 503 Equilibrium and Welfare Econ, 4 hours

Students are strongly encouraged to complete ACE 501, 502, and 503 in the same academic year.
2. One from among:
 - ECON 532 Econometric Analysis I, 4 hours
 - ECON 535 Econometric Analysis II, 4 hours
 - ACE 563 Math Program App Econ I, 2 hours *and*
 - ACE 567 Math Program App Econ II, 2 hours
 - STAT 400 Statistics and Probability I, 4 hours *and*
 - STAT 410 Statistics and Probability II, 4 hours

Students may substitute other advanced quantitative methods courses approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. Sixteen hours of courses satisfying requirements 1 and 2 above, or other 500-level courses, but not any independent study courses.
4. Twenty-four hours of graduate credit overall with a GPA of at least 3.5 for both the courses used to satisfy requirements 1 and 2 above and all hours completed.

Students who satisfy these requirements may apply for transfer into the ACE Ph.D. program using a Graduate College petition form. The petition must include a recommendation from the student's academic advisor and will be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Admissions and Recruiting Committee.

Students admitted into the Ph.D. program via the straight-through option must complete the Ph.D. core examination based on courses listed in 1, above, before five semesters have elapsed from their original enrollment in the ACE graduate program. The core examination is described in the Ph.D. program requirements. Students must also complete all other Graduate College and Department requirements for the Ph.D. degree (see next section for details).

The Doctor of Philosophy degree prepares successful candidates for positions in academia, the private sector, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Generally the first year is devoted to completion of the core course requirements and written core examination; the second year is given to courses in an area of specialization and writing of the second-year research paper; the third is spent preparing for the oral preliminary examination and defense of the dissertation proposal; and the fourth year is dedicated to the completion of research and the dissertation.

Students work with an initial program planning committee and advisor to tailor a program to fit their interests. Their program will build on core courses in economic theory and quantitative methods. These courses provide a solid understanding of economic theory and its application, including an understanding of quantitative methods—the tools of applied economic analysis.

Academic Advising

Each student is assigned an initial academic advisor when they arrive in the program. A student may request that the Director of Graduate Studies change their academic advisor at any time by completing another advisor selection form, securing the concurrence of the proposed new advisor, and submitting the form to the Department Office. A student's academic advisor and other faculty in their fields will help them determine the course work and other activities appropriate for achieving a high level of expertise in their fields of research. Annually, the department will assess students' progress towards the degree. If weaknesses are identified, additional course work, independent study, or other appropriate activities may be recommended. If a student's performance or progress towards the degree is consistently and significantly below expectations, they may be advised to terminate the program and seek other opportunities.

Courses

The core courses cover the theory and quantitative methods upon which advanced research is based. Field courses build on the knowledge gained in the core courses. In addition to the core courses and field courses, PhD students are required to complete ACE 561, Advanced Research and Scholarly Communication. ACE 561 is normally taken in the 4th semester of the program.

Core Courses

Typically PhD students complete the core course requirements during the first year. Each student must complete the core course requirement in two consecutive semesters beginning with the first fall semester they are registered unless a delay to complete remedial courses or graduate-level non-ACE courses is recommended by their initial program planning committee and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies or they file a petition in the first eight weeks of the semester in which they enroll in a core course. Core courses must be taken for a letter grade.

The core courses are:

- ACE 592ME¹ Microeconomics
- ACE 501 Risk and Info: Theory and App, 4 hours
- ACE 502 Demand/Supply/Firms/Households, 4 hours
- ACE 503 Equilibrium and Welfare Econ, 4 hours
- ECON 532² Econometric Analysis I, 4 hours
- ECON 535 Econometric Analysis II, 4 hours

¹ECON 500 may be taken in place of ACE 592ME if it is available to ACE students and if the Director of Graduate Studies grants permission.

² Students who have completed STAT 400 and STAT 410 or the equivalent may be exempted from the requirement to complete ECON 532.

If a student petitions to be excused from ECON 532 and/or 535 on the grounds that they have already taken similar classes, they must take additional 500-level econometrics to replace those credit hours.

Quantitative Methods Courses

Students are required to complete 4 hours of quantitative methods courses beyond those in the core. This requirement may be satisfied by ECON 536, ACE 530, ACE 592SE, ACE 563/567, or other courses approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Field Courses

By the end of the first year of the program, each student will consult with their advisor to select courses to take for their fields. They must submit a “Ph.D. Course Plan and Approval Form” as part of their annual review (see “Assessing Progress,” “*Reporting Progress towards Degree*”) or by the end of their first year in the Ph.D. program. After approval, this list of courses will be incorporated into their progress report. The list of courses may only be modified with the consent of the student, the student’s advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students may design their own fields or select from among several pre-designed ones. Each field must have at least eight hours at the 500 level. Of the 16 hours of field coursework, at least eight hours must be ACE courses. The result should be that the student has gained recognizable expertise in two coherent areas of study and research. Students who plan to be competitive for academic positions should strongly consider including ECON 503 (Macroeconomic Theory I) and at least two additional 500-level economics courses in their plan of study. Below are some illustrative ways of constructing an area of Ph.D. specialization (not an exhaustive list).

