



GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Academic Year 2020-2021

(Updated August 2020)

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FACULTY

PROFESSORS

Laurence Ball: Macroeconomics

Christopher Carroll: Macroeconomics, Public Finance

Gregory Duffee (Carl Christ Professor): Finance

Mark Gersovitz: Economic Development, Public Finance

Bruce Hamilton (Professor Emeritus): Urban Economics, Public Finance, Labor Economics

Yingyao Hu (Chair): Econometrics, Empirical Industrial Organization, Labor Economics

Olivier Jeanne: International Macroeconomics, Monetary Policy

Matthew Kahn (Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Economics and Business): Urban, environmental economics

Edi Karni (Scott and Barbara Black Professor): Economics of Uncertainty and Information, Decision Theory, Microeconomic Theory

M. Ali Khan (Abram Hutzler Professor): Mathematical Economics, Trade, Development

Robert Moffitt (Krieger-Eisenhower Professor): Labor Economics, Public Economics, Econometrics, Population Economics

John Quah: Microeconomic Theory

Jonathan Wright: Time Series Econometrics, Empirical Macroeconomics, Finance

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Filipe Campante (Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor): Political Economy

Ying Chen: Game Theory, Information Economics, Political Economy

Brendan Daley: Theory of Financial Markets

Elena Krasnokutskaya: Industrial Organization, Applied Microeconomics, Applied Econometrics

Nicholas Papageorge (Broadus Mitchell Associate Professor): Health Economics, Labor Economics, Economics of Innovation

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Marcelo Fernandez: Market and Mechanism Design

Yujung Hwang: Labor Economics, Political Economy, Development Economics, Urban Economics

Lixiong Li: Econometrics, Empirical Industrial Organization

FELLOWS

Robert J. Barbera: Director, Center for Financial Economics

Barclay Knapp: Managerial Economics & Business Strategy

RESEARCH PROFESSORS

Richard Spady (Professor): Econometrics, Industrial Organization

LECTURERS

Somasree Dasgupta (Senior Lecturer): International Trade, Economic Growth, Macroeconomics

Muhammad Husain (Senior Lecturer): Labor Economics, Urban Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Barbara Morgan (Senior Lecturer): Labor Economics, Public Policy

Ludmila Poliakova (Lecturer): Macroeconomics, Development Economics

JOINT APPOINTMENTS (Principal appointments is with another school or division)

David Bishai (Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health): Health Economics

Andrew Ching (Professor, Carey Business School): Industrial organization

Michal Darden (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): Health economics, information economics

Itay Fainmesser (Assistant Professor, Carey Business School): Business Economics

Steve H. Hanke (Professor, DOGEE): Applied Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Finance

Pravin Krishna (Professor, SAIS): International Trade, Political Economy

Jian Ni (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): Industrial Organization

Mitsukuni Nishida (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): Industrial Organization, Applied Econometrics

Alessandro Rebucci (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): International Finance and Macroeconomics

Emilia Simeonova (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): Health Economics

Shubhranshu Singh (Associate Professor, Carey Business School): Marketing

Carlos Vegh (Professor, SAIS): International Macroeconomics

FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Department Chair: Y. Hu

Placement Officer: C. Carroll

Director, Center for Financial Economics: R. Barbera

Graduate Admissions Committee: J. Wright (Chair), Y. Chen, N. Papageorge, B. Daley, E. Krasnokutskaya, L. Ball

Computing Coordinator: R. Moffitt

Assistant Computing Coordinator: Y. Hwang

Department Web Page: Y. Chen (fall), M. Fernandez (spring)

Happy Hour Coordinator: Y. Hwang, L. Li

Department Coordinator: R. Moffitt

Advising

Undergraduate

Director of Undergraduate Studies: B. Hamilton

Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies: S. Dasgupta

Advisors: M. Gersovitz, B. Hamilton, B. Morgan, R. Barbera, M. Husain, S. Dasgupta, M. Kahn (career advising), N. Papageorge (career advising)

Graduate

Director of Graduate Studies: G. Duffee

Research Seminars

	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Macro	L. Ball	G. Duffee
Theory	Y. Chen	J. Quah
Applied Micro	R. Moffitt	L. Li
Second-Year Research Seminar	B. Daley	E. Karni

IMPORTANT DATES

Dissertation Pre-Proposal Due Date: December 1, 2020

American Economic Association Annual Meeting/North American Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society (virtual): January 3—5, 2021

Second-year Comprehensive Exams:
Macro: January 19, 2021; Micro: January 25, 2021

Dissertation Proposal Due Date: May 1, 2021

Second-Year Research Paper Due Date: July 1, 2021

First Year Student Comprehensive Exams:
Macro: July 6, 2021; Micro: July 12, 2021

First Year Comprehensive Exam Makeup:
Macro: August 23, 2021; Micro: August 30, 2021

I. CURRICULUM AND PHD REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Our department is by far the smallest of the leading graduate departments of economics in the country. To have a first-rate graduate program, we restrict the range of fields that we cover. We have strong core groups in economic theory, applied microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, and finance.

At the graduate level we offer only a PhD program, not a terminal Masters program. Students admitted to the PhD program can receive an MA degree by fulfilling part of the requirements of the PhD program.

This handbook is concerned only with the PhD program. The word “student” refers always to a graduate student in the PhD program. In the interest of brevity, but not prejudice, the words “he” and “his” should always be taken to mean “he or she” and “his or her” respectively. Other common abbreviations in this document are DGS, denoting the department’s Director of Graduate Studies, and Chair, denoting the department’s Chair.

