

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMICS (STEM)

Economics looks at choices under scarcity and how these choices affect production, market prices, national output, unemployment, inflation, economic growth and the use and distribution of resources within and across nations. GW's graduate economics program involves topics ranging from microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics to subject areas chosen from labor economics, international economics, and the economics of industry. It is part of the social and behavioral sciences program in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences.

The PhD program is divided into two units. The first unit includes completing examinations in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory and two field examinations selected by the student and approved by the doctoral program committee. The second unit includes participation in a dissertation seminar, completion of the written dissertation, and an oral defense. The program is offered primarily on a full-time basis and students are expected to complete their degrees in five to six years. Occasionally, the program admits highly qualified part-time students.

This is a STEM designated program.

Visit the program website (<https://economics.columbian.gwu.edu/phd-economics/>) for additional information.

## ADMISSIONS

Admission Fall – January 15  
deadlines:

Standardized GRE general test (institutional code 5246)  
test scores:

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the PTE Academic is required of all applicants except those who hold a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from a college or university in the United States or from an institution located in a country in which English is the official language, provided English was the language of instruction.

Minimum scores for the program are:

- Academic IELTS: an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual score below 6.0; or

- TOEFL: 600 on paper-based or 100 on Internet-based; or

- PTE Academic: 68

Recommendations: Ph.D. - Three (3) recommendations required:

Prior academic records:

Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission.

If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

Statement of purpose: In an essay of 250 – 500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in your chosen field. Include your academic objectives, research interests, and career plans. Also discuss your related qualifications, including collegiate, professional, and community activities, and any other substantial accomplishments not already mentioned on the application. If you are applying for an assistantship or fellowship, you should also describe any teaching experience you have had.

International applicants only: Please follow this link - <https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants> (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants/>) - to review the International Applicant Information carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Graduate Studies  
The George Washington University  
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 107  
Washington DC 20052

For additional information about the admissions process visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions-faq/>) page.

Contact:

[askccas@gwu.edu](mailto:askccas@gwu.edu)  
202-994-6210 (phone)

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

## REQUIREMENTS

### Pre-candidacy requirements

Pre-candidacy requirements include satisfactory completion of 48 credits, including 18 credits in required courses and 30 credits in elective courses. Students must also earn a grade of *Pass* or *Pass*

with *Distinction* on each part of the general examination, as outlined below.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required</b>		
Core theory and econometrics courses		
ECON 8301	Microeconomic Theory I	
ECON 8302	Microeconomic Theory II	
ECON 8305	Macroeconomic Theory I	
ECON 8306	Macroeconomic Theory II	
ECON 8375	Econometrics I	
ECON 8376	Econometrics II	
Research development course		
ECON 8397	Paper Proposal Seminar (does not count toward the 48 credits of required and elective courses necessary for the degree)	

### Electives

Students must complete 30 credits in 8000-level or approved 6000-level courses. At least 21 of these credits should be 8000-level ECON courses. Research credits such as those taken in ECON 8998 or ECON 8999 do not count as elective credits in pre-candidacy, nor does ECON 8397. ECON 8997 does count toward the 30 elective credits but not toward the 21 required 8000-level ECON elective credits.

In cases where knowledge outside the discipline of economics or outside Department of Economics (ECON) course offerings is critical to the student's research field, students may take up to 6 credits in pre-candidacy coursework outside the department, with departmental approval. In exceptional circumstances, a student may take 9 such credits, with departmental approval.

### Program option selection and curriculum requirements

By the end of August in the second year, students should indicate whether they are selecting the microeconomics option or the macroeconomics option. Subsequently, students must complete at least 12 elective credits in the following courses, corresponding to their chosen option

Code	Title	Credits
Macroeconomics courses		
ECON 8307	Macroeconomic Theory III	
ECON 8323	Monetary Theory and Policy I	
ECON 8324	Monetary Theory and Policy II	

ECON 8337	Environmental Economics
ECON 8377	Econometrics III
ECON 8378	Economic Forecasting
ECON 8379	Laboratory in Applied Econometrics
ECON 8381	International Trade Theory
ECON 8382	International Finance and Open-Economy Macroeconomics
ECON 8383	International Financial Markets
ECON 8395	Advanced Special Topics
Microeconomics courses	
ECON 8303	Microeconomic Theory III
ECON 8337	Environmental Economics
ECON 8341	Labor Economics I
ECON 8342	Labor Economics II
ECON 8345	Industrial Organization I
ECON 8346	Industrial Organization II
ECON 8351	Development Economics I
ECON 8352	Development Economics II
ECON 8357	Regional Economics
ECON 8358	Urban Economics
ECON 8363	Public Finance I
ECON 8364	Public Finance II
ECON 8377	Econometrics III
ECON 8379	Laboratory in Applied Econometrics
ECON 8381	International Trade Theory
ECON 8383	International Financial Markets
ECON 8395	Advanced Special Topics

### General Examination

The general examination has three parts: two preliminary examinations taken in the first year—one in microeconomic theory and one in macroeconomic theory—and a research paper due in the sixth semester. To pass the general examination, students must earn a grade of *Pass* or *Pass with Distinction* on both preliminary examinations and on the research paper.

Students who earn a GPA of 3.0 or above in the microeconomic theory course sequence (ECON 8301 and ECON 8302) are considered to have earned a grade of *Pass* on the preliminary examination in microeconomic theory; students who earn a GPA of 3.0 or above in the macroeconomic theory course sequence (ECON 8305 and ECON 8306) are considered to have earned a grade of *Pass* on the preliminary examination in macroeconomic theory. Other students must sit the preliminary examinations at the end of the first year.

Students who do not earn a grade of *Pass* or *Pass with Distinction* on both preliminary examinations may, with departmental approval, retake one or both examinations before the start of the following semester. Both preliminary examinations must be passed by the second attempt.

Students are also required to earn a grade of *Pass* or *Pass with Distinction* on the research paper, which constitutes the second half of the general examination. Students must submit the research paper and deliver a presentation of the content to at least two faculty members for evaluation by the end of their sixth semester in the program. (Part-time students may submit the research paper later, subject to departmental approval.) Students who do not pass the research paper by the end of the sixth semester will receive an academic warning and must pass it by the end of the following semester.

#### Post-candidacy requirements

Post-candidacy requirements include successful completion of 24 credits at the 8000 level, the formulation of a dissertation proposal, a formal presentation of the proposal by the student to a prospective dissertation committee for approval (where approval of the proposal formalizes the creation of the dissertation committee), and completion of a dissertation that demonstrates the candidate's ability to do original research as determined by the dissertation committee.

Students should successfully defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the eighth semester in the program. Students who do not successfully defend the dissertation proposal by the deadline will receive an academic warning and must successfully defend the proposal by the end of the following semester. Part-time students may defend later, subject to departmental approval.

The 24 credits must include a minimum of 6 credits in ECON 8999 Dissertation Research.

Once a student successfully completes the 72 credits required for the program, they must register for 1 credit in CCAS 0940 Continuing Research - Doctoral each subsequent fall and spring semester until they have successfully defended their dissertation to the dissertation oral examination committee, thereby completing the degree program.

Students may apply for the master of philosophy (MPhil) degree after successfully defending a dissertation proposal.

#### Time limits

The pre-candidacy stage must be concluded within six semesters of matriculation in the program; part-time students may conclude the pre-candidacy stage within ten semesters of matriculation, subject to departmental approval. Upon successful completion of pre-candidacy, students are considered for admission to candidacy, i.e., the dissertation stage. The dissertation stage must be completed within five years of entry into candidacy, or within eight years of matriculation in the program, whichever comes first.