DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Handbook refers to two important resources throughout as follows:

- **The *University Bulletin* is referred to as the *Bulletin***
- **The *Graduate School Manual* is referred to as the *Manual***

1) GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ECONOMICS

A. Master's Degree

The Economics Department offers an MA in Financial Economics. Requirements are listed in the *Bulletin,* and are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Completion of the MA degree generally requires three semesters.

Students holding a master’s degree in economics from another university are not generally eligible for a master’s degree in economics from Binghamton.

PhD students who do not already hold an MA degree in economics from another school may apply for an MA degree from Binghamton in their third semester of study, and should refer to Appendix 1.

B. Doctoral Degrees

The Economics Department offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Economics. Requirements for the program are listed in the *Bulletin* and are outlined in more detail in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

The requirements for the PhD are as follows:

i. Courses

The course requirements include a minimum of 59 credit hours. The required PhD courses (611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 693, 694 and 699) are offered every year. Generally about three elective courses are offered each semester, and the Economics Department attempts to offer each elective course at least once every third semester. A complete listing of all graduate courses is given in the *Bulletin*. Students are required to select two elective fields. A list of all fields of specialization, and the elective courses generally used to satisfy them, includes:

Econometrics	ECON 618, ECON 619
Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	ECON 682, ECON 683
Development Economics	ECON 656, ECON 657
Labor Economics	ECON 641, ECON 642
Advanced Macroeconomics	ECON 633, ECON 634
Public Economics (currently not offered)	ECON 636, ECON 637

ii. Comprehensive examinations

All PhD students must pass comprehensive exams in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory at the end of their first year. The initial round of comprehensive exams are offered approximately two weeks apart in June, starting about two weeks after the week of spring semester final exams. Students who do not pass an exam on the first attempt will be allowed another attempt to pass an exam in the failed subject. The second round of comprehensive exams are offered approximately two weeks apart in July and about two weeks after the end of the first round of comprehensive exams. A student who fails ***either*** theory exam the second time is terminated from the economics PhD program. ***A third attempt is not allowed.*** If a student does not take a comprehensive exam at the time specified, then a grade of Fail is recorded and the student is terminated from the program.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.0 must apply in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies for permission to take any comprehensive exam.

iii. Third year paper

PhD students are required to complete a major research paper by the end of the spring following the third year in the program. The paper is due on or before noon on the Friday of final exam week of the spring semester. Students who fail to present an acceptable paper by this time will be considered as not making satisfactory progress and will be terminated from the program.

Each PhD student chooses a dissertation advisor no later than December 15 of his or her third year (their 5th semester). A student designates an advisor by completing Section 1 of Form A (Appendix 5) and submitting it with the advisor's signature to the department secretary. No student is allowed to complete the third-year paper without having chosen an advisor. The advisor may help the student identify a suitable topic for the third-year paper and discuss its general structure, but the paper must be the student's own work.

PhD students will be "Admitted to Candidacy" for the PhD in Economics and become ABD ("All But Dissertation") when they pass their third-year papers. The ABD status confers certain library and computer privileges, as well as reduced fees.

The Graduate School requires that students have chosen their dissertation committee prior to becoming ABD. The dissertation committee consists of the dissertation advisor and two faculty committee members. Thus submission of the third-year paper requires that students also complete **Section 2** of Form A with the signatures of the two faculty committee members. Therefore all of the following documents should be submitted to the department secretary by noon on the Friday of final exam week of the spring semester of their 3rd year the following:

1. Form A (Appendix 5)
2. **The completed third-year paper cover sheet (Form B),** linked from **Appendix 6)**
3. Two paper copies of the third-year paper and one PDF file

iv. The Prospectus

PhD students usually begin thinking about their dissertations in the pre-dissertation research seminars, ECON 693 and 694. All PhD students must register for and attend ECON 693 and 694 (1 credit each) in their third year of study and continue attending thereafter until they have successfully defended a dissertation prospectus. Although **attendance** is still mandatory until the prospectus is presented and approved, registration for ECON 693 and 694 is not required after each course has been taken once.

