

*Ph.D. Handbook*  
*OCGSE Doctoral Program in Economics*  
*Departments of Economics*  
*Carleton University & University of Ottawa*  
*2016-2019*

Welcome to the Ottawa-Carleton Graduate School of Economics (OCGSE) Doctoral Program in Economics! This program is unique in Canada because it is jointly given by two universities: the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. As such, you have access to the professors and resources of both institutions. The purpose of this handbook is to outline some of the rules and traditions of the Joint Program in order to render more transparent how this program actually operates. You should note that nothing in this handbook should be taken as superseding the general regulations of the Graduate Schools of Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. **Students are subject to the calendar regulations of the university at which they are registered** and should consult the graduate calendar of their university, or the relevant Ph.D. program supervisor, for the particular rules and regulations governing such matters as thesis formatting and submission procedures. Descriptions of the courses offered by the two departments are found in the graduate calendars of the two universities.

Students are expected to know the rules contained in this handbook and in the calendar. If a student has a problem meeting a particular requirement, he or she should meet with the Director of the Joint Doctoral Program. The Directorship alternates between the two universities and is held by a professor in the Joint Program who is typically appointed for three years. For the period 2016-2019, the Director position will be held by Professor Louis-Philippe Morin, who will serve simultaneously as the Ph.D. Supervisor at the University of Ottawa. There is also an Associate Director of the Joint Program, also typically appointed for three years, who serves simultaneously as the Ph.D. Supervisor (or Supervisor of Doctoral Studies) at the university not holding the Directorship (Professor Hashmat Khan - Carleton University). A complete list of individuals charged with the management and administration of the Joint Program is provided at the end of this handbook.

### **Registration Requirements**

#### **Full Time**

In the Joint Doctoral Program, full-time students are normally expected to be enrolled in at least two graduate courses per term during each Fall-Winter session. Once the coursework phase has been completed, continual registration in the Ph.D. Thesis shell course is sufficient for maintaining full-time status.

A student with full-time employment may register as a full-time student only if the relevant Ph.D. program supervisor agrees that the employment relates to work directly linked to the student's research.

#### **Part Time**

University of Ottawa Ph.D. students can no longer have part-time status. Part-time status at Carleton University requires a student to enrol in a minimum of one graduate course per term and permits registration in a maximum of two graduate courses per term. A Carleton University student may register in the Ph.D. Thesis or Ph.D. Workshop shell courses and maintain part-time status.

## **Registration Requirements for Financial Assistance**

The graduate schools at the two universities award scholarship assistance to qualified full-time students on a full-year basis. To begin to be and remain eligible to receive funding students must

- be registered full-time in the degree program;
- maintain full-time status;
- progress at an acceptable rate through the program as determined by their department and the relevant dean of graduate studies;
- remain in good academic standing for the duration of their funding.

For information on the conditions in relation to scholarship funding and teaching assistantships, students should consult with their department and its associated faculty of graduate studies.

## **Ph.D. Program Requirements**

For courses in the Joint Program, a minimum grade of 70 percent is required for program credit. (Note that students are graded according to the system in use at the university at which they are registered.) All courses are one term in duration and no course may be repeated more than once. Carleton University courses are worth 0.5 credit apiece whereas those at the University of Ottawa courses are worth 3.

Notwithstanding additional course work that may be required by the admissions committee as a condition of entry, students admitted to the Joint Doctoral Program are required to complete:

- 2.0 C.U. credits or 12 U. of O. credits in Mathematical Foundations for Economic Theory (ECON 6019 or ECO 7119), Economic Theory: Microeconomics (ECON 6020 or ECO 7922), Economic Theory: Macroeconomics (ECON 6021 or ECO 7923), and Econometrics II (ECON 6027 or ECO 7126);
- 2.0 C.U. credits or 12 U. of O. credits in economics electives normally comprising two courses in each of two fields of specialization;
- Comprehensive Examination in Microeconomic Theory (ECON 6900 or ECO 7990), Comprehensive Examination in Macroeconomic Theory (ECON 6902 or ECO 7991), and Comprehensive Examination in Primary Field (ECON 6905 or ECO 9990) equivalent to 1.5 C.U. credits;
- Thesis Workshop I (ECON 6907 or ECO 7002) and Thesis Workshop II (ECON 6908 or ECO 7004) equivalent to 1.0 C.U. credit; and
- a Ph.D. thesis (ECON 6909 or THD 9999) equivalent to 5.0 C.U. credits.

## **Fields of Specialization**

Students are required to do course work in two of eight approved fields of specialization leading to a comprehensive examination in one of them (the primary field).

