**University of Pittsburgh Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences**
**Department of Economics**

# Graduate Student Handbook – PhD Program

**Updated February 2024**

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## I. Overview

The mission of the doctoral program is to educate and inspire graduate students in economics to become creators of knowledge and providers of high-quality teaching, and to attain successful careers in academia, research, institutions, government, and the private sector. The normal time to completion of the PhD degree is five to six years. The department does not offer a master's degree program.

This document describes the rules, requirements, and responsibilities of doctoral students during their residency in the Department of Economics at the University of Pittsburgh. It is assumed that all students in the doctoral program are familiar with the material in this document and agree to abide by the rules, requirements, and responsibilities as set forth below. Students also agree to abide by all University of Pittsburgh academic regulations for graduate students as set forth in the University's Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog.

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) works with members of the department's Graduate Committee to certify the completion of graduate student requirements and to resolve any graduate program problems or disputes.

The Graduate Committee currently comprises:
Prof. Luca Rigotti, DGS (rigotti@pitt.edu)
Prof. Daniele Coen-Pirani
Prof. Andreas Ferrara
Prof. Mahrad Sharifvaghefi
Prof. Rania Gihleb
Prof. Alistair Wilson
Gwendolyn Viles, Graduate Administrator
Mardoche Ayitchehou, Graduate Student Representative

Students should feel free to contact the DGS, the Graduate Administrator, or the other members of the Graduate Committee regarding any problem they are having with the graduate program. Problems unrelated to the graduate program should be brought to the attention of the Department Chair, Professor Marla Ripoll.

## II. Advising

The DGS is the principal advisor for all new graduate students. Beginning in the spring term of year two, the instructor of the Research Methods in Economics course and the DGS will assist students to find two faculty members who will become the readers of the second-year research paper. Either the first reader or the DGS will advise students with course registration until the end of spring term of the student's third year in the program. At the beginning of the fourth year, the student will identify a faculty member to act as the major advisor for his/her dissertation research, and to act as the chair of the committee once the student constitutes a committee for the dissertation overview.

### A. Registration Guidelines

Full-time graduate students are those registered for nine or more credits in any given term. All graduate students must be in active status and must register for at least one credit during the term in which they are completing their preliminary examinations, comprehensive examination, field requirements, admission to candidacy, dissertation defense, and graduation.

Full-time teaching assistants, teaching fellows, graduate student assistants, and graduate student researchers are required to be full-time students during the fall and spring terms of their appointment and may register for up to 15 credits each term.

Doctoral students who have completed the 72-credit requirement (See section III-A), have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0, have completed both field requirements (see section III.E), and are working full-time on their dissertation may register for "Full-Time Dissertation Study" (FTDC 3999), which carries no credits or letter grade, but provides students with the full-time status necessary to meet funding and/or visa eligibility requirements. Students who register for FTDC are assessed a lower tuition fee.

### B. Cross-Registration Program

Graduate students can register for courses at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) from either the Heinz School of Public Policy, the Tepper School of Business or Social Decision Sciences. Other approved universities may be considered. Cross-registration requires prior approval by the DGS, is limited to one semester-long course (4 CMU credits), or two mini-courses per term (2 CMU credits each). These cross-registered courses count toward the 45 economics graded credit requirement as well as toward the student's GPA but do not count toward major or minor requirements. The student must be registered at the University of Pittsburgh for at least nine credits (full time status) before cross-registration. There are no additional tuition charges for cross-registration.

Students should be aware of the deadlines for cross-registration, which are different than the deadlines for internal enrollment. A cross-registration form must be filled out by the student and signed by the DGS via DocuSign. The student will send the signed form to the Graduate Administrator, who will forward the form to the Graduate Office and the Registrar's Office for approval and processing.

## III. Requirements for the PhD Degree

### A. Credit Requirements

The minimum requirement for the PhD is 72 credits in academic courses (this is university-wide policy as described by the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in the university course catalog).

Credits in courses such as physical education, music, languages, etc. count toward the cumulative number of credits, but do not fulfill the 72 credit requirement. Of the 72 credits, 45 must be earned in graded course work in economics. The remaining 27 credits can come from non-graded courses, independent study, dissertation research and/or transfer credits. The student's graduate advisor or the DGS must approve graded courses that are taken outside of the department.