PhD students are expected to defend their prospectus during the fall semester of their fourth year (their 7th semester) in the Economics Department Seminar. Before defending the prospectus, each student must write a preliminary version of the prospectus and give an oral pre-Prospectus presentation in ECON 693/694. This presentation must be attended by the student's dissertation advisor. It is also recommended that the other two members of the student's dissertation committee attend the pre-Prospectus presentation. This presentation is evaluated by the instructor of ECON 693/694 and the student's advisor, as well as any other dissertation committee members that may be present. Toward the end of the fall semester of the fourth year, the student must present the prospectus in the Economics Department Seminar. All members of the student's dissertation committee must attend the Prospectus presentation. Faculty members vote on whether or not the prospectus is acceptable. If the prospectus is found unacceptable, then it must be re-presented until it is accepted. A description of the prospectus and the rules concerning its acceptance are given in Appendix 7.

v. Dissertation

The dissertation may not be defended for at least six months after the presentation of the prospectus. A fourth member of the committee, selected from outside the department, is appointed for the defense. The dissertation defense is open to the public.

2) Grades and Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Graduate School policy on satisfactory academic progress may be found in the *Manual*.

In general, graduate students must maintain a cumulative average of "B" or 3.0 in every semester to remain in good standing. Courses graded S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) do not count in the official grade point average. It is absolutely necessary to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to receive funding.

3) Incompletes

The grade of "Incomplete" (I) is discussed in the *Manual* and the *Bulletin*. Graduate students who receive a mark of "I" are normally allowed six months to finish the work for a course and to receive a regular grade if they register the next semester. In exceptional circumstances Incompletes may be extended, with the approval of the instructor **and the Graduate School**, to a maximum of one calendar year. Students who do not register in the next semester have a calendar year to complete the course. When an "Incomplete" lapses, the grade automatically becomes a "Withdraw" and cannot be changed. Students with assistantships should note that Graduate School policy now requires that any "Incomplete" be completed by the following August 1 if funding is to be continued.

4) Course Repeat Policy

The Graduate School's policy on repeating courses is given in the *Manual* and the *Bulletin*. Any course with a grade of B- or lower may be repeated if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. The original grade stays on the transcript along with the new grade, but only the new grade is used to compute the grade point average. This is NOT automatic—the student must request a memo to this effect from the Director of Graduate Studies.

5) Computer Literacy

All graduate students are expected to use the Binghamton e-mail address assigned to them, and to become familiar with commonly used software such as Microsoft Office, a web browser, SAS, STATA, E-Views, GAUSS, Mathematica, etc.

6) Graduate School Time Limits

The Graduate School imposes certain time limits for completion of graduate degrees. MA candidates must complete their degree within five years of the date they enter graduate school. PhD candidates must be admitted to candidacy (ABD) either within five years of admission to the Graduate School or within five years of the award of a Binghamton master's degree, must present their prospectus within six months of entering candidacy, and must complete their degree within five years after they are admitted to candidacy. These time limits apply in addition to other Graduate School and department requirements (for example, GPA and successful completion of comprehensive exams).

7) Advisors

The Director of Graduate Studies is the advisor for all PhD students during their first year; there is a separate advisor for MA students. PhD students in their second and later years will choose their own advisors, generally based on relationships they have established with faculty whose research interests are similar to their own. Advisors for students admitted to candidacy are their dissertation chairs as designated on Form A. The Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies are also available to give advice to all students.