B. Overall Requirements

Successful completion of the PhD program requires

1. Satisfying a course requirement.
2. Passing a comprehensive examination of performance in the first two years of the program.
3. Demonstrating teaching ability by successfully acting as a Teaching Assistant for six semesters.
4. Completing a dissertation that the faculty determines is acceptable.

The remainder of this handbook section discusses these requirements.

C. Course Requirements

Students must pass fifteen one-semester courses, where “pass” is defined as a grade of at least a B-. Students take three additional courses on a pass/fail basis. These courses do not count towards the 15-course requirement. The additional courses are Core Mathematics for Economics (180.609), taken in the fall semester of the first year, and Research Seminar courses (180.697) taken in both the fall and spring of the second year.

Courses eligible for the 15-course requirement include all 600-level courses offered in the department for a letter grade. Courses offered pass/fail include seminar workshops and a few courses generically described as “reading courses.” As of this writing, our reading courses are 180.690, Advanced Econometrics, and 180.673, Advanced Labor Economics. These can be valuable courses for students who have already completed their 15-course requirement.

With approval from the DGS, courses offered by other departments can be eligible for the 15-course requirement. No more than two courses outside the department count towards the 15-course requirement. The course content should be equivalent to a 600-level department course. With the permission of the DGS and the willingness of the course instructor, the instructor may augment the course with additional content in order to meet this standard. Our department is on a semester system, but not all courses offered at the university are semester-length courses. With the permission of the DGS, two or three quarter-length courses in other departments qualify as one or two semester-length economics courses, respectively.

In general, a student cannot take a course twice for credit—for example, a student cannot receive two course credits for passing 180.605, Advanced Macro, in two different years. With the permission of the DGS, this restriction can be relaxed if the course content differs substantially in the two different years. This typically occurs only when the course has different instructors.

Students qualify for an MA degree upon completion of these course requirements and after demonstrating teaching ability through successful performance as a Teaching Assistant for one semester.

D. The Program's First Year

Students focus on course work during the first year. The first-year classes develop general methodologies in microeconomics, macroeconomics, statistics, and econometrics. In the fall semester of their first year, students normally take General Equilibrium Theory 180.600, Consumer and Producer Theory 180.601, Macroeconomic Theory 180.603, Core Mathematics 180.609 (pass/fail), and Statistical Inference 180.636. In the spring semester of their first year, students normally take Macroeconomic Theory 180.604, Game Theory 180.622, Economics of Information 180.623, and Econometrics 180.633.

In the summer after the first year, students take comprehensive examinations on microeconomics and macroeconomics. A student must receive a passing grade (B- or better) in at least seven of their eight letter-grade courses in order to take the comprehensive examinations. The department does not permit students who pass six or fewer letter-grade courses to either take the comprehensive examinations or register for a second year in the program. No Master's degree is awarded. Such a student can appeal to the DGS if the student thinks there are extenuating circumstances. The DGS, in consultation with course instructors and the Chair, will rule on the appeal.

E. Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive examinations consist of two four-hour written examinations, one in microeconomics and one in macroeconomics. Three faculty members create and grade the micro comp exam and another three create and grade the macro comp exam.

Students studying for the comprehensive exams can meet with the instructors of their first-year courses to go over material in preparation for the exam. Various prior comprehensive exams are also available for students to study.

Students have two opportunities to pass the comprehensive examinations: in early July after the end of the first year and in late August before the beginning of the program's second year. The specific dates vary from year to year. The Calendar of Important Dates at the beginning of this handbook contains the upcoming dates.

F. The Program's Second Year

The description in this part (F) applies to students entering our program in the fall of 2020. Our program's first two years were recently revamped. Students who entered in the fall of 2019 use the second-year description that follows this part (F).

Students who pass the comprehensive exams spend their second year on taking courses, working on mentored research, and writing a second-year paper. This second-year program helps develop student's research skills so they are in a position to transition to their own dissertation research. Students will not be Teaching Assistants in their second year. Faculty will formally evaluate students at the end of their second year, and will dismiss from the program those students that the faculty determine are too weak to continue.

F.1. Coursework

Second-year coursework focuses on fields within economics, such as macroeconomics, microeconomic theory, econometrics, finance, and applied microeconomics. Students will be encouraged to take five or six field courses during their second year. In addition, students are required to take the 13-hour pass/fail course "Research Seminar" in each semester. The fall course consists of different professors discussing how to identify promising research topics. During the spring course, students present their own research from their second-year paper.

F.2. Mentored Research

At the end of the first year, each student provides to the DGS a list of professors they would prefer to work with in their second year, and an explanation. Faculty tell the DGS the maximum number of second-year students with whom they are willing to work. The DGS assigns a student to a single professor, who is the student's research mentor.

The nature of the mentored research is chosen by the professor based on the professor's current research and both the interests and talent of the student. The professor may propose one or two specific research projects for the student to pursue, either in conjunction with the professor ("joint research"), or without ("directed research"). In addition, the student may assist the professor's own research ("RA" work) if the professor thinks that this will help the student. An important component of this mentoring relationship is frequent meetings between the student and the professor.

The professor who mentors the student in the fall semester will likely, but not necessarily, mentor the student in the spring semester. A student may want to explore research in two different fields prior to choosing their specific field of study. A student might decide during the fall that research in a different field or with a different professor suits the student better. Alternatively, the professor might conclude the student should work with someone else. Requests for changes go through the DGS.

