

# Rules of the MA Programs 2009/2010

Department of Economics  
Boston University

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These rules apply to all students beginning a masters program in or after the 2008/2009 academic year. Some are university rules; the remainder are those of the Economics Department. Departmental rules are administered by the Director of Masters Programs. The final discretion in all departmental rules pertaining to graduate studies rests with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and a Graduate Instruction Committee comprised of several departmental faculty members. Students may petition to waive any departmental rule or any ruling by the Graduate Instruction Committee. Denial of such a petition may in turn be appealed to the full Department faculty by petition. For more information, see the Graduate School Bulletin.

The graduate degree programs covered by these rules are:

1. MA: An eight-course Masters program.
2. MAEP: A twelve-course Masters program.
3. BA/MA: A 144-credit dual-degree program leading to both the BA and MA degrees.
4. MA/MBA: An 80-credit dual-degree Masters program administered jointly with the School of Management.
5. MAGDE: A twelve-course Masters program.

All rules and requirements for the MA program also apply to the MA portion of the MAEP, MAGDE, BA/MA, and MA/MBA programs except as explicitly noted below.

# 1 Course and Grade Requirements

The MA student must pass eight courses. The student must take the four required core courses or equivalent — EC501, EC502, EC507 and EC508. The remaining four courses should be economics electives or approved electives.

The MAEP student must pass twelve courses. The student must take the four required core courses or equivalent — EC501, EC502, EC507 and EC508. The remaining eight courses are to be divided as follows: two management methods core, two select fields with two courses per field, and two additional electives.

The BA/MA student must pass at least 144 credits. The student must take the four required core courses or equivalent — EC501, EC502, EC507 and EC508. Overall, at least eight courses at the graduate level (EC501–999) or equivalent must be passed. Four of these may also be counted toward fulfilling requirements for the BA degree. The BA and MA degrees will be conferred concurrently after completion of both.

The MA/MBA student must pass a minimum of 80 credits in total. Of these, 40 credits must be taken in GSM and 24 credits in the Department of Economics. The student must take the four required core courses or equivalent — EC501, EC502, EC507 and EC508. The remaining 16 credits may be taken in either the GSM or the Department of Economics. The MA and MBA degrees will be conferred concurrently after completion of both.

The MAGDE student must pass twelve courses. The student must take the four required core courses or equivalent — EC501, EC502, EC507, and EC508. The remaining eight courses are to be divided as follows: three core courses in global development policy, four elective courses in economics, and a final capstone course.

For all the masters programs, after the mathematics placement examination, given to all incoming graduate students every fall, those students who are found to be in need of further mathematical preparation must include EC505 as an elective.

All graduate courses are graded by letter grades. “A” is the highest grade. For all masters programs, “B–” is the lowest passing grade for a graduate course; grades of “C+” or lower are failing grades. For the purpose of computing grade point averages, the following numerical values are given to the grades:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	F
4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	0.0

The minimum grade point average for the MA, MAEP, and MAGDE programs and

the MA portion of the BA/MA and MA/MBA programs is 2.85. In addition, students in the BA/MA program must have an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 (including all undergraduate and graduate courses).

Furthermore, a student will be terminated from these programs if he/she has more than two failing grades or if he/she fails to maintain a minimum grade point average. See Section 5.

## **2 Comprehensive Exam**

Students in all five masters programs also must pass a comprehensive examination that tests general knowledge of economic theory and quantitative methods. The examination covers the four core masters courses (EC501, EC502, EC507, and EC508). This examination is offered twice a year, including once at the end of each spring semester. The minimum passing grade is “B-”. If a student fails this exam twice, he is terminated from the program. If a PhD or MAPE/PhD student passes the MAPE/PhD qualifying examination in micro and/or macro and subsequently transfers to the MA, MAEP, or MAGDE program, the masters comprehensive examination requirement is considered satisfied.

## **3 Transfer of Credit**

Entering students should take note of the specific terms of their admission with respect to both the degree program and the number of courses required. These terms are specified in the letter of admission. If the student has already completed graduate courses at Boston University and if such work was not considered in the course requirements stipulated by the terms of admission, the student should petition for transfer of credit immediately. Students are advised that petitions to transfer credit will be accepted only if it is determined that the course in question equals or exceeds the standard required of graduate Economics courses at Boston University. To assist in this determination, each petition must be accompanied by a reading list and syllabus, and, if possible, a copy of the final examination.

The Graduate School Bulletin states,

Graduate-level courses in other accredited graduate schools or in other Schools and Colleges of Boston University not used toward the awarding of any other degree may be transferred on recommendation of the major advisor and the

chairman of the department with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standards. Credit for work to be taken concurrently with studies in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences must be approved before registration for such courses; all such courses must be taken for a letter grade (not Pass/Fail). No transfer of credit for courses taken before the senior year of college will be accepted. Petitions for credits for transfer are available in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Office.

Sometimes a student wishes to take a graduate course that is offered outside the Economics Department, intending that the course be counted towards his/her degree requirements. Whether the graduate course is one given in another department or school at Boston University or is a graduate course given in a school outside Boston University, permission must be granted beforehand. To get permission for a Boston University course, the student must submit a written petition to the Graduate Instruction Committee, include a copy of the course syllabus, and, if possible, a copy of a past final examination. For a course taken outside of Boston University, the student must also submit a Petition to Transfer Credit form (available from the Graduate School), the syllabus, and an official transcript from the outside university after the Graduate Instruction Committee has approved the course and the student has received the grade.