8) Transfer Credit

The Graduate School's policy on transfer credit is given in the *Manual*. Credit is not given for courses used to obtain another degree (such as an MA) at a previous institution. However, the number of courses required for a PhD may be reduced, and some specific course requirements waived, on the basis of prior work. It should be noted that PhD students will usually want to take the PhD theory courses as preparation for comprehensive exams. In all cases the university residency requirement of 24 units in residence must be fulfilled. All requests for approval of transfer credits, and any waivers of course requirements, must be approved in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

9) Adding and Dropping Courses

Students desiring to add or drop a course must consult the Director of Graduate Studies and the Administrative Assistant, who will verify that the change is appropriate according to the student's assistantship status and/or standing in the department. Students are also expected to discuss this with the professor(s) of the course(s). All adding and dropping of courses must be done within the first two weeks of class. Late adds (after the deadline) are discouraged, and late drops will result in a grade of W on the transcript.

10) Course Overloads and Courses Outside the Department

Economics graduate students wishing to take more than 12 credits (excluding ECON 603 and 608A) in the first three semesters must obtain the prior written approval of the Director of Graduate Studies (Form C, Appendix 8). **Funded students** in the fourth semester and beyond wanting more than nine credits must request approval from the Director of Graduate Studies using (Form C, Appendix 8). **Self-funded students** wanting more than 16 credits in any semester must also request Graduate School approval using the Graduate Overload Petition.

11) Funding Renewal Policies

The Economics Department's polices covering the initial awarding of assistantships and the criteria for renewal can be found in Appendix 9.

12) Assistantship Assignments

All students in economics receiving financial aid as assistantships should expect to serve both as teaching assistants and research assistants at some time. Assignment to teaching or research will depend on the department's assessment of its needs during each semester. Both teaching and research assignments offer valuable training in skills that enhance students' attractiveness and fitness for their intended careers.

Recipients of assistantships should be aware that the continuation of aid depends upon performance both in coursework and in assistantship assignments. Unsatisfactory work in teaching or research assignments can be grounds for termination of assistantships.

One implication of these rules is that non-native speakers of English should work to polish the language skills required for effectiveness in the classroom. Failure to do so risks not only an unrewarding experience when assigned as a teaching assistant but also the termination of aid as a result of unsatisfactory performance. In addition to the informal practice that comes with reading, speaking, and listening in English, students should consider taking advantage of formal training offered by the English as a Second Language Program, especially ESL 725, Oral Communication in College Teaching.

15) Graduate Levels, Full-time Status, Course Loads, Overloads

Graduate Levels

Level 1	New MA/PhD students with a bachelor's degree who have completed fewer than 24 credits at Binghamton University
Level 2	MA or PhD students who have either entered with a graduate degree or completed at least 24 credits of graduate work at Binghamton University
Level 3	PhD students who have completed the requirements for the master's degree and have begun to complete doctoral coursework
Level 4	PhD students who are "ABD" (completed all of the doctoral coursework, passed all comprehensive exams and third year paper, and are admitted to candidacy)

Full-Time Status

The state-recognized full-time course load is 12 credits per semester for Level 1 and nine credits per semester for Level 2 and beyond. However, because nearly all regular courses at Binghamton University carry four credits, MA students will take 12 credits each semester during their first two semesters and eight credits in the third semester. PhD students will take 12 credits each semester for their first three semesters and nine credits in the fourth and fifth semester. Thereafter they will take one credit per semester. Therefore the following guidelines apply:

First Year:

- **Funded students** at Level 1 must register for 12 credits.
- **Funded students** at Level 2 will register for 12 credits to assure timely completion of the degree
- **Self-funded domestic students** at Levels 1 and 2 will normally register for 12 credits to be considered full-time and to assure timely completion of the degree.
- **Self-funded international students** at Level 1 must register for 12 credits to be full-time.
- **Self-funded international students** at Level 2 must register for at least nine credits to maintain full-time status, and will normally register for 12 credits to assure timely completion of the degree.