There are three courses in each approved field of specialization. Students are required to have successfully completed at least two of these courses prior to writing their primary field comprehensive exam. In cases where the student does not complete all three courses in their primary field, they are expected to have assimilated the information from the third course in advance of writing the primary field comprehensive exam. In addition, each student must satisfy a secondary field requirement by completing two of the three courses in an approved field other than their primary field.

Students are required to take four elective courses. Normally, two of these courses would be taken in aid of preparing the student to write the primary field comprehensive exam and two would be taken to satisfy the

secondary field requirement. In cases where the student completed one or more of these courses as part of their master's program, these courses can count toward the primary or the secondary field requirement. However, in this case, additional courses must be completed in order to satisfy the requirement of four economics electives.

The eight approved fields of specialization are:

- Econometrics
- Economic Development
- Economics of the Environment
- Industrial Organization
- International Economics
- Labour Economics
- Monetary Economics
- Public Economics

### **Comprehensive Examinations**

As is typical of North American Ph.D. programs in economics, students in the Joint Doctoral Program are required to write comprehensive examinations. The main purpose of these examinations is to ensure that students have an integrated knowledge of the relevant subject matter and are thus prepared to advance to dissertation research. Each student is required to pass three comprehensive examinations, one in each of microeconomic and macroeconomic theory (ECON 6020 or ECO 7922 and ECON 6021 or ECO 7923, respectively) and one in the student's chosen primary field of specialization (ECON 6905 or ECO 9990).

Comprehensive examinations are written examinations that are evaluated by an examination board normally comprising economics faculty from both universities. Although not compulsory, an oral examination may be required by an examination board in certain cases deemed to be "borderline" (i.e., at the margin between passing and failing). **During an oral examination, the candidate will have access to no written material other than their own unannotated written examination script and the associated question paper.** All students will be provided as soon as possible after they write each comprehensive exam with a copy of their written exam script in order in part to prepare for the possibility of being given an oral exam. **If required, an oral examination will only be conducted after the second attempt at a particular comprehensive examination and only in cases that are borderline.**

Comprehensive examinations are written twice a year, usually in May and late August. The theory comprehensive boards meet during both these periods and students writing the comprehensive exam for a second time are asked to wait outside the board meeting room so as to be available should an oral exam be required. The field comprehensive boards will almost always be scheduled during the designated periods but an associated board meeting may not take place should a clear consensus on the appropriate (pass/fail) grades be determined by the board members through communication in advance of the scheduled board meeting. Students are informed individually of their grades on comprehensive exams via e-mail messages from the Director normally within two weeks of writing them. **No comprehensive examination may be repeated more than once.**

Two months or so before each comprehensive examination period, students are asked to indicate to the Director which examination(s) they plan to write. Each student who signs up for an exam is expected to write it. Any withdrawal from an exam must be approved by the Director as soon as possible before the exam takes place.

### *Maximum Time to Complete Comprehensives*

#### **Students are expected to write both theory examinations in the spring of the first year of doctoral study.**

A second attempt at a failed exam must normally be written in the next exam period (e.g., in August following a failed attempt in the spring). Students cannot write any theory comprehensive examination more than twice. Therefore, failed theory comprehensive examination implies failure from the Joint Doctoral Program. In addition, students who fail to successfully complete both theory comprehensive examinations within 12 months of beginning full-time study in the Joint Program will normally be withdrawn from it.

The comprehensive examination in the primary field of specialization should normally be completed within 24 months of beginning full-time study in the Joint Doctoral Program. Students who fail to meet this requirement will normally be withdrawn from the program. Each type of field comprehensive examination may be written by a student a maximum of two times. However, a student may be granted the permission of the Director to switch to a different primary field after one or two unsuccessful attempts at the comprehensive examination of an initial primary field, provided that the time limit of 24 months will not be exceeded in doing so.

### *The Board*

For each comprehensive examination, there is a separate examining board chaired by the Director. Typically, at least one examiner is the instructor of a relevant course, and efforts are made to include at least one economics faculty member from each university. The names of the examiners are communicated to students as early as possible before the exams take place. Examination questions are normally contributed by board members, but may also be submitted by other economics faculty at the request of the board member designated by the Director to be the exam coordinator.

### *Preparing to Write the Comprehensives*

Comprehensive examinations are designed to be comprehensive in coverage and are not tied exclusively to the material taught or reviewed in a particular set of courses. Given this fact, it may be useful to keep in mind while preparing for such exams the following rough description of their potential scope and intended coverage.

In general terms, the theory comprehensive exams are built on material that would typically be covered in a one-year graduate sequence of micro and macro theory courses. Each field examination is built on material covered in all courses designated in the calendar as being part of that field. Note that the types of questions or applications will not be restricted to either the examples or the material covered in any particular year. In fact, the purpose of the examination is to assess the ability of the student to handle comprehensively material that is not narrowly associated with any particular course.

