# ECONOMICS, PHD

Tulane University's Economics Department offers a Ph.D. program in Economics. This Ph.D. program gives students distinctive training designed to make them attractive candidates for employment in universities, government, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and the non-profit sector. Our program is distinguished by three features:

**Applied focus.** The program is designed for students who are interested in using economic analysis to investigate real world problems. Students receive extensive training in the tools of economic analysis. These tools are an essential job skill for those who seek to evaluate public policies.

**Interdisciplinary approach.** The program breaks down the barriers to interdisciplinary graduate education by incorporating field coursework and research experiences with our prestigious cross campus partners. Our cross campus partners include the Freeman School of Business, the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, the Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, the Department of Political Science, and the Murphy Institute of Political Economy. Students will acquire the practical interdisciplinary knowledge necessary for innovative research and careful policy analysis.

**Small, highly selective program with a high faculty-to-student ratio.** This facilitates closer interaction between students and faculty, who are dedicated to research at the frontiers of their fields. Importantly, students have the opportunity to undertake joint research projects with faculty, as part of the training. Generous fellowships are available and are awarded on the basis of academic merit and potential for scholarship. Accepted students receive funding for five years, conditional on satisfactory progress through the program.

## Requirements

## Curriculum

The degree of Ph.D. in economics requires 48 credit hours, passage of preliminary examinations within the first two years of study, a dissertation prospectus, a dissertation proposal, and a final dissertation defense.

The course of study in the first year includes:

- microeconomics (two semesters)
- econometrics (two semesters)
- macroeconomics (one semester)
- applied econometric methods for policy analysis (one semester)

In their second and third years, students will complete field courses in economics and in partner schools. Interdisciplinary fields of study have been designed so that students can draw from the expertise of faculty in Economics as well as our partner schools. The fields of concentration are:

- Health, education, and human capital
- Public economics and public policy
- Development, inequality, and poverty.

While student research may ultimately focus on a single field of concentration, students will take classes spanning multiple concentrations and will be encouraged to explore synergies between multiple areas.

### Student Milestones, Required Examinations, and Monitoring of Progress to Degree

There are six program milestones: (1) Preliminary Examination, (2) Field Paper, (3) Choosing a Dissertation Advisor and Committee, (4) the Dissertation Prospectus Defense (Admission to Candidacy), (5) the Dissertation Proposal Defense, and (6) the final Dissertation Defense itself. Satisfactory performance in the Ph.D. program is defined as maintaining at least a B average, obtaining no grade lower than a B-, and meeting these six milestones on time.

1. **The Preliminary Examination**: is taken during the summer of the first program year. Failing the micro theory and/or econometrics portion(s) of the exam entitles a student to retake the failed portion in January of year II. Failing a second time is cause for dismissal. Students who fail a second time and are otherwise in good standing are typically allowed to continue in the program through the fourth semester. Satisfactory performance in 36 credit hours of approved graduate courses allows them to earn the degree of M.S. in Economics.
2. **Field Paper**: In year II, students should choose a **Field Paper Chair** and, together with this Chair, form a Field Paper Committee. The Committee must have at least three faculty members on it, including the Chair. The Chair and at least one other Committee member must be tenured or tenure-track professors of Tulane University's Department of Economics. The third Committee member must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member of Tulane University, from Economics or another discipline. Additional members from Tulane or other academic institutions may be added at the Chair's discretion. The student is to have a Field Paper proposal approved by the Committee by May 15 of program year II. The Field Paper is then written during the second summer. A full draft of the paper is to be handed in to the Chair by August 15, and a final version of the paper is due to the full Committee for approval by September 15.

3. **Dissertation Committee**: The Field Paper Chair and Committee structure often evolve naturally into Dissertation Advisor and Dissertation Committee. However, this two-step structure also provides a natural opportunity to modify or entirely change the supervision of a student. It is expected that the Dissertation Committee will be formally constituted by December 15 of program year III. While there is no formal paperwork concerning this step, it is expected that the student will notify the Director of Graduate Studies via email, with copies to his Dissertation Committee members and to the Chair of the Department of Economics.
4. **3rd Year Prospectus Defense**: With the Field Paper approved, the remainder of the Fall III semester is spent coming up with dissertation topics and choosing a Dissertation Committee. In order to aid the process of research topic development, third-year students are required to take ECON-7980, "Research Methods," a class in which ideas are developed and presented on a weekly basis. Spring III is spent refining a dissertation prospectus under consultation with the Dissertation Committee, with the goal of a formal **3rd Year Dissertation Prospectus Defense** by May 15 of year III. Successful 3rd Year Prospectus defense and satisfactory completion of the requisite coursework advances the student to Ph.D. Candidate status. It is the student's responsibility to (i) schedule the defense with her/his Committee, (ii) obtain signatures for and submit to the Dean the "Approval of Dissertation Prospectus" and "Admission to Candidacy" forms, and (iii) give one copy to the Director of Graduate Studies and one copy to the Office Manager. A link to the required forms appears below.
5. **4th Year Dissertation Proposal Defense**: Economics dissertations typically consist of three research papers. Years IV and V are entirely devoted to writing the dissertation. Students will be going on the job market in the fall of year V and job applications typically require submitting at least one fully polished dissertation paper to prospective employers by mid-October. With this objective in mind, the **4th Year Dissertation Proposal Defense** should take place no later than May 15 of program year IV. The 4th Year Proposal must consist of at least one fully developed paper and well-developed drafts of the rest of the dissertation. A successful 4th Year Dissertation Proposal Defense implies certification by the Dissertation Committee that (a) a fully polished paper will be ready by the October job market deadline and (b) that it is feasible to complete the entire dissertation within the remaining Program year.
6. **Oral Defense:** It is expected that the PhD in Economics will be earned in five years. Once the dissertation has been completed, the School of Liberal Arts requires an Oral Defense of the dissertation. In order for the degree of PhD in Economics to be completed the student must organize an oral defense of her/his dissertation, have the Dissertation Committee members sign the Oral Defense Approval Form, turn in a copy of the completed Form to the Economics Department Director of Graduate Studies, and submit the original signed form to the SLA Graduate Programs office immediately following the Defense. Students are responsible for knowing the SLA deadlines for degree application and also knowing the requirements for digital submission of their dissertation. These guidelines can be found under the heading "Directions for Completion of Graduation Requirements and Submission of Doctoral Dissertation" at this website: https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/graduating-students (https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/graduating-students/).

***A NOTE ON RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS****: Students should expect to complete the PhD program in five years and yet they will typically finish taking classes in the first half of that time. The dissertation-writing phase thus accounts for at least half of the program. This is a very important, formative time when students mature as professional economists. They interact with the faculty, learn to teach and perform research by working with faculty members as RA's or TA's, present their own work in workshops and seminars, travel to conferences, participate in departmental seminars, and meet with visiting speakers. Students who choose to leave during this period typically never complete the PhD degree. It is therefore expected that all PhD students will remain in residence in New Orleans during this very important and formative period. Leaving New Orleans without obtaining explicit written approval from the student's dissertation advisor and from the Director of Graduate Studies will constitute grounds for terminating financial support permanently. Any such written approval must be obtained by the end of the first month of the semester before the intended absence.*