F.3. The Second-Year Paper

Each student must write a solo-authored research paper during the second year. The paper will have a main supervisor and a second reader. The idea for the second-year paper can come from the student, a research mentor or other professor.

The second-year paper is distinct from, but likely related to, the research mentorship. The student can choose a topic suitable for supervision by the student's research mentor. If the student chooses a topic outside of the mentor's expertise, the mentor will assist the student in identifying a suitable supervisor. In turn, the supervisor will assist the student in identifying a suitable second reader. Although the supervisor provides primary guidance, the student and second reader should meet at least monthly during the spring semester.

The deadline for identifying a general topic and a supervisor (via email to the DGS) is December 15. The deadline for reporting the identity of the second reader (via email to the DGS) is January 15. The papers must be completed and submitted to the DGS, the supervisor, and the second reader by April 1. Students will present work from their papers in the spring Research Seminar.

F.4. Evaluation

All second-year students are evaluated for their research potential. Those who the faculty determine are unlikely to produce an acceptable dissertation are dismissed at the end of the second year. The evaluation process for those who fail the comprehensive exams differs from those who pass the exams.

Students who do not pass the comprehensive exams as of the beginning of their second year in the program are placed on academic probation for the fall semester. Section II.B. of this handbook describes criteria for passing. Briefly, there are minimum acceptable scores for both exams, and a minimum acceptable mean score across the two exams. During the fall these students follow the same curriculum as students who passed the comps: second-year courses and a research mentorship.

After the completion of the fall semester, the faculty votes whether to retain or dismiss each student who failed the comps. They are guided by information from second-year instructors, and research mentors. The majority of those voting must agree to allow the student to remain in the program.

The department's guiding principle is that faculty judgment of a student's research potential can, in rare cases, outweigh poor performance on the comprehensive exams. The expected consequence of failing the comprehensive exams is dismissal from the program. A minimum requirement for remaining in the program is that the student's research potential exceeds the potential of the median student (across many years) who passes the comprehensive exams. In addition, a member of the faculty must agree to serve as the student's dissertation advisor of last resort. This tenure/tenure-track member of the faculty will serve as the advisor in the event that no other faculty member is willing to advise the student during the dissertation stage of the program.

Students are notified of the outcome of the meeting as soon as possible. Any student that receives a majority vote to remain in the program is removed from probation, and participates fully in the usual Spring semester activities for second-year students. This includes the evaluation of the second-year paper and the possibility of dismissal at the end of the second year.

Students that do not receive a majority vote to remain in the program are dismissed effective the end of the spring semester. These students will not participate in a research mentorship in the spring, nor will they write a second-year paper. Their focus will be on course work and teaching, since students who meet the 15-course requirement and demonstrate teaching ability will qualify for a Masters degree. The teaching requirement is satisfied by performing successfully as a Teaching Assistant during the spring semester.

Year-end evaluations are performed for all students who pass the comprehensive exams, as well as those who fail the exams yet are successfully removed from probation after the fall semester. This year-end evaluation takes place after the second-year paper is submitted and graded by the paper's advisors. This evaluation is done at the end of April. The student's research mentor(s), second-year paper supervisor, and second reader jointly prepare the evaluation, in consultation with the student's course instructors. A majority vote of the faculty determines whether the student is dismissed at the end of their second year.

F. (Alternative, for students who began in fall 2019)

In the second year, students take the Research Seminar (180.697) and seven one-term elective courses, to complete their 15-course requirement.

The Research Seminar (180.697) is designed to introduce students to the research process. It has two phases. The first phase has weekly presentations by the faculty of a particular research project, from inception to completion. While the Research Workshops have scholars present the "final result" of a project, the presentations in the Research Seminar discuss how an idea was formulated, how it was approached (including false starts and challenges), and how it was revised and modified over time, including during the journal review process. The second phase of the course is for students to provide short presentations of ideas that they are considering for the second year research paper (which is described below). Prior to this second phase, students should be meeting with individual faculty to discuss potential ideas.

Usually the seven elective courses referred to above include at least two well-defined "fields", each consisting of two courses. With our usual course offerings students can typically put together such fields as advanced macroeconomics, economic theory, industrial organization, international economics, labor economics, and econometrics. We anticipate adding finance to this list soon.

Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive examinations consist of two four-hour written examinations, one in microeconomics and one in macroeconomics. Each exam is set and graded by three faculty members (six in all).

Students have two opportunities to pass the comprehensive examinations: in August after the first year in the program, and in late January during the second year in the program. The specific dates vary from year to year. They are listed in the Calendar of Important Dates at the beginning of this Handbook. A student who has taken the full first-year schedule of eight courses with at least seven passing grades (B- or higher) may take the exam in August, and January, if necessary. A student who does not satisfy this requirement may take the exam in January if, by the end of December the student has at least seven passing grades in courses approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies may waive this requirement in extraordinarily exceptional circumstances.

A student who has not passed the comprehensive examinations cannot register for a third year in the program.

A numerical scoring system is employed, using increments of 0.1 and ending at 4.3. As a guide, the following table of equivalencies with letter grades is given 2.0=C, 2.3=C+, 2.7=B-, 3.0=B, 3.3=B+, 3.7=A-, 4.0=A, 4.3=A+. The comprehensive examinations are passed if (a) each of the two examinations receives a score of 2.7 or more; and (b) the average score over the two examinations combined is 2.85 or more; otherwise the examinations are failed. Students who take the micro (macro) exam in January will have an overall micro (macro) exam grade equal to the maximum of their micro (macro) scores from August and January.