Graded courses correspond to those in which the student obtains a letter grade (LG option) on the standard scale A, B, C, etc. Graded courses in which the student earns a grade of C+ or lower do not count toward the 72 credit requirement. The official grading policy for non-graded courses is Satisfactory / No Credit (or S/NC). A student must obtain a grade of S for a non-graded course to count toward the 72 credit requirement. Advanced students who have already completed the 72 credit requirement may still register for up to 6 credits per term under the S/NC non-graded option, or under the Noncredit audit option, which carries a grade N.

The Department of Economics graded coursework requirement is to be completed according to the following schedule:

<u>First year of study</u>: 9 required courses, 27 total credits, 24 graded credits

- ECON 3001, Introduction to Mathematical Methods (3 credits, non-graded)
- ECON 3010, Mathematical Methods of Economic Analysis (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3020, Econometric Theory I (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3030, Microeconomic Theory I (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3040, Macroeconomic Theory I (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3050, Econometric Theory II (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3060, Microeconomic Theory II (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3070, Macroeconomic Theory II (3 credits, graded)
- ECON 3080, Empirical Methods (3 credits, graded)

<u>Second and third year of study</u>:

- ECON 3210, Teaching Economics, mandatory in the fall term of the second year of study (1 credit, non-graded)
- ECON 3220, Research Methods in Economics, mandatory in the spring term of the second year of study (1 credit, non-graded)
- ECON 3900, PhD Comprehensive Preparation, can only be taken in the fall term of the third year of study to revise and fulfill the second-year research paper requirement (4 credits, non-graded)
- Six graded elective field courses in economics (see Section III.E. Field Requirements)
- Two graded seminars in economics

<u>Fourth year of study and beyond</u>:

- Any remaining required field courses to complete the 45 graded credits in economics coursework and the 72 total credits.

- One seminar each semester: students who have passed the PhD Comprehensive Exam (second-year research paper requirement), have earned 72 credits, and who register for Full Time Dissertation Study (FTDS) are still expected to formally register in seminars, either as Satisfactory/ No Credit (S/NC) or as Noncredit audit (N). Students must discuss with the instructor the option of having grade options S/NC or N. The student must also notify the Graduate Administrator if they are receiving funding, who will contact the Graduate Dean's office in order to ensure that the student is not charged a fee.
- Any field courses of interest: students in FTDS status and awarded funding may register for up to 6 credits a term (2 courses, including seminars) without charge. As in the case of seminars, at the beginning of the term students must discuss with the instructor the option of having grade options S/NC or N and must notify the Graduate Administrator to avoid financial charges.

<u>Notes</u>:

- ECON 3001 is offered over three weeks in August prior to the start of the first year. These credits do not count toward the 45 graded credits requirement. After completing ECON 3001 a student may have the option of taking a test that would allow them to waive ECON 3010. This practice is generally discouraged, and it will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the relevant instructors and the DGS. The instructor for ECON 3010 will give this test the first week of the fall term. If a student passes, he/she must substitute another graded course.
- Only in exceptional circumstances, when an incoming student has taken first-year PhD courses as part of a reputable MA in Economics program, he/she will be allowed to substitute no more than one course in each of the fall and spring terms of the first year. The student must submit the syllabus and transcripts of the corresponding course to the DGS, who will consult with the relevant first-year instructor. If approved, the student will be allowed to take another graded course in economics, or a directed study (ECON 3902). Directed studies are graded courses and are only feasible when a faculty member in the economics department agrees to prepare a reading list to guide the student through an advanced study of a topic. In general, directed studies are reserved for students who have excelled in a specific subject in other previous graduate work, have taken enough courses in the subject, and have already conducted research in the area. A directed study on the terms described here (with a faculty member in economics) counts towards the 45 graded credits of coursework in economics.
- It is required that all students complete a total of 27 credits (9 courses) during the first year, with at least 24 graded credits.
- The list of elective field graded courses in each term must be approved by the student's advisor or the DGS (see section II) prior to registration.
- Elective field graded courses must be used to satisfy the field requirements as described in section III.E.
- Courses must carry graduate-level credits (i.e., 3000-level courses). Prior to Fall 2017, 1000-level courses were counted toward the 72-credit requirement; students admitted after Fall 2017 may not count these courses. Furthermore, courses numbered below 1000 do not qualify.
- Students who have taken relevant PhD level courses at other institutions may request transferring up to 6 credits (generally 2 courses). Requests must be submitted to the DGS

and will be reviewed in consultation with relevant faculty. Transferred credits do not count toward the 45 graded coursework requirement.