When preparing to write comprehensive examinations, some students find it useful to study in groups. It might also be useful to review the material, including any examinations, from relevant courses taken and not taken. Students might also benefit from reviewing relevant past comprehensive exams.

Once a particular examination board has determined the associated examination grades, students will be advised individually by the Director by e-mail.

After a second comprehensive examination attempt, students should prepare for a possible oral examination. Students are expected to use the time between the written examination and the associated board meeting to review the answers that they provided in the written exam. Such a review should be undertaken even if you think that you performed very well or extremely badly. Oral examinations, if required, normally take place at the end of the relevant board meeting. In an oral exam, the student will be asked to revisit one or more of the questions that they answered (or should have answered) in the written exam. Students may work with others in preparing for an oral exam but should ensure that they are personally prepared to answer any questions asked by the board.

## **The Ph.D. Thesis**

### ***Registration in the Thesis Shell Course***

Once students have finished their comprehensive examinations they must register for the thesis requirement (ECON 6909 or THD 9999). Students are expected to complete their theses within two years of initial registration in this requirement.

### ***Choosing a Thesis Topic and Supervisor***

Choosing a viable thesis topic is a challenging task. Some students fail to complete their theses in a reasonable period of time because they underestimate the magnitude of this task and fail to seek the necessary guidance early in the process. It is essential that students talk with faculty members in their field(s) of specialization when trying to find a topic. A common problem encountered at this stage is having a thesis topic that is too broad. By keeping in touch with faculty members, students can receive guidance regarding what constitutes a well-defined research question.

When defining their thesis topics, students should keep in mind that they have to find faculty members to supervise their research. It is desirable, therefore, that a student's topic be of interest to the faculty member in question. This provides yet another reason for keeping close ties with faculty members while in the process of defining a thesis topic.

To provide further guidance to students at the thesis-writing stage, they are required to complete two thesis workshops.

### ***Thesis Workshops***

Thesis Workshop I (ECON 6907 or ECO 7002): The first workshop is designed to determine whether the student has made a significant start on a viable thesis topic, and should be completed within the first year of thesis registration. To evaluate the workshop, the relevant Ph.D. program supervisor will select a committee of at least three faculty members, including the thesis supervisor and normally at least one member from the other university.

Thesis Workshop II (ECON 6908 or ECO 7004): The paper for the second workshop should represent a substantial portion of the research for the thesis and be presented before the end of the second year of thesis registration. Whenever possible, the relevant Ph.D. program supervisor will ask the committee that evaluated the first workshop to evaluate the second workshop as well.

### ***Final Defence***

The final defence of a candidate's preliminarily completed thesis is conducted subject to the regulations of the faculty of graduate studies of the relevant university. Students are advised that the procedures do differ between the two universities and the appropriate graduate calendar should be read closely when a defence is being considered. Thesis examining committees must include at least one thesis examiner from the other university.

### **Other Courses**

All students in the Joint Doctoral Program are permitted to take courses that are offered by the two departments but are formally outside of the Joint Program. Students may be allowed to fulfill their course requirements by substituting a course from elsewhere in the graduate program. Students should discuss such substitutions with the relevant Ph.D. program supervisor to ensure that they will be counted for credit.

## **Other Relevant Information**

### **Departmental Seminars**

The Departments of Economics at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa host seminars on various topics throughout the Fall-Winter session. Students who have completed the comprehensive examinations in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory will be required to attend a minimum of eight such departmental seminars during each academic year until they have submitted their thesis to the relevant faculty of graduate studies.

### **Program Management and Administration, 2016-2019**

Professor Louis-Philippe Morin, Director, Ottawa-Carleton Joint Doctoral Program in Economics and Supervisor of Doctoral Studies, Department of Economics, University of Ottawa, Room 9056, Social Sciences Building, 613-562-5800 ext. 4867.

Professor Hashmat Khan, Associate Director, Ottawa-Carleton Joint Doctoral Program in Economics and Ph.D. Supervisor, Department of Economics, Carleton University, Room D-891, Loeb Building, 613-520-2600 ext. 1561.

Marge Brooks, Graduate Administrator, Department of Economics, Carleton University, Room C-874, Loeb Building, 613-520-2600 ext. 3743.

Diane Ritchot, Operations Coordinator, Department of Economics, University of Ottawa, Room 9005, Social Sciences Building, 613-562-5753.

### **Faculty Members**

[www.carleton.ca/economics/faculty-and-staff/regular-faculty](http://www.carleton.ca/economics/faculty-and-staff/regular-faculty)

[www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eco/professors](http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eco/professors)