Agricultural Finance

ACE 542 Advanced Agricultural Finance, 4 hours

and at least one of:

FIN 511 Investments, 4 hours

FIN 561 Financial Intermediation, 4 hours

FIN 562 Macrofinance, 4 hours

FIN 591 Theory of Finance, 4 hours

Family and Consumer Economics

ACE 531 Impact Evaluation, 2 hours

ACE 571 Household Economics, 2 hours

and at least one of:

ECON 551 Topics in Development Economics, 4 hours

ECON 545 Economics of Education, Health, and Human Capital, 4 hours

ECON 540 Labor Economics 1, 4 hours

International, Policy, and Development Economics

8 hours out of:

ACE 556 Agricultural Policy and Political Economy, 4 hours

ACE 557 Food, Poverty and Development, 2 hours

ACE 559 Food, Trade and Development, 2 hours

ACE 531 Impact Evaluation, 2 hours

ACE 571 Household Economics, 2 hours

Natural Resource and Environmental Economics

At least two of:

ACE 510 Advanced Natural Resource Economics, 4 hours

ACE 516 Environmental Economics, 4 hours

ACE 530 Microeconometrics, 4 hours

ACE 592SE Spatial Econometrics, 4 hours

Price Analysis and Agricultural Marketing

ACE 520 Food Commodity Markets, 4 hours

ACE 527 Advanced Price Analysis, 4 hours

Regional Economics and Public Policy

At least two of:

ACE 552 Regional Development Theory, 4 hours

ACE 592SE Spatial Econometrics, 4 hours

ECON 514 Urban Economics, 4 hours

Requirements for Continuation in the Ph.D. Program

Written Core Examination

Ph.D. students are required to pass a written core examination. They take the exam during the summer after completion of the core courses. This examination is based primarily on material covered in ACE 592ME, 501, 502, and 503, and may call for students to integrate theory and analytical tools to analyze problems or concepts. Understanding of the content of ECON 532 and ECON 535 may be required to complete the exam. The examination must be taken within two years of direct entry into the Ph.D. program unless a request for an extension is approved by a student's advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Head. Only Ph.D. students may write the core examination.

The examining committee is appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies. The committee normally consists of the faculty who instruct the four ACE core courses (ACE 592-ME, ACE 501, 502, and 503), one additional faculty member, and the Director of Graduate Studies as an ex-officio member.

The chair of the examining committee reports the results of the examination to students in writing within two weeks of the examination with a copy to students' advisors, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Head. The grading is "pass" or "fail," although additional qualitative remarks, such as "high distinction," that represent a consensus of the examining committee may be included. A copy of the examination and answers becomes part of students' departmental academic file.

If a student does not pass, they may sit for a make-up examination to be graded by the first day of the following spring semester. To ensure that they enroll in classes that are consistent with their needs, they will not be allowed to register for classes after taking the exam the second time until the second examination results are reported. Failing the written core examination twice will result in dismissal from the doctoral program. Failure to sit for a scheduled make-up examination will also result in dismissal. Students failing the core exam may be eligible to receive the Non-Thesis MS degree based on coursework.

Research Paper

Purpose

The research paper requirement is designed to develop and evaluate a student's ability to conduct and communicate original, independent research in a manner appropriate for scholarly publication and presentation. It verifies that they are expert in the subject matter that constitutes the frontier of research in at least one of their areas of specialization. It also helps prepare them for the research, writing, and oral defense efforts required to complete a dissertation successfully. The requirement calls for the student to complete a written research paper and present that research in a public setting. Participation in ACE 561, Advanced Research and Scholarly Communication, is required and supports the development of students' research papers.

Guidelines and Requirements for Development of a Successful Paper

- **Style:** The paper must be written in the form of a journal article appropriate to a student's area of specialization. It should be 20-30 pages long (double spaced, 12 point font, one inch margins); 35 pages, including figures and tables, is a firm upper limit. It should pose a research question, place that question in the relevant literature, work towards answering the question, and discuss the results of that investigation. It may use whatever tools are most appropriate to answer the question at hand including, but not limited to, econometric analysis, numerical simulation, operations research methods, and theoretical modeling.
- **Source and Authorship:** The paper may, for example, have its foundations in second-year field courses or in research-assistance work performed while at the University of Illinois. The paper may not be a written product based on work largely conducted before entering the ACE Ph.D. program. The paper must have the student as its sole author and be comprised of research that is largely the student's own work. University policies for academic integrity strictly apply.
- **Topic and Originality:** The paper must represent original research that addresses an issue that is of substantial interest in one of the student's areas of specialization. Selection of the topic is itself an important part of this requirement. As part of the paper, the topic must be motivated by and distinguished from previous, related work. The paper need not be of publishable quality to satisfy this requirement, and it may reasonably represent only a modest departure from previously published work, but it must be well conceived, justified, and communicated. Examples of exercises which, if carefully and professionally executed, would yield papers appropriate to this requirement are presented in the Illustrative Approaches section below.