- Independent studies, and individual research credits do not count toward fulfillment of the 45 graded course work requirement.
- It is a policy of the department that students officially register in all courses or seminars they attend. The option to take any course as non-graded (S/NC or N options) must be discussed with the instructor at the beginning of the term. The Grade Option Request Form serves as a reminder to both the instructor and the student on the terms of the agreement. The form is available from the Graduate Administrator.

### B. Minimum GPA

To be certified for the doctoral degree in economics, all students must attain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 in all 3000-level economics course work and in all courses qualifying for graduation.

### C. Preliminary Examination Requirement

The PhD preliminary examination consists of a four-hour exam in microeconomic theory and a second four-hour exam in macroeconomic theory. Students must complete the first year with a GPA no lower than 3.0 in order to take the preliminary examinations. Students must pass both examinations to satisfy the preliminary examination requirement and to continue in the program.

The exams are to be taken at the end of the spring term of the first year of study (typically the first full week of June). If a student fails either or both preliminary examinations given in June, a second attempt is offered later in the summer of that same year (typically in August). The exact dates of all examinations will be announced in advance.

The grading scale for preliminary exams is: P+ (pass with honors), P (pass), M (fail at PhD level but pass towards a terminal MA degree) and F (fail).

A student who has failed both exams after two attempts at each (M or F grades) will be dismissed from the PhD program. However, a student may continue enrollment during the fall term of the second year to complete a terminal MA degree if: 1) the student passed one of the two PhD preliminary examinations with at least an M grade; and 2) if the student has earned at least a B letter grade in no less than 12 credits (4 first-year courses). In order to complete the terminal MA degree, the student must: 1) complete 30 credits of graded coursework; and 2) have a cumulative GPA of no less than 3.0. If the student was admitted in the PhD program with funding, then funding will be provided for the fall term while the student completes the terminal MA degree. Funding will take the form of a TA appointment, and the student is expected to perform all duties to the satisfaction of the faculty member he/she is assisting.

Only under truly exceptional circumstances, a student who has passed (P or P+) one preliminary examination but has obtained no less than an M grade in the other (after two attempts) may petition for a third attempt at the remaining examination (which would be given in June at the end of the student's second year). Granting of these petitions is at the discretion of the Graduate Committee.

In the case of medical-related circumstances, proper documentation from a medical provider must be submitted. No retroactive documentation of medical conditions will be accepted. Students who are granted a third attempt will still be expected to satisfy all second-year course requirements. A student who fails in the third attempt at an exam will be dismissed from the program, although he/she may apply to receive a terminal master's degree (MA) if 30 credits of graduate level coursework are completed with a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Continuing PhD students who have passed both preliminary examinations and completed 30 credits of graduate-level coursework may also apply to receive a master's degree.

**D. Comprehensive Examination Requirement (PhD Comprehensive Research Paper)**

All students are required to complete a second-year research paper demonstrating their ability to initiate original research in economics. The department prefers and recommends single-authored papers. In exceptional circumstances, the Graduate Committee will allow the PhD comprehensive paper to be co-authored with a member of the faculty if the faculty co-author writes a letter describing the student's substantial contribution to the joint project.

The timeline for the completion of this requirement is as follows:

1. Registration in ECON 3220, Research Methods in Economics, during the spring term of the second year of study. This course assists students in the transition from first-year coursework to research. The main purpose of the course is the drafting of the second- year research paper proposal and the identification of two faculty readers.
2. Submission of a four-to-five-page research proposal by May 1st of the second year of the program. This proposal must contain the following four sections: introduction, literature review, methods and procedures, and tentative schedule. The introduction should motivate the research, clearly state the research question, explain the importance of the research and the contribution, and state the types of insights the research will provide. The methods and procedures should be described in as much detail as possible. The tentative plan should establish target dates to complete different components of the research over the summer of the second year and should be the basis to discuss the expectations of progress with the first reader. The proposal should list two faculty members who will serve as readers and supervise the project. These faculty members should sign a form to accept their role. By accepting the proposal, the two faculty members commit to supervision of the PhD comprehensive paper to completion of the review process. This is not, however, a commitment to supervision of the dissertation.
3. Submission of a complete paper by September 1st. A complete paper is one that states a question, reviews the relevant literature, presents a coherent methodology, and provides results.
4. Registration in ECON 3900, PhD Comprehensive Preparation, in the fall term of the third year. This non-graded course allows students to continue working on their second- year paper. While working to complete this paper, students should meet regularly with the readers.