The Department Chair may modify any of these requirements in extraordinarily exceptional circumstances.

Students who leave the program after their second year will be awarded a Master's Degree if they have completed all coursework (fifteen courses) in the first two years with passing grades of B- or higher. Students who leave the program can alternatively be awarded a Master's Degree if they have completed all coursework (eight courses) in the first year with passing grades of B- or higher and write an acceptable Master's Thesis.

Students studying for the comprehensive exams can meet with the instructors of their first-year courses to go over material in preparation for the exam.

Research Paper

Before being admitted to work on the dissertation, the student must submit a research paper to the Graduate Program Director. The paper is due at the end of the second year; see the Calendar of Important Dates for the specific date for the current year. This paper is considered part of the comprehensive examinations. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that before beginning full-time dissertation work the student will have had some experience with original research. The research paper should be either a substantial term paper written in one of the graduate courses, or one written independently with scope comparable with such a term paper. In either event the student is encouraged to seek faculty and other advice and guidance as the work progresses. Each research paper typically has one faculty examiner.

Students should begin early to think about their research papers. While it is hoped that research papers will sometimes lead to fruitful dissertation projects, they are not meant to be dissertation or research proposals as such, but complete papers in their own right, analogous in form to articles appearing in the professional journals. The examiner, in judging the paper, will look for originality in posing a problem, judgment in modeling it, creativity and energy in collecting and organizing data (if it is an empirical project), technical expertise in the project's execution (whether it is proving a theorem or estimating a model), economic insight in drawing conclusions, and exposition in presenting the contribution in a scholarly and professional manner. All of these qualities are relevant to general competence in research.

A term paper from a course may be submitted. However, it does not follow that a research paper that has received a passing grade in a course will necessarily pass the examination, since the criteria are different. Students have one less course in the fourth semester, so they can and should devote considerable time and care to this requirement. If a second year paper receives a failing grade, the student will be given a period of at least a month to revise the paper. A student who fails the research paper requirement a second time may be immediately dismissed from the graduate program.

G. Years Three and Beyond

Students spend these years engaged in research. Each semester students register for a research workshop. Students learn how to teach economics by acting as Teaching Assistants. Most importantly, students work on their dissertation.

G.1. Courses

In their third year, students take any necessary letter-grade courses to reach the 15-course requirement.

G.2. Research Workshops

Students in their third and later years are required to enroll in and to attend one or more of the Research Workshops. Consistent failure to attend may jeopardize a student's funding. The Department offers workshops in Microeconomic Theory, Macroeconomics/Finance, and Applied

Microeconomics. Faculty from outside the university, JHU faculty, and advanced graduate students present their original research at these workshops. The extent to which a student participates in the Research Workshops forms part of the basis on which faculty members evaluate their work at all stages of the student's career, including job placement.

G.3. Training for Teaching Positions (Teaching Assistant Positions)

The DGS assigns students to TA positions based on pedagogical concerns, student interest, and instructor preferences. Students act as TAs each semester beginning with the fall of their third year. In one semester of their third year, each student will be a TA for either Elements of Macroeconomics (offered in the fall) or Elements of Microeconomics (offered in the spring), based on the student's research interests. Typically, students are TAs for courses related to their field of study. The maximum annual workload for a teaching assistant is 16 hours per week for 30 weeks. Actual workloads may be less in some courses.

Teaching is an important responsibility and must be taken seriously. Teaching assistants are required to take direction from course instructors and respond promptly to communications from instructors and department administrators. They are also required to treat students in their courses with professionalism and respect. A student who repeatedly fails to meet these requirements will be put on probation. Failure to meet these requirements while on probation will result in dismissal from the program.

The university has substantial resources available to help TAs learn how to be effective instructors, including courses that help improve communication skills of students for whom English is not their primary language. See homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/professional-development/teaching-assistant-resources/ and krieger.jhu.edu/cle/language-programs/esl/

G.4. The Dissertation Pre-Proposal and Proposal

In the fall of their third year, students work with faculty to define, in broad terms, a dissertation topic. The choice of topic cannot be disentangled from the choice of dissertation advisor. Students do not write dissertations on their own and simply submit them to the department upon completion. Instead, students work closely with an advisor throughout the process. The department urges students to begin serious work on the dissertation as soon as possible. Students should talk to multiple professors during the process of developing a dissertation topic. As the topic narrows, students should seek out at an early stage one or two members of the faculty who are prepared to supervise the dissertation to its completion.

By December 15 of the third year in the program, students submit to the DGS a dissertation pre-proposal describing the work he is doing, specifying a professor with whom the student is working, and the progress the student has made. The pre-proposal ensures that students are engaging with faculty to flesh out a dissertation topic. The pre-proposal is not graded. Students will receive comments on the pre-proposal from the specified professor.

By May 1 of the third year in the program, each student must have a main advisor drawn from the pool of tenure-track and tenured professors in the department. The student must explicitly ask a professor to serve in this role. If the professor accepts, the student informs the DGS of main advisor's identity.