Illustrative Approaches

The research that will serve as the basis of the required research paper and presentation may be developed from a student's Ph.D. course work, assistantship, or personal interests. The following examples of suitable research undertakings are meant to be illustrative but not limiting; research that represents a greater departure from the established literature is also encouraged.

- Begin with a previously-published empirical analysis and:
 - use the same data set to estimate, simulate, or optimize different functional relationships, to control for endogeneity, conduct novel simulations, or otherwise exercise the data to correct previous work or address new questions.
 - use a new data set to test previously-proposed econometric equations, simulations, or optimizations to see if the results are stable across countries, time periods, etc.
- Begin with a previously-published theoretical analysis of an applied problem and:
 - change the assumptions of the model, in a non-trivial and empirically relevant way, to see how the model's results change.
 - conduct a numerical analysis of the model (if none was previously conducted) to see if the effects identified in the model are likely to be large and/or important.

Procedures

1. **Timing of Research Paper:** The research paper requirement must be satisfied in the calendar year following a student's first sitting for the core examination. There is a single annual cycle for research paper submission, with topic proposals due by the last day of classes of Spring Semester and complete papers due August 16, papers requiring minor revision resubmitted by October 1, and papers requiring significant revision resubmitted by the last Friday before Fall Break, typically November 17-21. If any of these dates fall on weekends, the deadlines move to the next business day. The deadlines are firm, and can only be changed by petition.
2. **Topic Selection:** The student's topic should be described in a proposal or outline. This document should include references to some key literature and not exceed three pages of text. The proposal must be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies by the last day of classes in the spring of the student's second year. The proposal is reviewed by a faculty committee that will either approve the proposal and inform the Graduate Programs Assistant for inclusion in the student's file or request revisions required for approval. This approval serves to certify the topic as one of significance in the student's area(s) of specialization. The proposal and the comments from the committee on the proposal will be conveyed to the reviewers of the paper in August.
3. **Research Support:** If, in preparing to meet this requirement, a student needs to purchase data, software, or other basic research resources, they may apply to the Director of Graduate Programs for a grant to cover the costs. The proposal should be filed at least two months before the paper is due, indicate what is needed, why, and the cost, and be endorsed by the student's academic advisor. Grants will ordinarily not exceed \$250 per student. Any tangible purchases will become the property of the University.
4. **Certification of Independence:** After the topic is selected, the student is expected to conduct the research and write the research paper independently. On the cover of the paper, the student should include the following statement and certify its applicability by signing and dating the statement:

I certify that the contents of this paper are my own work except as specifically noted within the paper, that it was prepared specifically for the Ph.D. Research Paper requirement of the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, and that it is not based on work done prior to joining the ACE doctoral program.

Signature

Date

5. **Submission:** The paper should be turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Programs Assistant via email no later than the due date noted above.
6. **Evaluation:** Each research paper in a given year will be evaluated by a committee comprised of the Graduate Programs Committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and other faculty to be appointed as needed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

The review standard is slightly less stringent than the standard for contributed papers at the annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association. Review will consider both revealed knowledge of the literature and standards of the field and facility with the research methods applied in the analysis. The paper should address an interesting question using appropriate research methods and data, and be free of glaring mistakes. There must be an adequate use of the literature to motivate the problem, justify the research methods, warrant the evidence, and signal current knowledge of the field. Appropriate scientific research methods should be used to analyze the data, and discussion and conclusions should reveal a full understanding of the methods used. The paper should be organized and written as a standard research paper in applied economics.

The initial evaluation may result in a pass-with-distinction, pass, revise and resubmit (minor or major). Requests for minor or major revisions must be transmitted to students in the form of referee reports from the reviewers; the reviews must be clear about what changes are

necessary in order for the paper to pass the second-year requirement (as distinct from comments that are really suggestions for future work.)

When a student submits a revised version, it must be accompanied with a detailed response to the reviews they received (as one would do in the case of a journal article). Adequate time will be allowed to prepare a revised version, with the limit as noted above. A paper judged to require revisions will be evaluated a second time and awarded a pass or fail. A failing evaluation on the revised paper will cause the student to be dismissed from further doctoral study in the Department. The written evaluation of the paper will be included in the student's file.

Research Presentations

Each year the Department holds a student research celebration. All students who passed the research paper requirement within the preceding 12 months are required to make a presentation at the research celebration or at an equivalent public-seminar venue in the Department. Students whose research papers have not been evaluated and accepted may not present at the research celebration. The presentation will not be formally evaluated, although feedback designed to help students improve presentation skills is encouraged. (More advanced students and Master's Degree candidates may also be invited to make presentations.)

Oral Defense of Dissertation Proposal/Preliminary Examination

This oral examination assesses a student's preparation and plans for independent research and other related topics. The examination includes, but is not limited to, the formal proposal for dissertation research. Successful completion of this examination completes the preliminary examination requirements of the Graduate College.

A student is eligible to take the oral preliminary examination after satisfying all pre-dissertation course requirements, including the removal of all excused and deferred grades (other than thesis), passing the written core examination, and completing the research paper requirement. The date of the oral proposal defense/preliminary examination is fixed by the student's advisor after completion of these requirements.