5. Presentation of the paper in a seminar by October 30th in the fall term of the student's third year. Both faculty readers, as well as a member of the Graduate Committee, should be present at the seminar.
6. Following the presentation of the paper, the student needs to meet with the two faculty readers for discussion/direction on changes and additions necessary to complete the research paper requirement.
7. The completed paper must be delivered to the two faculty supervisors by December 15th in the third year of study. Supervisors will then submit their pass-fail grades to the Graduate Committee by the end of the fall term.
8. Failure to pass the comprehensive examination requirement is grounds for dismissal from the PhD program.

If during the research, and in consultation with the first reader, a student must change the original second-year research proposal, he/she must notify the DGS and submit an updated version of the proposal. In addition, the student must consult with the DGS if the change in the proposal requires a change in the two readers.

Expect for those students who co-author their second-year paper with a member of the faculty, all other second-year students are automatically considered for the annual Best Second-Year Paper Award, which is announced at the beginning of students' fourth year in the program.

## E. Field Requirements

A variety of courses are offered within six different fields. The six fields are:

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Applied Microeconomics
- Experimental Economics
- International and Development Economics
- Econometrics

The field of Applied Microeconomics offers more than one subfield or "track" (e.g. Urban / Public / Environmental, History). The list of courses offered within each field is periodically updated by the DGS in coordination with members of the Graduate Committee representing each of the fields. Graduate Committee members consult with relevant faculty members in each field to plan course offerings. These faculty members shall be responsible for the enforcement of field requirements.

Students are required to take coursework in two major fields, consisting of two graded courses and one graded seminar in each field, and one minor field consisting of two graded courses. The two major fields must be completed within different areas. Students can major in only one of the tracks offered within Applied Microeconomics but can pursue a minor in another track.

The minor field requirement is flexible, including either two graded courses within a single field, or in two different fields. All minor courses must be on fields different from the two majors. Minor courses are meant to be complementary to the two majors, either contributing to the student's breadth of knowledge, or allowing them to explore relevant content for their dissertation.

Course descriptions will indicate which field requirement(s) are satisfied by successful course completion. Students must verify the fulfillment of these requirements by filling out the Majors and Minor Field Completion Form when they register for FTDS, typically in the fall term of the fourth year. The form should be submitted electronically to the Graduate Administrator.

Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Labor / Development will offer seminars in one semester; Experimental, Econometrics, and Applied Micro seminars will be offered in the other semester.

### F. Dissertation Overview (Admission to Candidacy)

At the University of Pittsburgh, all PhD students must complete and defend a doctoral dissertation. An early step in this process is the Dissertation Overview where the student presents a summary of his/her proposed research to the doctoral committee. The overview requires the student to carefully formulate a plan and permits the doctoral committee members to provide guidance in shaping the conceptualization and methodology of that plan. The doctoral committee must unanimously approve the dissertation topic and research plan before the student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Approval of the proposal does not imply either the acceptance of a dissertation prepared in accord with the proposal, or the restriction of the dissertation to this original proposal. The student is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate regulatory approvals are obtained for the proposed research. For example, if the research proposed in the overview or prospectus involves human subjects, that proposed research must be approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before it may be carried out.

By the beginning of the fall term of the fourth year in the program, the student must identify a faculty member from the Department of Economics who agrees to serve as the major advisor for the student's dissertation research. In so doing, the student is required to obtain the faculty member's signature on a form that will be kept on file in the economics Graduate Office. Subsequent changes in the designated major advisor must be approved by the DGS.

The dissertation overview is typically scheduled with the consent of the student's major advisor(s) only when the student has one or more completed chapters of his/her dissertation and has a thorough outline of how the other chapters will be completed. The overview consists of both a written statement and an oral presentation to the major advisor (committee chair) and a tentative doctoral committee on:

a) the general subject of the proposed dissertation,
b) the principal source materials to be used,
c) the techniques and methods to be pursued, and
d) a survey of the literature relevant to the chosen topic.