Also by May 1, each student submits a dissertation proposal simultaneously to the DGS and the student's main advisor. This proposal gives the department a basis for evaluating the feasibility, progress and promise of a dissertation plan. The department recognizes that sometimes plans are modified in the course of the research. The proposal should include

- (i) The name(s) of at least one additional professor (i.e., other than the main advisor) with whom the student has discussed the dissertation proposal at length.
- (ii) An abstract of the proposed research.
- (iii) A detailed statement of the work already done and to be done, describing its objectives, its relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and to similar work in progress elsewhere (if any), the techniques to be used, the data to be used (if any), and the significance of the expected results.

The department imposes no specific rule concerning the length of the proposal. However, normally a proposal is unlikely sufficiently detailed unless it contains at least twenty double-spaced pages.

The main advisor and a second reader evaluate the proposal. The DGS chooses the second reader from among the faculty that have worked with the student on the development of the topic. The readers determine if the proposal is acceptable. If the proposal is not accepted, the readers describe in writing in what ways the proposal requires revision. The readers and DGS determine a date by which the revised proposal is due. This process continues until the proposal is acceptable.

The dissertation proposal is an important step in a student's progression towards a PhD, and there are substantial consequences for failing to meet this timeline.

- (i) A student who fails to submit by May 1 a proposal with some potential is placed on academic probation. This applies only to a student who fails to submit any proposal, or who submits one that is very seriously deficient. It does not apply to a proposal that is on a reasonable track but needs more work to be acceptable. A student who has not submitted any proposal, or whose submitted proposal is very seriously deficient, is dismissed from the program by December 1 of their fourth year.
- (ii) A student who has submitted a proposal that is *not* very seriously deficient, yet does not have an accepted dissertation proposal by December 1 of their fourth year, is placed on academic probation. Such a student will remain on probation until he either completes an acceptable proposal, or is dismissed from the program. The probation period cannot extend beyond the end of their fourth year.

(iii) A student who does not have an accepted dissertation proposal by the end of their fourth year in the program is dismissed from the program as of the end of the fourth year.

These actions are taken in accordance with the [Graduate Student Probation, Funding Withdrawal and Dismissal Policy](#).

G.5. The Dissertation Process

In the department's experience, frequent contact between student and advisor is critical to the creation of a strong dissertation. After the dissertation proposal is accepted, students and advisors must meet at least monthly (in-person or virtually) to go over the student's progress and discuss next steps.

Both advisors and students are responsible to maintain this contact. Students who routinely do not respond in a timely fashion to correspondence from faculty (or administrators) may be put on probation. If communication does not improve the student will be dismissed from the program. Naturally, a student might be out of email contact for a week or two owing to a summer vacation or another reason. Since the PhD program is a 12-month/year commitment, students are expected to inform their advisors in advance of any periods when the student will be out of contact.

To broaden the input received by the student, an ad hoc committee will discuss annually the student's work. The student and the main advisor meet with two other professors to review the year's achievements and discuss the research plan for the next year. The outside professors then write a letter summarizing their views and recommendations, submitted to the advisor, student, and the DGS.

The selection of advisors, including a main advisor, need not be permanent. If a student's interests change, the student may identify a new main advisor. As with the initial selection, the student must explicitly ask a tenured/tenure-track professor to take over the role of main advisor, and the professor must accept. In exceedingly rare circumstances, a student may be unable to identify a new main advisor. For example, if the student's main advisor departs JHU and no one else in the department has similar research interests, there may be no tenure/tenure-track professor who readily accepts the role of main advisor. If so, the student should enlist the assistance of the DGS to identify a new main advisor.

Students should aim to identify their dissertation topic and write their dissertations within three years. Along with the first two years of coursework and mentored research, this implies a period of five years in the PhD program. It is true that most economics PhD students at Hopkins and elsewhere take six years to complete the PhD program. The job market in economics is competitive, and the best employers expect dissertations to be very polished. Students who seek the best placements often benefit from taking a sixth year to improve the dissertation. In addition,

setbacks in dissertation research can sometimes make it difficult to complete the program in five years. In either of these cases, a student may remain for a sixth year.

Nonetheless, it is unwise to *aim* for six years, since setbacks are common in research. Students should aim to be finished in five years. If all goes very well, then they can complete in five years, but an extra year is available if that would turn out to be helpful.

Six years is the absolute time limit for resident status in the program. Students who are not finished by the end of the sixth year must withdraw from the program or apply for non-resident status. It is possible, however, for exceptions to be made in truly unusual circumstances. A student wishing to remain for a seventh year must apply to the DGS. While exceptions are possible, we anticipate that almost all requests for a seventh year will be rejected.

The department is committed to ensuring that students stay on course to complete the Ph.D. program within six years. The department will place on academic probation a student who is substantially behind schedule. The department will provide the student a set of benchmarks to meet in order to return to schedule. The probation period will last at least six months. At the end of the probation period the student is either taken off probation, probation is renewed, or the student is dismissed from the program. Decisions on probation and termination of students will be made by the DGS in consultation with advisors.

The schedule that determines whether a student is put on academic probation is

- (i) During the student's fifth year, the student must be on track to have a reasonably polished version of one chapter of the dissertation completed by the end of the summer following their fifth year in the program. This chapter is typically described as the student's "job market paper."
- (ii) The student must have completed a reasonably polished version of the job market paper by the end of the summer following the student's fifth year.
- (iii) The student must go on the job market, as described in the handbook's Section IV.A., in the late fall of the student's sixth year.
- (iv) During the student's sixth year, the student must be on track to defend the dissertation at a GBO (discussed in this handbook's section I.G.7) by the end of the summer following the student's sixth year.
- (v) The student's GBO must take place by the end of the summer following the student's sixth year.