The proposal defense/preliminary examination is administered by the student's examination committee. This committee consists of at least four voting members. There must be at least three members from the Department of ACE, one of whom serves as the student's research supervisor; and one faculty member from outside the Department in a discipline appropriate for the student's dissertation topic. At least three committee members, including the chair, must be members of the Graduate Faculty and at least two members must be tenured faculty. A person not on the faculty of the University of Illinois with expertise in the area of research may serve on this committee. A participant from outside the University may be nominated in a statement that justifies the involvement and identifies the resources that will be used to defray the associated expenses, if any. Non-voting members, such as an external reader, a member of the faculty who is off campus, or others who can make a significant contribution to the research, may be appointed. Requests for deviation from these membership requirements will be considered by the Director of Graduate Studies and Head and, if required, by the Graduate College. This committee also will supervise the student's dissertation research.

The student, committee chair, and at least one additional voting member of the committee must be physically present for all oral components of the examination (i.e., presence by video or teleconference is not acceptable). If the committee has more than one chair, all chairs must be physically present; in these cases, no additional voting member is required to be physically present.

All voting members of the committee must be present in person or participate via teleconference or other electronic communication media during the examination, deliberation and results determination of all oral components of the examination.

Prior to this examination the student completes a research proposal which typically includes 1) identification of the problem or issues, 2) review of the literature usually augmented in the dissertation itself, 3) the conceptual basis for the analysis, 4) description of the data on which the analysis will be based, and 5) description of the research method. Normally the proposal does not include analytical results because the analysis is to be undertaken after the examination and with committee agreement on

the appropriateness of the topic and the research plan. If the student intends to write a dissertation consisting of three research papers, the research proposal that they defend should include: one research paper that is substantially complete, including results and their interpretation; a second research paper that has a well identified research question, appropriate research methods, and research data; and a third research paper proposal with a well-defined research problem and conceptual concepts for forming and answering a significant research question. The three-essay model is becoming the norm in applied economics.

The research proposal should be distributed to the examination committee members at least one week prior to the proposed examination date.

At least one month prior to the proposed examination date, the advisor must request that the Head recommend the members of the examination committee to the Dean of the Graduate College. Besides the recommended membership, this request includes the nomination of a chairperson and a director of research (generally, but not necessarily, the chair of the committee) as well as the proposed date of the examination.

The proposal defense/preliminary examination is open to the public. The committee chair arranges for the time and place of the examination to be announced to ACE faculty and graduate students at least ten days prior to the exam. The student must register during the entire term in which they have their final dissertation examination. For this purpose only, "term" is defined as extending through the day prior to the first day of the following term.

Although the proposal defense/preliminary examination is public, the deliberations of the committee are held in an executive session. The committee determines whether the student shall advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree and whether the dissertation topic and research plan, as presented in the research proposal, are acceptable. The committee's decision must be unanimous and is reported as "pass," "decision deferred" or "fail." In cases of deferral, the committee specifies the activities required to earn a "pass," including the possibility of reconvening the examination based on a revised proposal. A reconvened examination is scheduled within every six months until a "pass" or "fail" outcome is achieved. In most cases failure is final. In some cases the committee may record a failure but grant the student one additional opportunity to take the examination after completing further course work, independent study, or research. The committee decision is communicated in writing to the Head by the committee chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for submitting the Preliminary Examination Result to the Department as soon as possible after the examination. All voting members must sign this form. Non-voting members (if appointed) do not sign the form. If a result is not communicated within six months of the exam date, the committee is dissolved.

After successfully completing the oral proposal defense/preliminary examination, the student must register each regular academic term until they have met the total credit requirement for the degree. Thereafter, if the student is away from campus, they may not need to register each semester except as noted in "Dissertation and Final Oral Examination" and as needed for visa or funding purposes.

Dissertation and Final Oral Examination

During the dissertation phase, the student will meet with the director of their dissertation research at least monthly (typically weekly) to discuss their research progress.

A student is expected to complete their dissertation within one year, but not more than two years, from the date of their oral proposal defense. One year after passing the proposal defense/preliminary examination, and subsequently at six-month intervals, they must demonstrate to the full committee that they are making reasonable progress on the dissertation research.

A PhD student must successfully defend their dissertation in a final oral examination. The final Ph.D. examination evaluates the quality of the dissertation research. A student must register during the entire term in which they have their final dissertation examination. For this purpose only, "term" is defined as extending through the day prior to the first day of the following term

Generally the same committee that administered the oral proposal defense examines the completed dissertation, but substitutions may be made. The same membership requirements as for the oral proposal defense committee apply to the final examination committee. At least one month prior to the examination, the chair of the committee requests that the Head recommend to the Dean of the Graduate College that the members of this committee be designated as the examining committee.

The student, committee chair, and at least one additional voting member of the committee must be physically present for all oral components of the examination (i.e., presence by video or teleconference is not acceptable.) If the committee has more than one chair, all chairs must be physically present; in these cases, no additional voting member is required to be physically present.