Candidates may appear for the overview only after they have completed the preliminary examination, comprehensive examination, and other departmental requirements.

The timeline for completion of the overview requirement is as follows. For students who enrolled in the PhD program up to AY 2021-22 (included), the deadline for passing the overview is:

1. At least three weeks prior to the beginning of their 5th year in the program if they are going on the market in year 5.
2. The end of the 5th year in the program otherwise.

For students who enrolled in the PhD program starting in AY 2022-23 (included):

1. An overview must be held by the last day of the spring semester of a student's fourth year in the program (according to the academic calendar).
2. Failure to schedule an overview according to 1 is grounds for dismissal from the program.
3. If a student holds an overview but does not pass it, they will have a second chance to retake it by a second deadline: three weeks prior to the start of the academic year in which they would begin their 5th year in the program.
4. Failure to pass the overview at the second attempt is grounds for dismissal from the PhD program.
5. In strenuous and verifiable circumstances, a student may petition the graduate committee and request a delay of their overview relative to the deadline in point 1. These circumstances include a health shock or a primary advisor announcing their departure from the University less than a year from the overview deadline. The petition must be submitted before the overview deadline."

The doctoral committee must be constituted as follows:

- Three faculty members from the Department of Economics and one faculty member from either another department at the University of Pittsburgh, or from another university.
- Faculty members from the University of Pittsburgh must have Graduate Faculty status.
- The outside committee member must be approved by the Graduate Dean's office prior to the Overview.
- One of these four faculty members (usually the student's major advisor) is designated as the committee chair. In cases where the student chooses a faculty member from outside of the department as the dissertation committee chair, the student must also choose a faculty member from the Department of Economics as the co-chair.
- All committee members must be present for the Dissertation Overview. If this is not possible, the student can solicit approval from the Graduate Dean's office for a member to be present via Skype or other teleconferencing technologies. If this is approved, this committee member must be present at the Dissertation Defense and no further exceptions can be requested.

While co-authorships are encouraged among graduate students, at least one solo paper is required as one of the dissertation chapters. Only in exceptional circumstances a student may include three co-authored papers in the dissertation, all of which must be a very high quality. When a co- authored paper is included in a dissertation, the student should indicate in a footnote at the beginning of the corresponding chapter the names of all co-authors. Co-authored papers cannot read identical across dissertations. At the very least, the introduction of the paper must read differently, framing the paper within the student's specific dissertation theme / general subject.

Finally, under no circumstances would two completely identical dissertations be allowed (i.e., two students cannot be coauthors in every single dissertation chapter).

The candidate and committee members may choose to attend the overview either in person or remotely without needing prior approval. In cases where there are both in-person and remote attendees, the hybrid meeting must be conducted synchronously. Please consult the Dietrich School's Doctoral Dissertation Committee Policy for all the University rules governing Overviews and Dissertation Defenses.

### G. Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is conducted by the student's doctoral committee and chaired by the student's advisor(s). The candidate, the Chair of the committee, and at least one other committee member must attend the dissertation defense in person. If a candidate has co-chairs, the candidate, BOTH co-chairs, and at least one other member must attend in person. If the defense will have any configuration other than this, a completed Remote Participation Request form must be submitted to the Graduate Administrator as early as possible prior to the defense. The Graduate Office must approve any virtual or hybrid defense requests prior to the defense taking place.

This final oral presentation and examination primarily consists of the candidate's defense of the dissertation, though the examination is not limited to materials in and related to the dissertation. One copy of the dissertation must be provided to each member of the doctoral committee at least two weeks prior to the date set for the oral examination. The examination is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance.

A minimum of eight months must elapse between the date of the student's Admission to Candidacy and the Dissertation Defense. Note that this does not mean eight months from the date of the Overview, but eight months from the date that appears on the formal Admission to Candidacy letter from the Dean.

## IV. Job Market Participation/Placement Assistance

There is a centralized academic job market in economics that is held annually as part of the Allied Social Sciences Association meetings (typically held the first full week of January). The placement director will distribute a first notice of intent by the middle of every spring term to identify students planning to go to the job market. All students planning to participate in the job market must pass their dissertation overview (i.e. achieved candidate status) at least three weeks prior to the beginning of their 5$^{th}$ academic year in the program. A second notice of intent identifying the three letter writers is due early in the fall term of the job market year. Job market talks take place throughout the fall and mock interviews occur in early December.