These actions are taken in accordance with the [Graduate Student Probation, Funding Withdrawal and Dismissal Policy](#).

Students who have not defended their dissertation by the end of the summer following their sixth year are dismissed from the program. Exceptions granted to this normal progression are unusual, and are made by the DGS. In those cases, students are typically required to apply for non-resident status. Non-resident

students pay ten percent of the resident student tuition and pay separately for medical insurance. Non-resident status is often allowed when a student has gone through the job market, taken a job, and has subsequently encountered an obstacle in completing the dissertation and/or scheduling the GBO.

In rare circumstances the Chair, in consultation with the DGS, may relax any of these progress benchmarks. The only time this has occurred is during the coronavirus pandemic.

G.6. The Mentoring Relationship

Advisors train students and prepare them for their professional career. This mentoring relationship is an important part of graduate education. Following the university's policy on mentoring commitments, the DGS will be the department's point person to whom students can go if they have questions or concerns related to their own PhD advisor. In particular, if a student thinks that one of their mentors in the department is not providing the necessary mentorship, the student can appeal to the DGS.

The DGS will work with the student to determine what aspects of the mentoring relation need improvement. The DGS will make any necessary recommendations to the Chair, who is responsible for implementation. For example, the Chair may meet with the mentor to describe how the mentoring process should be modified, and require more monitoring of the mentoring relationship by the DGS. If necessary, the Chair may require another professor to replace the original mentor.

If the DGS is the mentor about whom the student is complaining, the DGS role is replaced by the chair of the admissions committee. If the department chair is the mentor, the DGS and the chair of the admissions committee are jointly responsible for implementing any necessary recommendations.

The Dean's office is available to help mediate mentoring disagreements. The formal university-wide policy is [here](#).

G.7. The GBO

The university requires an oral examination, called a GBO, of all Ph.D. candidates. In our department, this exam occurs after the dissertation is completed. The university has detailed rules concerning this examination and the submission of the dissertation. A committee of faculty from the department and two JHU faculty outside of the department evaluate the student's command of economics and the quality of the dissertation. The outside faculty must be at the level of associate professor or higher.

G.8. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is copying of another person's work (ideas, writings, etc.), published or unpublished, without proper citation. Plagiarism is a very serious offense in research. We will severely punish

plagiarism in research papers, up to dismissal from the program. The Krieger School's formal policy for addressing plagiarism and other forms of cheating is [here](#). A former student with a PhD may have the degree revoked if plagiarism is subsequently discovered in a dissertation. We advise students to familiarize themselves with proper procedures for citation in accordance with standards in scholarly journals and American higher education.

Should any student believe that another student has in some way plagiarized a research paper or dissertation work, the appropriate action to take is to report the alleged facts immediately to the Chair. No other way of dealing with suspected cheating is permissible.

II. GRADING OF COURSES AND THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

A. Course Grading

The grading of each course is entirely the responsibility of the instructor, and is based on whatever criteria the instructor considers appropriate, such as performance on a written or oral examination, a term paper, or a research project. If the student believes that a given course grade is unjust, he should feel free to raise the question with the instructor, but the instructor's decision is final.

Courses are normally graded on the scale of C-, C, C+, B-, B, B+, A-, A, A+, with B- or above constituting a pass, all other grades a failure. In some courses the instructor chooses to grade pass/fail, such as in a reading course. Core Mathematics and the Research Workshops are always graded pass/fail.

A failing grade in a course, other than a first-year course, may be remedied by retaking the course and passing it. Subject to instructor approval, a failing grade may also be remedied by further examination, either written or oral, or any other method specified by the instructor. In case a student fails a course, and then passes it by any means other than retaking the course, the new grade must be a B-; the Department's records will show that the grade was originally a failure.

Cheating on course examinations is a very serious offense. Cheating may consist of two or more students collaborating to answer questions on an examination, or by one student copying the answers of another student when the latter student is unaware of the action, or by a student improperly using notes, readings or other materials on an examination. The department punishes cheating severely. Punishment can include expulsion from the program. The Krieger School's formal policy for addressing cheating is [here](#).

Should any student believe that another student has in some way cheated on an examination, the student should report the alleged facts immediately to the Department Chair, or to the instructor of the course. No other way of dealing with suspected cheating is permissible.

B. Grading of Comprehensive Examinations

Students need not bring an examination booklet or any other paper to a comprehensive exam. A lined writing pad will be provided to each student just before the examination is administered. All backpacks must be left in the departmental office during the exam. Students are allowed pens, pencils, beverages, and snacks but calculators are allowed only at the discretion of the faculty monitor. All other items kept in a student's possession are subject to inspection. Each student's paper will be identified only by a number, not the student's name. The number will be stamped on each page of the student's writing pad. Students will be asked to write on one side of a page only, and to use a dark pencil or ink.

For the comprehensive examinations, a numerical scoring system is employed, using increments of 0.1 and ending at 4.3. As a guide, the following table of equivalencies with letter grades is given 2.0=C, 2.3=C+, 2.7=B-, 3.0=B, 3.3=B+, 3.7=A-, 4.0=A, 4.3=A+. The comprehensive examinations are passed if

(a) each of the two examinations receives a score of 2.7 or more;

and

(b) the average score over the two examinations combined is 2.85 or more; otherwise the examinations are failed.

Students who take the exams in July can retake either or both exams in August. The student's overall micro (macro) score is the maximum of their score on the July and August micro (macro) exams.