All voting members of the committee must be present in person or participate via teleconference or other electronic communication media during the examination, deliberation and results determination of all oral components of the examination. The chairperson is responsible for scheduling the examination and notifying committee members. The examination is open to the public, and the chair of the committee arranges for the time and place of the examination to be announced to the department faculty and graduate students at least 10 days in advance of the exam. The student must submit the dissertation to committee members at least one week prior to the examination unless all committee members agree to a shorter reading period.

Although the examination is open to the public, deliberations of the committee are held in an executive session. The committee will reach a decision of “pass with a satisfactory thesis,” “pass, pending revision of thesis,” or “fail.” The candidate fails the Final Exam if a Director of Research votes Fail or if two or more Committee members vote Fail. All voting members must sign the Final Exam Result form and must indicate the vote of Pass or Fail.

The chairperson is responsible for submitting the Final Examination Result with signature of all voting members to the Department. The decision is communicated by the Department to the Graduate College. If the committee cannot agree on a decision, the chairperson confers with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head.

If more than five years elapse between the oral preliminary and final Ph.D. examinations, the student must pass another preliminary examination.

After passing the final examination and having their dissertation approved, the student must provide an electronic copy (PDF format) for format review to the Department thesis reviewer at least two weeks before the dissertation is due to be deposited in the Graduate College. Graduate College guidelines for dissertation preparation and deposit are described at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation>. The student must also provide to the Department a final electronic copy of the dissertation as accepted by the Graduate College.

Ph.D. degrees are awarded in May, August, and December. Students must apply to be on the degree list and deposit the dissertation by deadlines established by the Graduate College. These deadlines are available from the *Graduate College Academic Calendar* (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/general/calendar/current>) and the Department Office. If more than one year elapses between the final Ph.D. examination and depositing the dissertation with the Graduate College, the dissertation must be accompanied by a signed petition and a statement from the Head to the Dean of the Graduate College. The statement must address whether the dissertation being deposited is essentially the one that the student defended and whether an award of the degree is appropriate under the circumstances.

Minor in ACE

A doctoral student enrolled in another department of the University may obtain a minor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics (ACE) by completing eight hours of graduate credit in ACE courses, at least four of which must be at the 500-level, and by passing a written preliminary examination in one of the areas of specialization. A candidate for a minor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics must apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for the appointment of a faculty member to supervise the work and a committee to administer the preliminary examination. This minor will not appear on the student transcript.

Assessing Progress

Reporting Progress towards Degree

Each year each Ph.D. student must submit an annual review of progress following a template provided by the department. This annual report is reviewed by the student’s advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Based on this report the advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies will communicate with the student about their progress in the program.

Milestones to Completion of Degree

The following guidelines and limits reflect the expeditious completion of the degree requirements. If a student must extend one or more of the limits, a request shall be made to the Head. The request, endorsed by the student's advisor, should indicate the reasons for the delay and include a plan and a specific date for completion.

Ph.D. Milestones	Normal Progress	Limit¹
Completion of core courses	End 2 nd semester	End 3 rd semester
Selection of field courses	End 2 nd semester	
Written core examination	End 1 st year	End 2 nd year
Completion of research paper	5 th semester	End 3 rd year
Oral defense of dissertation proposal/preliminary examination	5 th - 6 th semester	See footnote ²
Final examination	8 th - 10 th semester	5/6/7 years ³

¹Limits based on fall entry and no remedial requirements.

²The Graduate College requires that a student must pass a second preliminary examination if more than 5 years elapse between a preliminary examination and a final examination.

³Graduate College limits for completion of degree are as follows:

- Seven years from initial registration in the Graduate College for a doctoral student accepted without a master's degree that is equivalent to that awarded at the University of Illinois.
- Six years from initial registration in the doctoral program for a student
 - (a) who completed a master's degree from another university or
 - (b) for whom more than three years elapse between completion of a master's degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and initial registration in a doctoral program.
- Five years from initial registration in the doctoral program for a student who completed a master's degree at the University of Illinois within the last three years.

The Graduate College requires that Ph.D. dissertations be deposited less than one year after the final examination.

Sample Program

The following course plan will satisfy the requirements and lead to expedient completion of the Ph.D.:

Option A

Year 1		
Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session
ACE 592ME (4 hours) ACE 501 (4 hours) ECON 532 (4 hours)	ACE 502 (4 hours) ACE 503 (4 hours) ECON 535 (4 hours)	Written Core Exam (July)
End of first year – identify field courses		
Year 2		
Identify research paper topic		
Semester 3	Semester 4	Summer Session
Field Course*, 500-level (4 hours) Field Course*, 500-level (4 hours) Quantitative Methods Course, 500-level	Field Course*, 500-level (4 hours) Field Course*, 500-level (4 hours) ACE 561	Prepare Research Paper
Year 3		
Semester 5	Semester 6	
ACE 599 (12 hours) Present in Research Celebration	ACE 599 (12 hours) Oral Proposal Defense/Prelim Exam	
Year 4		
Semester 7	Semester 8	
ACE 599 (12 hours) Final Exam	ACE 599 (12 hours) Dissertation Deposit	

Ph.D. Requirements Summary

Credit: Students entering the Ph.D. program with a M.Sc. degree need 64 credit hours to graduate; a maximum of 32 thesis hours may count toward that total. Students entering the Ph.D. program without a M.Sc. degree need 96 hours to graduate. A maximum of 48 thesis hours may count towards that total.