Only a limited number of courses may be accepted for transfer credit. Such courses cannot be used to satisfy the Departmental Core requirements for any graduate degree program. For the eight-course MA or the twelve-course MAEP or MAGDE, up to two transfer courses may be permitted. Transfer of credit for graduate courses is not normally permitted for BA/MA students.

## 4 Other Rules and Requirements

**Placement Examinations:** All incoming students in a Masters program take a placement examination in mathematics. The result of this exam serves only to assist in advising students in course selection.

**Faculty Advisors:** Each student will have a faculty advisor(usually the Director of Master's Programs) who will help in selecting the most appropriate plan of study. Each semester, the faculty advisor must approve the student's selection of courses and sign registration forms. The faculty advisor must be continuously informed about the student's progress and must approve changes in programs, adds, drops, and Incompletes. All incoming students will be assigned a faculty advisor.

**Course Selection:** Each semester, students who have not yet completed their course

requirements normally select and register for four courses (16 credits). Selection should be made with a clear view of a consistent long-term study program leading to the successful completion of all course requirements for the relevant degree program. Students should not enroll in courses for which they are not adequately prepared. If necessary, they should take preparatory undergraduate or graduate courses even if such courses are not required or do not carry credit under the student's degree program. Students may drop and/or add courses during the specified periods at the beginning of each semester if the original selection of courses turns out to be inappropriate for some reason. If a student is unable to complete a course, a grade of incomplete may (with the explicit consent of the course instructor as to how the course will be completed) be preferable to a drop.

**Course Equivalency:** Some departmental requirements can be satisfied by passing course equivalencies, rather than by ordinary course enrollment. Normally, a course equivalency is taken during the same semester in which the course is offered. The student must record his/her intention to take the equivalency with the Masters Program Administrator no later than three weeks after the beginning of the semester. The work required for an equivalency is the same as required for students who are formally registered in the course. The result of a course equivalency is a course grade used to satisfy the internal requirements of the Department. However, an equivalency does not carry Graduate School credit and does not appear on the student's official transcript. Under special circumstances (e.g., if a student has taken a similar course previously at some other university or if a student needs the equivalency for a course that will not be offered during the rest of his/her residency at Boston University), a student can petition the Graduate Instruction Committee to take a special course equivalency examination during one of the regular comprehensive examination periods.

**Grades of Incomplete:** The Graduate School Bulletin states "when the work of a course has not been completed within the semester of registration, the grade of 'I' is used. This automatically becomes a permanent 'I' (unsatisfactory grade) unless the course work is completed within the following calendar year. Grades of 'I' and 'C+' or lower are interpreted as failures." Students with "permanent" Incompletes can petition the Graduate School Committee on Academic Standards for permission to complete the relevant courses. Such permission is granted only under very special circumstances. As a principle, the Committee on Academic Standards has stated that it will not permit completion of any Incompletes more than two years old. The completion of Incompletes more than one but less than two years old may be permitted.

**Repeating Courses:** Generally, students cannot receive university credit for taking the same course twice; however, students who fail a course ("C+" or less) can either retake it for credit or satisfy a departmental requirement by a course equivalency.

**Conduct Code:** According to the BU Student Academic Conduct Code, "All students

entering Boston University are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity.” The Graduate School states that “Any attempt to be dishonest or deceptive in the performance of academic work, in or out of the classroom, or any attempt to alter academic records or any collaboration with another student or students in an act of academic misconduct, constitutes an offense.” See

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/grad-resources/forms/discipline/>

for more details on violations of the code, their punishments, and the procedures for review of alleged offenses.

**Residency Requirements:** The Graduate Bulletin states that “Each student must satisfy a residency requirement of a minimum of two consecutive regular semesters of full-time graduate study at Boston University.” The university also requires that a student be enrolled, paying at least the continuing student fee, during the two semesters immediately preceding receipt of any degree.

**Leaves of Absence:** The Graduate School Bulletin states that “Normally, students must register for each regular semester until completion of all degree requirements. Upon written request to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, a student will be allowed up to two semesters of leave of absence without committee consideration. Leaves of absence beyond two semesters may be granted in cases of substantiated illness, one semester maternity or paternity leave, or military service. In exceptional cases, the student should petition the associate dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences with approval of the chairman of the department or division of concentration.” A Leave of Absence form, obtainable from the Graduate School, should be completed before leaving. A student who overstays a leave of absence and wishes to return must reapply for admission and may be required to satisfy course and examination requirements a second time.

## 5 Student Evaluations and Termination Procedures

After each semester, the Graduate Instruction Committee evaluates the cumulative performance of all graduate students and sends warning letters to those whose performance indicate a limited chance of satisfying the requirements for a given degree. The Graduate Instruction Committee will terminate a student from the degree program for any of the following reasons:

1. More than eight credits of failing grades (“C+” or less or permanent incomplete).
2. Having an overall average so low that, even if all subsequent grades were “B+” or better, the final average at the end of the program would be lower than the minimum

required.

The Graduate Instructions Committee can revoke a student's guarantee of financial support if he/she becomes considered as not being in good standing as defined above.

Any decision by the GIC may be appealed as on page 1.