The Chair may modify any of these requirements in extraordinarily exceptional circumstances.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A. The First Through the Fifth Years

Students receive financial aid packages of a full tuition waiver (including health insurance fee) plus a stipend, as described in the university's offer of admission to the program. The department guarantees the tuition waiver and the stipend through the fifth year of study, provided that the student is making satisfactory progress at each stage.

B. Sixth Year Students

No funding is guaranteed in the sixth year. The department attempts to treat, and fund, sixth-year students as the department treats fifth-year students. In other words, the department attempts to provide a full tuition waiver and the same stipend that the student received in the fifth year, while the student continues to advance professionally by engaging in dissertation research and developing teaching competency. In some years the department may be able to afford to provide

only a tuition waiver, or a combined tuition waiver and partial stipend support. The department will fund all sixth years in a given year in the same way; the department will not choose some students to fund and other students to not fund.

Students will be notified in the spring semester of their fifth year what type of support the department will provide for the sixth year.

C. Other Fellowship and Aid

Several institutions and foundations besides the University provide graduate fellowships of various kinds. One such source is the National Science Foundation. We encourage students to apply for outside support, and the student should feel free to ask the faculty to assist them with the application. The award of outside support not only allows the Department to fund more students with the budget we have, it can mean additional money for the student and such an award can provide a useful signal to prospective employers and should go on a student's curriculum vitae when going on the job market.

Each student who receives an award of outside support should notify the Department immediately. This will help the Department to distribute its funds more effectively.

D. Extra Jobs

A graduate student with a full fellowship has three primary duties: First, he should work diligently on his courses or his dissertation, depending on his year of study. Second, he should develop teaching and research competency by fulfilling the duties of any teaching assistantship or research assistantship. Third, he is required to attend at least one Research Workshop in third or later years of study. These tasks together are a full-time job. In recent years, however, the faculty has observed that some graduate students have taken jobs outside the department, such as Teaching Assistantships in other schools within the university.

Our experience has shown that this is not wise. In the case of international students on an F-1 visa, it may jeopardize the visa. While a graduate student may increase his income by taking a job outside the department, it has the by-product of substantially impeding progress on the dissertation. This is not an intelligent long-run strategy. The best strategy both psychologically and financially is: **Complete your PhD as soon as possible.**

Graduate students are welcome to take summer jobs (in between the Spring and Fall semesters), either as a research assistant in the department working with a faculty member, as a teacher in the summer program of the university, or as a research assistant at one of the institutions—public or private--in the Washington area. Such jobs are helpful in supplementing income from fellowships and are often a good learning experience. However, it is important that a student make progress on his dissertation as well in the summer. Hence, it is advisable for a student to take a summer job that permits him to work on his dissertation. Students should know that many outside jobs require the student to be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, and to be proficient in English.

Experience reveals that the channels of communication by which knowledge of summer jobs is spread around are too diverse and ad hoc to make it feasible to coordinate the process through the Department in any systematic way. Nevertheless, it is useful to maintain an informal network of information, and so anyone who has knowledge of such jobs being available should inform the DGS. Similarly, anyone who is qualified and has need for a job should inform the DGS so that jobs and applicants can be matched as far as possible. Interested students should check the notices on the Departmental bulletin board. Job openings for summer positions are posted there.

To receive Curricular Practical Training when working outside the university in a teaching or research assistant job, international students must register for the course (180.698) “Research and Teaching Practicum” and fill out the appropriate forms from the international office. The course is offered every semester and in the summer.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

A. Information Technology

Alan Fisher (alan.fisher@jhu.edu) is in charge of the department’s IT systems. He is the first point of contact for “how-to” questions concerning computer accounts, local and remote access to the department’s network, and specialized computer resources. Alan also maintains the department’s IT web pages at econ.jhu.edu/computing-resources/. These web pages contain detailed information on computing resources in the department and the university.

The department also has faculty who serve as computing coordinators. Computer coordinators are available to answer broad questions about computing in the department, or specific computing questions that require an economics background. Current coordinators are listed under “Faculty Administrative Assignments” at the beginning of this handbook.

B. Getting a Job

The Department recognizes a responsibility in helping each student to obtain a first job, whether in academic or other walks of life. To this end, each year the department designates a Placement Director from among the faculty. It is the duty of the Placement Director to coordinate the efforts of faculty and students alike in obtaining the best possible results on the job market.

Students who do not have a complete, presentable job market paper as of the date on the timetable provided by the Placement Director will not receive support from the department’s formal job placement process. A student’s main advisor and the Placement Director determine whether the student satisfies this requirement.

Each Placement Director chooses his own way of organization, but the process necessarily involves some important common factors. Normally, early in the year when a student enters the job market, his curriculum vitae (including a thesis summary) is collected by the Placement Director, and these documents are assembled and sent around to a large number of

economics department and other research-oriented agencies in this country and Canada (other economics departments do this too). Prospective employers use such documents, and responses to public advertisements and/or direct approaches to faculty members at Hopkins, to arrange preliminary interviews at the 'job market' meetings organized by the American Economic Association (AEA) in early January. The purpose of these interviews is normally for employers to arrive at a short list of candidates for further, lengthier interviews, to be conducted at the employer's home institution.

Job market candidates are required to complete several forms for the Job Market, such as a curriculum vitae, thesis abstract, and other notes and materials. These will be described in detail by the Placement Director to all students who are on the market. The Placement Director will instruct the students to have their thesis advisor look over the abstract and curriculum vitae before submitting it.