## V. Satisfactory Progress, Probation, and Dismissal

The award or renewal of teaching assistantships depends on both satisfactory progress in the academic program, and the appropriate training and performance of teaching duties (see section VI). Failure to make satisfactory academic progress, as defined below, is grounds for discontinuation of funding. Students who do not presently have teaching assistantships but who expect to apply for one later should be aware of the requirements they must meet in order to receive an award in later years of graduate study.

### A. Guidelines for Satisfactory Progress

- GPA requirement: Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA while in residence.
- Pass both PhD preliminary examinations by the second attempt (in August following the first year of study).
- Pass the English language fluency test administered by the English Language Institute before the start of the second year of study (non-native English speakers only).
- Completion of four graded field courses (12 credits) during the second year of study (i.e. 2 courses per semester).
- Submission of the PhD comprehensive exam (second-year research paper) by September 1st at the start of the third year and receipt of a "pass" grade on this paper by the end of the fall term of the third year.
- Completion of the field requirements by the beginning of the fourth year of study.
- Declare a main research advisor by September 1st at the start of the fourth year in the program.
- Completion of a dissertation overview (advancement to candidacy) according to the timing outlined in this handbook.

Starting in the second year of the program students will be asked to complete an annual written Progress Report. This report briefly summarizes all research and teaching activities by the student and provides the basis for his/her yearly evaluation. The Progress Report template will be distributed electronically by the Graduate Administrator in mid-April. Students must fill out the report and meet with their main advisor(s) to discuss it and obtain feedback on academic progress. A signature must be obtained from the advisor(s) to certify that a meeting to discuss the report has taken place. Both the Progress Report and the signature form must be submitted to the graduate office by mid-May. A student who fails to submit the annual Progress Report may be placed on probation by the Graduate Committee.

### B. Probation

If the overall GPA falls below 3.0, the student is automatically on academic probation. In addition, any student who is not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree, as defined above, may be placed on probation by the department. The student will be informed in writing of such action.

### C. Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the program for any of the following reasons:

- Violations of the University's Academic Integrity Code which governs cheating, plagiarism, etc.
- Failure to achieve the minimum required GPA or to maintain satisfactory progress.
- Failure to pass the PhD preliminary examinations after two attempts.
- Failure to complete the PhD comprehensive examination (second-year research paper requirement). Note that there is a seven-year statute of limitations on the PhD Comprehensive Exam (Second-Year Research Paper). Doctoral students must retake the PhD comprehensives if they do not graduate within seven years of the exam date. An extension of the seven-year limit on the

comprehensive exam is not permitted.
- Failure to complete the dissertation overview requirement.
- Failure to complete all requirements for the PhD degree within a period of 10 years starting from the date of the student's initial registration for graduate study.
- In addition, students may be removed from teaching or research responsibilities if their performance in these tasks is judged to be unsatisfactory. The Graduate Committee will serve to arbitrate any disputes.

## VI. Teaching Assistantships, Teaching Fellowships, and Graduate Student Assistantships

A teaching assistant (TA) is a graduate student who holds a University teaching or teaching- related appointment. A teaching fellow (TF) is the same as a TA except that a TF has passed all preliminary examinations. A graduate student assistant (GSA) is a graduate student who performs duties to assist in the educational or research mission of the university but does not teach classes or recitation sections. Stipend rates for TAs, TFs, and GSAs are available online.

### A. Funding Priorities

Priority for funding is based on academic performance, teaching qualifications, competency, teaching evaluations, participation in department seminars (as noted in section III.E), and length of time in the program. The specific priority used is:
1. Students who have received funding in the immediate past semester, who are in their first 10 semesters in the program, and who are currently meeting all guidelines for satisfactory progress.
2. Students who have continuously met guidelines for satisfactory progress in the past. This group includes incoming students.

Note that there should be no presumption of funding for students who have been in the program for more than 10 semesters. Such students will have an opportunity to receive funding only if funds remain after priority has been given to students as described above. Students should check with the DGS well in advance of the eleventh semester to determine their likelihood of receiving continued funding. Typically, these funding decisions are made sometime during the summer.

### B. Continuing Award Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a TA/TF/GSA award the student must:
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- Demonstrate fluency in the English language by passing the English language fluency test by the start of the second year of study.