Second Year and Beyond:

- **Funded students** will normally register for 12 credits in the first semester of the second year to assure timely completion of the degree.
- **Self-funded international students** must register for at least nine credits to maintain full-time status and will normally register for 9-12 credits thereafter until coursework is complete to assure timely completion of the degree.[1]
- **Self-funded domestic students** will normally still register for 9 credits in the first semester of the second year, and 9-12 credits thereafter until coursework is complete to assure timely completion of the degree.[1]

Changing Levels and/or Status

Level 1 students are automatically changed to Level 2 when they complete 24 credits. Students who enter Binghamton University with an MA degree are already classified as Level 2. The status of PhD students who earn an MA degree while pursuing the PhD will be changed to level 3 when the MA is conferred. Level 4 status is automatically conferred when a student is admitted to candidacy.

16) Guidelines on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Graduate School *Manual* and University *Student Handbook* provide information on graduate students rights and responsibilities and University grievance procedures. An outline of Economics Department grievance procedures is given as Appendix 10. The procedures of the Economics Department for handling complaints involving gender sensitivity and/or sexual harassment are given as Appendix 11.

[1] As stated above most students will want to take 12 credit hours each semester during their first three semesters. However, MA students in their final semester may register for fewer that nine credits (usually eight) with the approval of ISSS. Although it is not advisable, PhD students at level 2 and beyond who need to maintain full-time status may register for fewer than nine hours if they take at least one hour of ECON 693, 694, 698, or 699. The student will then need to contact the department to be registered as full-time with non-billable hours. **Funded students** who are ABD will register for only one credit of ECON 699 and must contact the department to be registered as full-time with non-billable hours as well.

ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT OPERATING PROCEDURES

1) Department Office Hours

Administrative Assistant:	LT 911 - 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Department/Graduate Secretary:	LT 909 - 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Undergraduate Secretary:	LT 912 – MTWR 9:30 to 1:30

***NOTE:* The staff offices are generally closed daily12:00- 1:00 PM for lunch**.

2) Department Rooms

The Economics Department has four rooms that are available for use by any faculty, staff or graduate student. All users are expected to follow these general rules:

- Please do not leave or store any personal items - these rooms are not private offices. It is inappropriate to "live" in these spaces. Personal items such as lamps, microwaves, coffee makers, blankets, etc. are not allowed.
- Since these are public rooms, keep them neat and **please clean up any spills**.
- Please do not add, move or remove any furniture without first checking with the office.
- If it appears that you are the last one leaving, please **shut the windows, turn off the lights and lock the door**.

Conference Room—LT 907

This room is largely a meeting or social area unless reserved for another purpose. Students are welcome to use the refrigerator, microwave, and toaster oven during office hours (above). If it is necessary to reserve the room, see the department secretary (LT 909) to do so. The following are general rules for this space:

- Refrigerator: Label and date anything put in the refrigerator. If something is to be left in the refrigerator for everyone to use, then that should be labeled too ("For Everyone"). Do NOT take items in the refrigerator unless they are labeled as "For Everyone".
- Books/journals/papers: anything left on the table is presumed to be free to whomever wants it – students are encouraged to take anything that is of interest.
- The area MUST BE KEPT CLEAN; it is not the responsibility of the staff to do so. Clean up after yourselves and do not leave a mess in the oven or microwave. Ask the staff if cleaning supplies are needed.

Work Room—LT 910

This room contains the mailboxes and copy machine, which is available for use by anyone with a copy card during department office hours (above). These copy cards are different from the library copy cards and can be purchased at the Copy Center (in the basement of the Library Tower - to the right as you exit the elevator). The fee includes 200+ copies and the card can be "refilled" at the Copy Center. Any problems with the copy machine should be addressed to the department secretary in LT 909. **Please note that this room is not available after 4:30 when the staff leaves for the day.**
A scanner for use by faculty, staff and graduate students is also in this room. However, since this room also is the office for work/study students, it is expected that the desk space will be kept clean at all times and that use of the computer and scanner will not interfere with the work/study student's assignment.

The Work Room is NOT to be used as a computer POD or for e-mail. The computer is for scanning and course work only.