Core Courses: 24 hours. The core courses (see “Ph.D. Required and Recommended Courses”) begin in the first fall semester of enrollment unless a delay is recommended by the student’s initial program planning committee or on approval of a petition filed during the first eight weeks of the semester in which a student is enrolled in a core course. Students are encouraged to complete the core in two consecutive semesters. Core courses must be taken for letter grade.

Field Courses: (a) 16 approved hours at the 500 level to define two fields of expertise, at least 8 of which are in ACE.

Quantitative Methods Courses: 4 approved hours (minimum) of quantitative methods beyond the courses specified in the core.

Research Methods Course: 4 hours of ACE 561 or approved alternative taken in 4th semester.

500-Level Courses: 16 hours of 500-level course work, excluding the core courses, independent study, and thesis credit.

Independent Study: Eight hours of independent study, four hours from any one member of the faculty, may be taken for grade. Subsequent additional independent study credit may be taken on a credit/no credit basis. However, independent study shall not be used to satisfy specific degree requirements except in unusual circumstances and with approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Grade Point Average (GPA): A minimum overall graduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. “Retake” grades are not considered. Eight hours of independent study, four hours from any one member of the faculty, may be taken for grade. Subsequent additional independent study credit may be taken on a credit/no credit basis.

Written Core Examination: Passing grade on a written core examination that is based primarily on material covered in ACE 592ME, 501, 502, and 503 but may also require integration of theory and analytical tools to analyze problems or concepts.

Research Paper: A written paper in the form of a journal article and presented at a department conference. The research paper must be approved by the research paper committee.

Oral Defense of Dissertation Proposal/Preliminary Examination: Pass an oral preliminary examination and defend plans for independent research. Students must complete all non-thesis course and examination requirements and remove all excused and deferred (other than thesis) grades before the oral examination.

Dissertation and Final Oral Examination: Pass an oral examination that evaluates the dissertation research. Students must be registered for Thesis Research (599) in the semester of the examination. Deposit dissertation by the established deadlines.

Time Limit: Seven years from first registration in the Graduate College for a student who has not completed a master’s degree equivalent to that awarded at the University of Illinois; six years from initial registration in the doctoral program if an M.S. was completed at another institution or if more than three years lapse between completion of the M.S. here and continuation for the Ph.D.; five years from initial registration in the doctoral program if less than three years elapse between completion of a master’s degree here and initial registration for the Ph.D.

*Graduate credit is given for courses at the 400-level (unless the Catalog or Course Schedule specifies undergraduate credit only) and 500-level only. 100- 200- and 300-level courses do not earn credit toward a graduate degree in ACE.

The Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics offers graduate fellowships and assistantships on a competitive basis. This support is intended to attract and retain outstanding candidates for the Ph.D. and M.S. degrees by enriching their academic experiences.

Criteria and Procedures

Demonstration of exceptional ability in studies and/or research activities is an important criterion in selecting students for available fellowships and assistantships. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic performance; disciplinary interest, experience, and goals; skills; recommendations; results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and, if applicable, English proficiency test scores; writing ability; and match with donor intent (if applicable)..

Students are encouraged to contact faculty members in the Department to learn of research opportunities.

To receive financial assistance, students must be enrolled in the Graduate College at the time of the appointment except as noted under “Assistantships.”

Length of Appointment

Length of appointments for assistantships and fellowships vary with the type of appointment and continued availability of funds. Reappointment also will depend upon the student’s quality of work and progress toward completion of the degree.

Assistantships

Research and teaching assistantships provide opportunities for graduate students to assist faculty with research projects and educational programs. In most cases, and especially in the case of continuing students, the availability of financial aid depends on contract or grant funds from outside the Department. Time commitments are based on a 40-hour week. Thus, a one-half time appointment requires 20 hours per week, on average, in research or teaching activities assigned by a faculty supervisor. The percent time of appointment varies depending on the availability of funds, the nature of responsibilities, and the student’s qualifications. The assistantship stipend rates are set annually before the fall semester.

An assistantship appointment of one-quarter to two-thirds time for 91 or more days during a semester or 41 or more days during the summer term (defined as the period starting on the first day of classes and ending on the last day of final examinations) exempts the student from tuition and some student fees for that semester, as well as providing a stipend.

To receive and hold an assistantship, a student must be registered for the semesters of appointment. Although there is no minimum credit requirement to hold an assistantship, students not registered for at least a half-time load (six credit hours in a semester; three credit hours in the summer) in a particular term will be subject to Social Security and Medicare deductions for that term. With assistantships in the period between May 16 and August 15, students are not required to register if they were registered for the immediately preceding spring semester or are registered for the following fall semester. An exception to this is students whose first term of admission and appointment is summer must register for summer session.