### C. Rights and Duties of TA/TF/GSAs

The "Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows and Graduate Student Assistants Academic Regulations" describes the University-wide rights, responsibilities, and duties of TA/TF/GSA and can be viewed on-line. A student who believes he/she has been treated unfairly according to the guidelines set forth in the brochure should first attempt to discuss the problem with his or her supervisor, the director of graduate studies.

All new TA/TFs are required to attend an orientation program sponsored by the University's Center for Teaching and Learning. New TA/TFs must also register for the economics department's one-semester teacher training course, ECON 3210, Teaching Economics which is offered in the fall term of the second year. Any student who fails to take this course (or its equivalent, FACDEV 2200, University Teaching Practicum) jeopardizes his or her ability to be certified for graduation.

TAs who hold recitations are evaluated halfway through the term and receive feedback from the main instructor. A Class Visit Form is filled out by the main instructor and discussed with the TA during a follow-up meeting. When teaching issues are identified, additional support to the TA may be provided through one-on-one appointments with the Center for Teaching and Learning.

If TAs must miss teaching their recitation in an emergency (such as for an illness), they should notify the instructor of the course as soon as possible. The instructor will decide to either cancel or reschedule the recitation or arrange for a substitute. The TA or instructor should notify their students via the Canvas site about cancelling or rescheduling the recitation section.

## VII. Other Fellowships and Funding Sources

Other fellowship and non-teaching appointments are available.

- A&S Fellowships are typically awarded only to first-year students based on their application materials. All new PhD student applicants are automatically considered for A&S Fellowships. These one-year fellowships offer stipends at the level of a TA/TF plus an extra amount to offset the cost of health insurance.

- The Reuben E. Slesinger Fellowship is named in honor of Dr. Slesinger, a distinguished faculty member who taught in the department from 1940-86. The Slesinger Fellowship is awarded annually to the most promising entering PhD student, as determined by the graduate admissions committee. The terms of this one-year fellowship are equivalent to an A&S Fellowship.

- The S.H. Chou Fellowship is named in honor of Dr. Shun-Hsin (S.H.) Chou, a distinguished faculty member who taught in the department from 1957-85 and who was active in attracting students from his native China to do graduate work in the U.S. The Chou Fellowship is awarded biennially to a highly qualified entering PhD student from China and provides *two* years of support at a level equivalent to an A&S Fellowship. Students from Yengching Graduate Institute (YGI) or from a joint program between YGI and another academic institution in the People's Republic of China (PRC) are especially encouraged to apply. However, all student applicants from the PRC may be considered for this fellowship.
- A&S Summer Fellowships are offered each year to at least 10 continuing PhD students in the economics department. To be eligible to receive this fellowship, a student should be in their second or higher year in the program and should be in good academic standing (i.e., passed both preliminary examinations, GPA of 3.0 or higher). A call for proposals is circulated late in February of each year and applications are generally due around mid- March. Second-year students registered in ECON 3220, Research Methods in Economics, are particularly encouraged to apply using a shorter/ earlier version of their second-year research paper proposal. The Graduate Committee determines fellowship awards. Students who have been admitted to doctoral candidacy are not eligible for these fellowships.

- Andrew Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellowships are one-year fellowships that provide students with a little more funding than the TA/TF stipend and reprieve from all teaching responsibilities. Applicants should be well under way on their dissertations (typically in the third year or higher in the program). A call for proposals is circulated late in November each year. Students planning to apply are required to fill out a notice of intent form securing the signature of three faculty members who will write letters of support. The form is due in mid-December. Applications are submitted online, and the deadline is typically in mid-January each year. The competition for Mellon Fellowships is across all departments in A&S. While the Graduate Committee ranks the submitted proposals, final decisions are made by a committee in A&S. Awards are announced the first week of March. Students awarded a Mellon Fellowship are required to apply to an external funding opportunity (NSF awards, Mellon/ ACLS Fellowships, etc.) during the year of the award. The DGS and/or the Graduate Administrator will circulate announcements of these external fellowships to students holding Mellon Fellowships. Applications to most of these external fellowships occur early in the fall.

