

BOSTON COLLEGE

Department of Economics

PH.D. PROGRAM: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

September 2024

I. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes for our Ph.D. program are essentially the same as all the better Economics Ph.D. programs in the United States.

- Students are expected to understand the analytical foundations of and do analytical work in micro and macro theory, using mathematical tools that are consistent with the state of the art in economics.
- Students are expected to gain extensive knowledge of two additional fields of economics and be able to analyze and understand the issues in their chosen fields at a level consistent with the state of the art in those fields.
- Students are expected to have a basic understand-

than the May of ering of their second year.
The required courses for each field comprehensive exam

It should be noted that students entering their sixth or later years are not eligible for GSAS funding in the form of Graduate, Research, or Teaching Assistantships or Teaching Fellowships and will have to cover their own health insurance fees. However, students may seek out teaching opportunities in the Department.

We want very much for all students in the program to complete the degree. However, financial support is subject to a budget constraint. Our first commitment is to students who meet the satisfactory progress criteria. Support for Ph.D. students who do not meet the criteria outlined above depends on the availability of additional funds and the assessment of promise toward the Ph.D. degree by the graduate faculty at its annual meeting. Students receiving financial aid from the department as a GA, TA or TF are prohibited from accepting a second job elsewhere that may slow their progress toward the Ph.D. degree. Students considering secondary employment must receive prior approval from the Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

IV. ADVISEMENT

Students are encouraged to seek advice on an informal basis from their course instructors, from faculty members for whom they are assistants, and from any other

and research grants. With the competition for these funds, it is imperative that you present a complete, carefully planned project if you are to have any hope of obtaining outside funds.

Fourth, the sooner you develop such a proposal, the easier it will be to assess your planned time-to-completion for purposes of the job market. Having a well-developed proposal makes it easy to prepare a recruitment seminar, and to convince potential employers that you have thought ahead to the completion of the research. Some interviewers will tell you that a student who can assess just how much work remains is a much more credible candidate than one who presents voluminous early empirical findings, but is not sure how much work remains.

And last, the more organized the early stages of your dissertation research become, the more the work involves mere perspiration rather than continued inspiration. It is a great relief to have fashioned an amorphous thesis idea into a number of smaller feasible tasks. Dissertation research should involve originality, and inspired thoughts; but pragmatically, one has to finish!

Having said all that, what should a proposal contain? To serve the several purposes mentioned above, it should include the following eight items, each of which applies to each essay in a dissertation designed as a collection of multiple self-contained essays:

- (1) A *Statement of the problem* you are addressing in sufficient detail to bring the reader unfamiliar with this area to an understanding of why this is an interesting and worthwhile topic.
- (2) A *Review of the literature* in the area: a *concise* discussion of the seminal and recent work in the area that enables the reader to evaluate whether your study will be able to build upon and extend the frontier of the field.
- (3) A *Plan of research*—essentially, a verbal outline which describes what you are planning to present as a theoretical framework, and sketches the empirical implementation of that framework (if applicable). It should also contain a statement of what conclusions you would hope to draw, and indicate how dependent