C. Residence and Term Leave

Neither the University nor the Department has (or would enforce) rules about how close to Hopkins students should live. However, to be a full-time student means being on the campus most of the week, and it is hard to do this if one lives at a considerable distance from the University. Past experience has shown that living more than thirty miles away tends to have a markedly adverse effect on performance. Hence students are urged in the strongest terms to live near enough to Hopkins to make possible genuinely full-time activity here.

At any time during the PhD program, a student may apply for a leave of absence of a semester or more. During a leave of absence a student is not expected to make progress toward the degree.

A leave of one semester (or more generally, an odd number of semesters) complicates a student's progress because the formal job market process for new PhD economists happens once a year, in late fall and winter. The department requires that students go on the job market no later than their eleventh active semester in the program. This corresponds to the fall of the sixth year for students who do not take any leave. Thus a student who takes a one-semester leave in any of years one through five must go on the market in their tenth semester. Students who take a one-semester leave during the fall of their sixth year will not be able to make use of the department's formal job placement support. The Chair may modify any of these restrictions in extraordinarily exceptional circumstances.

D. Awards

Eugenio and Patricia Castillo Award: The Department makes an annual award to the student who, in the Department's judgment, has displayed the best performance in their first two years in the graduate program. The award comes with a financial stipend. An alumnus of the Department, Eugenio Castillo, and his wife, Patricia, very generously fund this award.

Bruce Hamilton Research Seminar Award: The Department makes an annual award to the advanced graduate student (3rd year & up) who has demonstrated the best performance in one of

the department's research workshops. This award comes with a financial stipend, which is also generously funded by Eugenio and Patricia Castillo.

Professor Joel Dean Undergraduate Teaching Award: The Department makes two or three annual awards to students who have shown excellence as a teaching assistant or instructor. The award comes with a financial stipend. This award is very generously funded by Joel and Monica Dean.

Carl Christ Fellowship: This fellowship honors a distinguished faculty member and is given to an outstanding graduate student.

The selection of these awards is normally made in the spring term.

E. Conference Support

The Department of Economics has limited funds to provide financial support for students whose research has been accepted for presentation at an appropriate professional conference. The Department may support some portion of transportation and hotel expenses and registration fees. To apply, you must first request approval from your primary thesis adviser who, if he or she approves it, should then send an email to the DGS. You must also submit a budget to the DGS, who will then email you with a decision on funding. For reimbursement, receipts should be submitted to the Department Administrator along with the DGS's email approving support.

As the Department has limited funds, it is important that the venue is a serious economics conference and, therefore, not all requests will be approved. In the past, some conferences which are more general social science - with questionable quality as to the economic research being presented - have not been approved. Funds are intended to be used to give students the experience and exposure of presenting before PhD economists, and we provide this financial support to encourage you to take the initiative.

Conference support will not be given to students who are on academic probation. The department has no other funds available for research support (buying data, tuition at summer schools etc.). Nor can the department pay fees for submitting a paper for presentation at a conference.

F. Graduate Advisory Council

The department has a three-member Graduate Advisory Council. The representatives, chosen by the graduate students, meet regularly with the Chair, DGS, and Admissions Committee chair to discuss issues of importance to graduate students. Representatives are chosen at the beginning of the spring semester, and serve for the next spring and fall semesters. One representative is chosen from first-year and second-year classes, one from the third-year and fourth-year classes, and one from the fifth-year class.

G. Student Wellness

Graduate School can often be a time of stress as students manage not only their school work, but also work, relationships and other responsibilities. It is very common for students in such a position to experience periods of feeling down, overwhelmed, anxious or depressed. As with any illness, taking care of yourself and getting treatment is important. The JHU student wellness web site is

<https://wellness.jhu.edu/about-health-and-wellness/>

This site is a central location to explore the variety of health and wellness resources available to students.

Professionals in the Student Health and Wellness Center or Counseling Center are here to address your needs and provide both care and resources. If you are concerned about a friend or classmate, you can also contact those resources for a consultation. Please find their contact information below:

Counseling Center-<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

3003 N Charles St
Homewood Apartments
Suite S-200
Baltimore, MD 21218
Tel: 410-516-8278

Student Health & Wellness Center- <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-health/>

1 E 31st St
Homewood Apartments
Suite N200
Baltimore, MD 21218
Tel: 410-516-8270

Students may also contact Renee Eastwood, Director for Graduate Academic Affairs, in our Dean's office. Her email is rseitz5@jhu.edu. Renee is Krieger's point person for helping graduate students. She can answer any questions that you might have and can help you navigate the various resources and options that are available to you.

H. General Student Support

The following offices are available to Homewood graduate students seeking assistance with academic and non-academic concerns.

Renee Eastwood
Director for Graduate Academic Affairs, Krieger School of Arts & Sciences
Wyman Park Building, Room 614 rseitz5@jhu.edu

Krieger School of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office - <http://krieger.jhu.edu/about/contact/> Graduate
Representatives Organization - <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/gro/>
JHU Counseling Center - <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/> Office of the Dean of
Student Life - <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-life/>
Homewood Graduate Affairs - <http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/>
Homewood Admissions Office - <https://www.jhu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/>
Office of student Disability Services - <http://web.jhu.edu/disabilities>
Office of Institutional Equity - <http://web.jhu.edu/administration/jhuoie/contact.html>