- Social Science Doctoral Dissertation (SSDD) Fellowships are offered each year to 3 continuing PhD students in the economics department. Like Mellon Fellowships, SSDDs provide students with a little more funding than the TA/TF stipend and reprieve from all teaching responsibilities. SSDDs are departmental awards and do not involve competition with other departments. Eligible students for a SSDD are those who would have completed the 72 credits required for the PhD degree by the beginning of the year of the award. In addition, it is a requirement of the SSDD that the student holds the dissertation overview by the end of the fall term of the award year. In order to apply for a SSDD Fellowship, students must apply to a Mellon Fellowship. The Graduate Committee will award SSDDs to those students who applied to a Mellon Fellowship but were not awarded one. The committee will follow the ranking established among Mellon Fellowship applicants. In addition, the Graduate Committee will consult with the students' main advisors to evaluate the feasibility of the requirement that the dissertation overview be held by the end of the fall term during the year of the award. Winners of SSDDs Fellowships will be announced the first week of March after the results of Mellon Fellowship applications are learned. Students awarded a SSDD Fellowship are required to apply to an external funding opportunity (NSF awards, Mellon/ ACLS Fellowships, etc.) during the year of the award. The DGS and/or the Graduate Administrator will circulate announcements of these external fellowships to students holding SSDD Fellowships. Applications to most of these external fellowships occur early in the fall.

- Other area-studies fellowships are available through the University Center for International Studies. This includes Chancellor's Graduate Fellowships through the Asian Studies Center and the Gutierrez Fellowship, which sponsors students whose focus of study is Latin America. The application deadline for most area-studies fellowships is mid-January or early February. Students should contact the director of graduate studies if they are planning to apply to one of these fellowships.

- Dean's Tuition Scholarships are awarded by the A&S Graduate Studies Office to continuing graduate students who demonstrate academic achievement and have exhausted their departmental funding. The award provides tuition only for one semester and is typically awarded to students who need to be enrolled in order to graduate. Application and further details are available from the Graduate Administrator.

- Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) may work with professors on research projects. These positions are subject to funding availability and are only at the invitation of individual faculty members.

- Departmental travel awards are available to support students' presentations at conferences. Since funds are limited, priority is given to students who are preparing for the job market and to other advanced students. Students should email the DGS to apply for a travel award. The DGS determines whether the student is eligible and may consult with the student's main advisor to verify that the paper is ready to be presented at a conference. The DGS will consult with the Department's Administrator to verify the availability of funds. Students who are awarded travel funds will be reimbursed after travel.

- A&S Planning and Budget Committee and Alumni Travel Fellowships are available to graduate students participating in conferences. Students who have completed 18 credits are eligible. PhD candidates may receive a second grant after completing their comprehensive exams.

- Teaching appointments to serve as main instructor, TA or grader for undergraduate courses are available during the summer terms (two six-week terms). A survey of interest is circulated each November for the following summer. Students who are awarded teaching appointments participate in the Summer Teaching Mentoring Program, which matches graduate students with faculty mentors. Excellence in teaching is recognized through the Graduate Student Teaching Award, which is announced at the beginning of every fall term.

For a list of further funding opportunities, see the A&S Graduate Studies Office financial assistance website.

## VIII. Dietrich Graduate School Embedded Clinician

The Dietrich Graduate School has an embedded clinician available for graduate students in the Arts & Sciences who need short-term counseling. If you are interested in meeting with the embedded clinician, please email Adriana Cox at adc254@pitt.edu or fill out the Embedded Clinician Request form. Examples of support provided:

- Anxiety and depression
- Adjustment and developmental concerns
- Interpersonal conflict
- Self-esteem
- Concerns related to life transitions
- Gender identity
- Sexuality
- Romantic relationships
- Substance use concerns
- Sexual violence/misconduct
- Racial trauma

Short-term counseling, as employed by college counseling centers, operates on a focused and outcome-oriented treatment model. This approach prioritizes addressing the specific issue causing distress for the individual rather than delving extensively into past experiences, such as childhood events. The emphasis lies in efficiently identifying and implementing solutions to the immediate concerns, allowing individuals to navigate, and overcome their challenges within a shorter time frame. This targeted method aligns with the unique needs and time constraints often present in a college setting, providing practical and timely support to those seeking assistance.

This form should not be used for urgent or immediate counseling support needs. Any student requiring support for an urgent or crisis situation may call the UCC at 412-648-7930 at any time to speak directly with a clinician. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency, please call 911 or Pitt

Police at 412-624-2121.