Economics Department Library—LT 1007

This is a library of various economics. PhD dissertations are also stored here. Journals may circulate for as long as needed, but should be returned as soon as possible. Dissertations are NOT to be taken from the room.

Furniture should NOT be rearranged in this room, and it is NOT intended for holding office hours.

3) Departmental Computers

The following rules should be observed regarding all computers:

- NEVER store data on the hard drive of a computer that is not your own. It will be removed without warning.
- No food or drink is allowed while working at any computer station.
- DO NOT move any of the equipment around.

Students assigned to faculty offices on a temporary basis may sometimes be allowed to use faculty computers for access to various programs. However NOTHING should be stored on these computers, nor should anything that is not directly needed for INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT be downloaded. Likewise, some graduate student offices may be equipped with older machines for use ONLY by the students assigned to that office. Data should never be stored on these machines and nothing other than programs necessary for instructional support should ever be downloaded.

4) E-Mail

The department requires all students to obtain and use a Binghamton electronic mail address. Students with questions or issues concerning their Binghamton e-mail should contact the computer consultant. It is STRONGLY recommended that students access their e-mail account directly through webmail and NOT forward to other web-based e-mail services that may not reliably accept Binghamton e-mail. Students should follow the information at: https://its.binghamton.edu/email to access their BU e-mail account.

Nearly all of the important information the department has for students will be sent through e-mail. It is the students' responsibility to check their e-mail **several times daily**, as this is often the only way the department can reach them with important messages. The University policy regarding electronic communications specifies that the Binghamton e-mail account will be the official channel for all e-mail communications, and that students will be responsible for all information sent to that address.

5) Addresses and Contact Information

It is **vitally** important that the department have the current address and telephone number, as well as a permanent contact, on file for all students. Changes and updates can be made at the Payroll Contract Info Enter your pods information for access. If you need your SUNY ID you can see the graduate secretary in LT 909.

6) Campus Mail

For convenience, campus inter-office mail will be placed in mail slots in LT 910.

Students **SHOULD NOT** use the department as a mailing address for personal mail from off-campus. All personal off-campus mail should be sent to the student's home, or they may obtain a free mailbox by applying at the campus post office.

Reminder: It is **illegal** to remove mail, magazines or anything else from a mailbox that is not your own.

7) University Smoking/Tobacco Use Policy

Binghamton University has adopted a Tobacco Free Campus Initiative which will be effective August 1, 2017. Please see the University website for more information and smoking cessation information. Tobacco Free Campus Info

8) Office Space, Keys and Building Passes

Offices: TA/GAs are provided with office space to prepare course material, to hold office hours, and/or to work on research assignments. This space is primarily for holding office hours, which must take precedence over all other uses. Since these offices will be shared with other TA/GAs, it is often not practical to use for personal study.

Office Hours: Teaching assistants must ask their faculty supervisor what kind of office hours they should have, and then check with any other students sharing the space to make sure that office hours do not conflict.

NOTE: *Students may not use nails or tape to attach items to the walls of the office space—use adhesive mounting putty or Command® hooks instead.*

Keys: Keys for assigned offices and the building are available from the graduate secretary in LT 909. A detailed copy of the key policy is available upon request. **For security reasons, if a key is lost, the student may be responsible for paying for the re-keying of the room and for all keys needed for that particular room or rooms.**

Building Passes: Students planning to be in the department after hours and/or on weekends will need to obtain a building pass from the department secretary. Campus Police will confiscate all University keys from anyone who does not have a valid pass.

9) Telephones, Faxes, Messages, etc.

Department telephones are for faculty and staff use. The office staff will, of course, take emergency messages and arrange for students to make emergency local calls using departmental phones; however, such calls should be kept to an absolute minimum.

The departmental FAX machine is for administrative, instructional, immigration and placement use **only**. All other FAXes should be sent and received from another source such as the Telecommunications Office located in Library North (LN) G216 – the FAX number is 607-777-4000.