Students with assistantship appointments are eligible to hold their assistantships through the end of the semester in which they deposit their thesis or dissertation.

The Graduate College’s Assistantship Policies are at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter8/assistantships>

Research Assistantships

Most research assistantships are funded by grants and contracts involving the analysis of contemporary issues. Research assistant duties generally include literature reviews, data collection and analysis, and preparation of reports.

Teaching Assistantships

To be eligible for a teaching assistantship (TA), non-native English speaking graduate students must provide evidence of spoken English language proficiency by submitting a TOEFL (iBT) speaking subsection score of at least 24, an IELTS (academic test) speaking sub-section score of at least 8, or a Test of Spoken English (TSE) or English Proficiency Interview (EPI) (administered by the University of Illinois) score of at least 5.

The Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning provides training opportunities for teaching assistants. Prior to the initial term of appointment as a TA, all teaching assistants who will teach in a classroom or office setting must attend training. Teaching assistants with classroom responsibilities must attend the Graduate Academy for College Teaching. Teaching assistants with non-classroom responsibilities (grading and/or holding office hours) may attend either the Graduate Academy for College Teaching or the Graduate Symposium on Grading and Office Hours.

Faculty Supervisor (TA/RA)

The assistantship supervisor may or may not be the student's academic advisor. Generally, the professor to whom a teaching or research assistant reports determines the responsibilities of the student and, together with the student's advisor, is the main source of information and feedback about the student's progress to the student and Department. Students may also consult with their advisors about sources of financial aid, Department funding policies, assistantship opportunities, and other matters. All students are encouraged to discuss with either the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Undergraduate Programs questions concerning teaching methods and matters such as cheating or plagiarism in classes for which the student is a TA.

Fellowships

The Department offers fellowships funded by internal resources, including generous gifts to the Department, or by successfully nominating students for competitive College and Campus Fellowships. These fellowships provide monetary stipends and, in most cases, exemption from tuition and some student fees. Fellowship holders are expected to be involved with research and teaching in the Department.

Fellows are required to register during each semester of the appointment. Fellowship holders may, with approval, accept additional hourly or teaching/research assistantship appointments of up to 50 percent time. Concurrent appointments do not reduce the registration requirement. Fellows may not hold two major fellowships or comparable awards concurrently.

Thesis deposit, withdrawal, or cancellation may affect the terms of the fellowship award, including termination. For more information consult the Graduate College Fellowship Office (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowships>).

Other Financial Support

Students without summer waiver-generating appointments who held waiver-generating appointments for the previous spring semester are eligible to receive summer automatic tuition waivers if they choose to enroll in the summer semester. For summer automatic waivers, only tuition and those fees as stated in Section 3-503 of the *Student Code* are waived.

Some students arrange for graduate appointments in other units on campus, such as one of the international area studies centers, the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, or a research institute. The Graduate College maintains the Assistantship Clearinghouse (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/clearinghouse>) which lists hourly positions and assistantships available to graduate students at the University.

Students are encouraged to apply, in collaboration with faculty members, for external fellowships, grants, and contracts that will provide financial assistance.

Occasionally part-time hourly work is available in the Department, but it does not qualify the student for a waiver of tuition and student fees.

Student loan information is available through the Office of Student Financial Aid.

Emergency grants may be requested from the Graduate College.

Travel Support

Support for travel is sometimes provided by the Department for groups of students attending major national meetings such as the AAEA annual meeting. Students may apply for department and campus support for travel to other meetings. Students working on research projects may receive travel support from project funds.

Campus Policies

The Campus Administrative Manual (CAM) is one of several policy manuals for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The CAM includes policies, procedures, information, forms and guidelines. The online version is available at <http://www.cam.illinois.edu/>.

The Department follows the policies found in the Graduate College Handbook of Policy and Requirements for Students, Faculty and Staff. Students should become familiar with this document at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook>. The following sections are especially useful:

Chapter III, Student Status and Registration (including course loads)

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter2>

Chapter IV: Academic Record (including Grading System, Academic Standing, Transfer of Credit)

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter3>

A petition may be filed to request a deviation from these policies and procedures. Instructions and forms for requesting a deviation from Graduate College policies are available at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gsas/gradpetition>. A Graduate Student Request form (available in the Department Office) should be used to request an exception to departmental policy or requirements. Deviations from policies or procedures stated herein or from other applicable regulations must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head and, when necessary, by the Dean of the Graduate College. It is strongly suggested that a student file the petition before the deviation occurs.

Departmental Policies

Advising

Faculty can help students select courses, develop a research project, and understand Department and University requirements. They can also offer career planning advice. The Department appoints an Initial Program Planning Committee (IPPC) to help students select courses for the first semester. An IPPC typically includes a graduate student as well as two faculty members. The IPPC serves *only* for the first semester.

Upon arrival, students are assigned a faculty member as Academic Advisor as described in this booklet under “M.S. Program” and “Ph.D. Program.” In addition to these advising assignments students are encouraged to consult with and seek advice from other members of the faculty.

