

# Third Year Papers—Guidelines for Students

Department of Economics, SUNY-Binghamton

1. **The purpose of the third-year paper** is for you to provide evidence that you will be able to undertake a research project—your dissertation—on your own. Ideally, the paper is part of your dissertation project—as such, its topic can be either a comprehensive and critical literature survey, or original research. You should discuss with your advisor which type of paper is most suitable for you. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year paper is due on the last Friday before fall classes of your fourth year begin.

2. **The general format of the third-year paper**

(1) **If you choose to write a literature review:**

(a) The expected length of a literature review is 30 – 35 pages, double spaced. (The list of references is not counted as part of the page requirement.) The literature review must be

- comprehensive (address all relevant issues and include all relevant papers),
- comparative (evaluate how different papers address the same/similar issues),
- critical (evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these papers).

You should treat this project as the start of the literature review that you will need to undertake for your dissertation. Thus you will reap the entire benefit of being careful, comprehensive, and critical. Overly selective literature reviews or reviews that simply summarize the literature without comparative and critical evaluation are not acceptable!

(b) Add a one- or two-page research proposal that shows how you plan to extend the existing literature in your dissertation. (The proposal is in addition to the above page requirement.)

(2) **If you chose to submit original research:**

(a) The expected format of an original research project is the standard economics working paper format (about 20 – 25 pages, double spaced). Thus it needs to contain

- the motivation of the project,
- a brief review of the most relevant literature and how your current research differs,
- a description of the economic/econometric model,
- some discussion and interpretation of the (expected) results.

(b) It is acceptable to submit a research paper that contains preliminary research—that is, the paper does not have to be publishable. However, you need to indicate which parts of your analysis are preliminary and how you plan to extend/complete your work.

(3) **Abstract:**

Every paper must be preceded by a short abstract of no more than 150 words that summarizes, in one or two sentences each,

- the motivation for the paper and what you do
- what you find
- either what your results imply, or where you see room for future research

### **3. Non-acceptable third-year papers:**

- (1) The third year paper cannot be a paper that you have already turned in as a term paper for a class.

However, substantial revisions of such papers are acceptable. If you have already written a term paper on the same topic, then you must submit the term paper together with your third-year paper.

- (2) Papers with overly large numbers of typos, grammatical errors, and unintelligible sentences will be returned to you without evaluation.

The paper must be in correct English—free of spelling and grammatical errors. Consult the writing center or friends who are native speakers if you have difficulties with English.

- (3) The Director of Graduate Studies or the faculty reviewers may find that your paper does not fulfill the minimum standards of a third-year paper. This provides information to your dissertation advisor, who may decide that he/she cannot be your advisor any longer. In this case you will need to find another faculty member who agrees to be your dissertation advisor. If you have not found another advisor by the end of the fall semester of your 4<sup>th</sup> year, then you will not be permitted to enroll in ECON 698 (research and dissertation), which for most students means that they will have to leave the program.

### **4. Miscellaneous:**

- (1) By May of your third year, you need to have identified a faculty member as your dissertation advisor, who must have agreed to serve as your advisor. (Thus you must have submitted the red dissertation form to Pat Sweet by the end of your third-year.) Your dissertation advisor will help you to determine whether you should work on a literature review or original research.

- (2) Submit a filled-in copy of the form below together with two hard copies of your paper to Pat Sweet on or before the last Friday before fall classes of your fourth year begin.

- (3) You need to propose two faculty members to serve as reviewers of your paper. The Director of Graduate Studies will consider your suggestions but may still assign the paper to different faculty members.

Your dissertation advisor can be one of the two faculty members you suggest. However, the third-year paper must be mostly your own work. Your advisor can help you identify a topic and get you started, but your advisor will not help you write the paper. You should also not ask your advisor to correct your paper before you submit it—otherwise the paper would not provide information about whether you will be able to undertake a research project on your own.

# Economics Department—Third Year Paper

*Section 1—To be completed by the student:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of paper: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Literature review  Research paper

This paper represents mainly preliminary work for my dissertation (and is not intended, in its present form, to be part of my dissertation).

This paper is intended to be (part of) a chapter of my dissertation.

Yes  No I have submitted a paper on the same/similar topic as a term paper (If yes, indicate in which class: \_\_\_\_\_ and submit a copy of your term paper as well.)

Please suggest three faculty members to serve as reviewers for the paper:

*Note: The Director of Graduate Studies will consider your suggestions but may still assign the paper to different faculty members.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit the completed form together with two hard copies of your paper to Pat Sweet

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*Section 2—To be completed by the Director of Graduate Studies:*

The paper has been evaluated by the following faculty members:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Approved:  Yes  No

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Approved:  Yes  No

Copies of their evaluations are attached.

Director of Graduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_