

Guide/Schedule/Manual for GSU Economics PhD students

This document provides a guideline for GSU economics PhD students during their five years of study, so that they know what to expect in each year, what is expected of them, and what is required to graduate successfully in five years and find a job. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, you are expected to graduate within 5 years of starting the program.

Year 1

In the first year, you are mainly focused on your coursework (core micro, macro, econometrics) and preparing for your comprehensive exams. By the end of the year, you will need to choose which field courses you are taking in year 2. You should begin to think about your research interests and the research interests of the faculty members that you might want to work with. You can attend department seminars occasionally (don't worry if you don't understand what's going on all of the time).

In the summer after Year 1, you should complete your core comprehensive exams.

Year 1 coursework:

Micro 1 (9010), Micro 2 (9030)
Macro 1 (9020), Macro 2 (9040)
Econometrics 1 (9710), Econometrics 2 (9720)
Math Econ (8030), [one applied economics course maybe]

Year 2

In the second year, you are focused mainly on your field courses, preparing to take your field comprehensive exam, and thinking more carefully about your dissertation field and topic. You should be meeting with faculty (e.g. the faculty who are teaching the field courses) about possible dissertation topics, and doing some preliminary research or literature reviews to familiarize yourself with these topics. You should occasionally be attending department research seminars that are of interest to you.

In the summer after Year 2, you should complete your field comprehensive exam. NOTE: Some field courses are not offered every year, which means that you may not finish your field courses until the middle or end of your third year and cannot take the field comprehensive exam until then. However, this should not affect the rest of your progress through the program, and you continue with the following plan for the third year (i.e. prepare your committee and proposal while you are finishing your field courses; do not wait).

Year 2 coursework:

Econometrics 3 (9730)
First field course 1, First field course 2, First field course 3
Second field course 1, Second field course 2
Applied Economics Courses

Year 3

In the third year, you should be starting work on your dissertation and complete most of the preparation and planning of your dissertation required for the dissertation proposal. In the summer before and fall semester, you should be meeting with faculty and eventually decide on a faculty member to serve as your dissertation committee chair (should be chosen three months after passing your field comp) and the rest of your dissertation committee (should be chosen six months after passing your field comp). You should be frequently attending the departmental research seminars – even if they are on a topic unrelated to your dissertation, you should attend to get a feel for how research seminars are conducted in economics. Starting this year, you are required to attend the dissertation seminar (Econ 9510) once per week, and you will be required to present your preliminary dissertation research at the end of the spring semester. You may want to apply to present your work at academic conferences, like the Southern Economics Association annual meeting, or the ASSA annual meeting, or a conference unique to your discipline (e.g. the National Tax Association annual meeting, or Camp Resources for environmental economics), especially if there is a session specifically for graduate students.

By the end of this year, you should have selected your dissertation committee chair and the rest of your dissertation committee and scheduled your dissertation proposal defense (due within 15 months of passing the field comprehensive exam).

Year 3 coursework:

- Econ 9510 (Dissertation seminar)
- Applied Economics Courses
- Field Courses (if necessary)

Year 4

This is the year where you will complete the bulk of the work for your dissertation, especially your job market paper. Over the summer or in the fall semester you should hold your dissertation proposal defense. Your dissertation proposal consists of a summary of all of the work that you will do for the three chapters of your dissertation. So, you should basically know what you will be doing in the three chapters of the dissertation, though you haven't actually done it yet. Once the proposal is successfully defended, you are expected to actually conduct the research. You are still required to attend the dissertation seminar (Econ 9510) and will present your work in progress midway through the year. You should be attending all of the departmental research seminars, especially any job market seminars that we have in January or February, to get a feel for what those are like. You should apply to present your work at an academic conference before going on the job market; a good choice is the Southern Economics Association annual meeting in November of your fifth year (the application deadline will be in the spring of your fourth year).

Starting in the spring semester of this year, you should be working on nothing besides perfecting your job market paper, since the job market paper is so important in the economics job market. By the end of this year, you should have a complete first draft of your job market paper to be prepared to go on the job market in your fifth year.

Year 4 coursework:

- Econ 9510 (Dissertation seminar)

Year 5

In this year you will go on the job market. Because this process is so time-intensive, it is important that the first draft of your job market paper is ready during the summer before the fifth year. The job application deadlines are typically early to mid-November, so you want to be sure that your first draft is complete several months ahead of that deadline so that you can spend what time you have in the fall semester revising your job market paper. You should be attending all departmental research seminars. You are still required to attend the dissertation seminar 9510 and will present in the first few weeks of the fall semester. In addition, you are required to attend the job market dissertation seminar (Econ 9515), starting in the summer before year 5.

The summer before and fall of this year will be devoted to preparation for the job market. You will participate in a mock interview a final practice job market talk. Once your job applications are submitted, you will spend the rest of the year finishing up your second and third chapters of your dissertation so that you can graduate in the spring or summer semester. Of course, you will defend your final dissertation in the spring or in the summer before graduating.

Year 5 coursework:

Econ 9510 (Dissertation seminar)

Econ 9515 (Job Market preparation seminar)

Other Information

Most of you will also have a graduate assistant (GA) assignment each year of the program, where you are assigned to a faculty member for up to 16 hours per week of work.

Many of you will eventually want to teach a course on your own; to do so you must first take the economics department's teaching course and pass the teaching qualification test.

Graduate school will be challenging, and it is important to take care of yourself. Maintain a healthy work-life balance. Keep regular hours for school/dissertation work, take weekends, etc. The [GSU Counseling center](#) offers some great free resources including [individual counseling sessions](#) that all of you should take advantage of.

Graduate school will be fun! Enjoy yourself and get ready to learn a lot!