

TO: Entering Graduate Students in Economics

FROM: Daniele Paserman, Chair

RE: Guidelines for Graduate Students in Economics at Boston University.

Welcome to the Department of Economics and to Boston. Let me take this opportunity to welcome you to the Economics Department and to provide advice and information which should prove useful, especially for international graduate students who are somewhat unfamiliar with American universities. I look forward to meeting you after the start of the semester.

1. Your program of study is defined entirely by the required courses as well as those you take as electives. Normally, four courses (each valued at four credits) constitute full-time attendance.
2. Whether you are in a master's or a Ph.D program, the Department determines the sequence in which you take the core courses. For all programs, it is possible to test out of the math course requirement (CAS EC 505 for M.A., GRS EC 705 for Ph.D.) through your performance on the math placement exam. Should you test out of the math requirement for your program, you may register for a math elective or an economics elective. Below are the usual course sequences for a master's student who did not test out of the math requirement.

Spring

Fall

MA

CAS EC 501
CAS EC 505
CAS EC 507
Elective

CAS EC 502
CAS EC 508
Elective
Elective

By ensuring that all students take courses in the proper sequence, we also ensure that students are appropriately prepared for the field and elective courses.

3. After meeting with your faculty advisor, you must register for the courses you and s/he have selected for you. You may add or drop courses after the semester has begun. Courses may be added during the first two weeks of classes. Courses may be dropped during the first month.
4. If you wish courses to be credited toward a degree, you must take the courses for credit. This commits you to doing all required work in the course and gives you the opportunity to receive a grade. If you do not need a given course for fulfillment of a degree requirement, you may wish to consider taking it on an audit basis. This grants you access to the course but does not involve a commitment to do the work or take the exams. Often, however, it is necessary to obtain permission of the instructor in order to take a course on an audit basis. This is particularly true of small seminars. You should remember that registering for an audit requires payment of full tuition.
5. Normally, at the first meeting of each course the instructor will explain the work required of students enrolled in that course. He or she will hand out lists of readings or other work to be assigned, and will indicate the particular pattern of examinations, papers or other requirements. Graduate students are adults and are treated as adults. This means that if they are absent, it is presumed that they were absent for a good reason. Therefore, attendance is not taken in class, and it is not necessary to explain your absence to an instructor. However, it is expected that students will attempt to attend all class sessions.

6. All faculty hold office hours; at least 3 hours/week. This time is reserved for students. Of course, most faculty members are very busy, and there may be times when you will find it difficult to see one of your professors or your advisor. However, faculty members (particularly advisors) are interested in student problems, want to be helpful and do not want their time restrictions to discourage students. So don't despair if your advisor can't see you at a particular time. Leave the faculty member a note, call back, or come back another time. Be aggressive if necessary!
7. The reading list will indicate the readings to be required of students during the course. In many lists some readings will be marked as optional, others as required. In other cases the professor may give no specific indication, but will expect that the students do a sizable amount but not necessarily all of the readings. It is intended that students read the required readings on the reading lists. Time pressures are such that the students are often unable to read everything assigned. However, a student who fails to read at least 75% of the required reading is not doing the work that he or she should be doing.
8. If a book is to be used quite intensively in a course, the instructor may recommend that students purchase it from the B.U. Bookstore. Often additional books or articles on the reading list are available in the reserve section within Mugar Library. This is located on the first floor of the library, towards the back, near the river. For a course having 20 or 30 students, the reserve desk may have only two or three copies of a given article or book. Therefore, such materials are lent to each student for only a very short time - three hours or so. If materials are kept longer than the indicated time, fines are levied. Independent of the penalty involved in paying a fine, you owe it to your fellow students to be punctual in returning materials to the reserve desk. If you want more time to study the reading, you can make a copy at the copying machines in the library.
9. If you desire a copy of better quality, consider one of the copy stores on Commonwealth Avenue. Charges are approximately 7 cents per sheet for material returned the same day, 3 cents if order placed beforehand and material left overnight and you tell them you are a Boston University student.
10. Professors normally depart from text and readings during sessions and present other material or other interpretations. Often class presentations involve simplified versions of concepts which may be difficult to understand in readings. For all these reasons, it is advisable to take notes carefully during class sessions.
11. In preparing term papers, be careful in your use of references. When you quote directly from a source, put the passage in quotation marks and footnote the reference. When you paraphrase someone else's work, make sure that your text or footnotes indicate that the passage is in fact paraphrased. Only through such care can one avoid unintentional plagiarism. You may wish to use the style format of one of the major journals as a model for referencing and footnoting.
12. ***Deliberate academic fraud, be it intentional plagiarism on term papers or cheating on exams, is a matter treated with the utmost seriousness.*** It both compromises the University's standards and also represents a breach of faith with one's fellow students. The Department has established procedures for dealing with cases of academic fraud. Cases may be referred to the Graduate School (GRS) or to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) where the penalties may be as severe as a permanent expulsion. Students should read the CAS booklet and the statement of GRS policy on academic fraud.
13. In accordance with the Code of Students Responsibilities (Appendix 15), current addresses **must** be on file with the University. *Students must provide this information via the University's online [MyBU Portal](#). Please be advised that addresses will not be updated from information provided on the registration form. <https://www.bu.edu/dos/policies/student-responsibilities/>*

The home address currently on file for you is the permanent address provided on your application for admission. Local addresses should be updated once you have located housing in the Boston area. If your name has changed or is incorrect, this can be updated at the Office of the University Registrar at 881 Commonwealth Avenue, Second Floor. This information cannot be changed using the MyBU Portal. Many students have failed to receive important announcements for failure to updating their current address.

14. You may find it useful to know the following administrative assignments:

Department Chair – Daniele Paserman
Department Associate Chair – Johannes Schmieder
Department Manager – Vikram Chowdary
Director of Graduate Studies – Zhongjun Qu
Director of Master's Programs – Hsueh-Ling Huynh
PhD Program Administrator – Mirtha Cabello
Master's Program Administrator – Karen Rodi

Director of the Institute for Economic Development – Dilip Mookherjee
Administrative Manager, IED – Kimberly Huskins
Program Coordinator –

Please use the resources available to you in the forms of your faculty advisor, Directors of Graduate Studies and Master's Programs, PhD and Master's Programs Administrators, and me. I wish all of you success as you begin your graduate studies and through completion of your degree program.