Although advisors, the Department, and the University can assist students in many instances, *each student is ultimately responsible for decisions affecting their own academic progress*. They should expect to rely largely on their own effort for success. Admission into the graduate program does not convey an obligation on the part of advisors, the Department, or the University to ensure that a student successfully completes the requirements for a graduate degree.

Quantitative Advising Examination

At initial enrollment, each student is invited to complete an examination designed to ascertain knowledge of quantitative techniques. Results of this examination are not a part of the student’s record. Performance on the exam informs advice about course selection. For example, a student may delay enrolling in theory courses until completing one or more quantitative or math courses.

Performance Expectations

Most students will perform beyond the minimum requirements. Students pursuing highly sought-after positions must go well beyond these minimum requirements in order to be competitive in the job market.

An ideal candidate for a position in academia must, in the M.S. or Ph.D. program, demonstrate intellectual curiosity and creativity, the ability to plan and conduct research, and the ability to effectively teach and/or deliver outreach programs. An ideal candidate for a position in the private or public sector must demonstrate intellectual curiosity and creativity, ability to formulate a research plan, to draw inferences, and to make strategic decisions from these inferences. There are no specific indicators of these abilities, but a number of accomplishments are suggestive of these abilities and help a student judge their progress:

- Academic performance well above the minimum grade point average.
- Completion of additional courses that help acquire additional research tools, competency in an additional area of expertise, or a greater depth of understanding in an area.
- Active participation in seminars and workshops as discussant and presenter.
- Teaching experience and training in programs such as the campus Graduate Teacher Certificate program.
- Expeditious completion of the requirements for the degree.
- Preparation, alone or in conjunction with a member of the faculty, of a proposal for research support.
- Submission and publication of papers in refereed journals and books.
- Presentation of research results in workshops; seminars; and regional, national, or international meetings.
- Work experience or internships in appropriate organizations.

Reporting Progress towards Degree

Graduate students in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics are required to report their progress toward degree as described earlier in this publication in “M.S. Program” and “Ph.D. Program.”

Dismissal and Reinstatement

If a student is dismissed from the graduate program for failing to satisfy departmental degree requirements, they may petition the Head for conditional reinstatement. Such a petition must include reasons for reinstatement and the recommendation of their academic advisor. In considering a petition for conditional reinstatement, the Department’s consideration may include, but is not limited to, performance in core and non-core courses; performance in teaching or research; recommendations of faculty, including the student’s advisor; deficiencies existing when beginning the program; and work or personal difficulties that may have interfered with progress toward satisfying requirements. If reinstatement is granted, it is conditional on meeting specific course, grade point average, and timing requirements specified by the Head, who will notify the student in writing of the outcome and/or conditions to be met.

Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, specific degree requirements may be waived or altered. A student may request a waiver of a departmental requirement by submitting a Graduate Student Request form to the Director of Graduate Studies stating: 1) the modification that is desired; 2) reasons for the modification; and 3) their advisor’s recommendation. Forms are available from the Department Office.

Solving Problems

If a student encounters problems, their advisor is usually their first contact. If the advisor is not able to resolve the issue, the student may consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, the Head of the Department, another faculty member, an officer of the departmental Graduate Student Organization, a representative of the Graduate College, the Dean of Students for the campus, or the Office of International Student and Scholar Services.

Grievance and Harassment

If a student believes that they have received unfair treatment in any matter involving the Department they may file a grievance with the Department Grievance Committee. Grievance procedures are outlined in the Department *Bylaws*. The Graduate College grievance policy is available at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter9/academic-conflict>

If a student believes that they may have been the victim of harassment of any form by any member of the University community, they should notify their advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Head of the Department, or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Academic Integrity Guidelines

A number of campus policies outline ethical and professional standards. See Article 1, Part 4 “Academic Integrity and Procedure” of the University of Illinois’s Student Code http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html. More information and policy is found in *The Graduate College Handbook* at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter9/academic-integrity>.

Many academic integrity issues involve the process of conducting and reporting research. Collaboration with faculty and other students is strongly encouraged in some situations but inappropriate in others. Faculty and students commonly work together on research leading to journal articles and other manuscripts. All who made a significant contribution to the research should be included in the list of authors. Individuals are generally listed in order of the contribution to the manuscript. If relative contribution is not clear, the authors may decide to list names alphabetically or on some other criteria. Ideally the authorship should be discussed and determined early in the project. All ACE graduate students must take online Responsible Conduct of Research training upon their arrival.

For course assignments the instructor should indicate whether problems and papers are to be completed alone or in work groups. When preparing papers it is crucial to state all sources of information and explicitly reference all quoted material. Failure to do so can result in severe academic penalties including dismissal from the University.

Student Governance

All graduate students in the Department are members of the Department’s Graduate Student Organization (GSO). The GSO contributes to departmental governance activities; represents students on some policy matters; administers graduate student office space; posts notices of interest to graduate students; recognizes significant teaching, research, and service activities by the faculty and staff; and organizes a variety of professional and social activities. Participation is encouraged. Officers are elected each year.