

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN FOOD AND BUSINESS ECONOMICS (16:395)

Master's Degree Learning Goals and Assessment

There are four learning goals that graduates of this program are expected to attain. The assessment of these learning goals and the role of the program in helping students attain these goals are presented below.¹

Learning Goal 1: To develop an advanced understanding of microeconomic theory

A. Assessment of student achievement of Goal 1

1. Successful completion of core courses (microeconomic theory, econometrics, and research methods). Core courses impart competency in students' analytical abilities.
2. Minimum acceptable grade threshold, which is B or 3.0 in a 4.0 scale.
3. Comprehensive examination after completion of second semester courses. Comprehensive examination assesses whether or not students are able to put their core course knowledge cohesively.
4. Meet prerequisites for advanced elective courses within and outside department.

B. Roles of the program in helping students to achieve Goal 1

1. Admission to program based on ability to succeed in core courses.
2. Examinations, assignments, and projects in each course (see course outlines). Completing these course requirements is related to A. (2) above.
3. Periodic review of student transcripts (see Policy Handbook). Regular review of students' progress in their respective areas of interest by the GPD and students' academic advisers, and providing timely feedback to the students so that appropriate action can be taken. Copy of such review is given to the Department Chair.
4. Periodic review and evaluation of core course content, including syllabi, and course offerings using Provide benchmark from comparable programs at other institutions.
5. Evaluate teaching effectiveness of instructors in relevant course(s); if effectiveness is below expectations, work with instructor to improve.
6. Periodic review of assessment tools. Establish a continuous feedback mechanism, such as an exit survey, to ensure that program goals and processes in place to achieve them (i.e., those listed under each goal) are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

¹ Please note that this is a dynamic document and therefore subject to change after periodic review by the program and the Graduate School.

Learning Goal 2: To demonstrate the ability to apply quantitative methods to economic theory and practice

A. Assessment of student achievement of Goal 2

1. Assessment of acquired skills by conducting comprehensive examination after completion of core courses. Comprehensive examination assesses whether or not students are able to put their core course knowledge cohesively.
2. Successful completion of core courses in microeconomic theory and econometrics. These core courses impart competency in students' analytical abilities.
3. Successful completion of Master's Thesis or Plan B research paper where students utilize their knowledge of and ability in quantitative methods to economic theory and practice. A successful completion includes,
 - a. Public defense of thesis or Plan B research paper by students. Such defense is assessed by the student's advisor and the research committee members.
 - b. Critical reading and assessment of thesis or Plan B paper by the student's advisor and research committee
 - c. Presentation of research outputs in conferences
 - d. Publication of research outputs in refereed journals
4. Acceptance for higher studies such as PhD programs.

B. Roles of the program in helping students to achieve Goal 2

1. Offering required core courses in quantitative methods and economic theory.
2. Provide early introduction to research methods and opportunities for research to students enrolled in the program. For instance, provide students with opportunity to work with faculty on applied issues, including those funded by external grants.
3. Regular review of students' progress in their respective areas of interest by the GPD and students' academic advisers, and providing timely feedback to the students so that appropriate action can be taken. Copy of such review is given to the Department Chair.
4. Regular interaction and advisement by student's academic advisor and research committee members in choosing the topic and in completing the thesis or plan B paper.
5. Opportunity to present their work in seminars, including those in the department and professional conferences. This may include supporting students' travel and conference attendance with faculty's grants and awards.
6. Periodic review of assessment tools. Establish a continuous feedback mechanism, such as an exit survey, to ensure that program goals and processes in place to achieve them (i.e., those listed under each goal) are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Learning Goal 3: To develop an in-depth understanding of an area within economics

A. Assessment of student achievement of Goal 3

1. Grades students obtain in elective graduate courses in their respective areas of interest (there is no minimum credit requirement, but a student may take 12+ elective credits in his/her area of specialization).
2. Periodic and regular review of the student's progress in his/her area of interest by student's academic adviser (student's major adviser) and providing timely feedback to the student to take action needed.
3. Successful completion of either a Master's thesis or Plan B research paper in student's area of interest. The quality of such original research is assessed by
 - a. Public defense of the thesis/Plan B paper
 - b. Critical reading of thesis/Plan B paper by committee of graduate faculty members
 - c. Mentoring by faculty for submission and acceptance of research articles to professional conferences and journals.
4. Continuation of graduate studies or placement in a position that requires ability in the student's selected area of specialization.

B. Roles of the program in helping students to achieve Goal 3

1. Interview the student in his/her second semester (spring) to identify his/her areas of interest within economics.
2. Timely determination of appropriate elective courses in student's area of interest and provide advice accordingly.
3. Partner students with faculty members who has matching areas of interest and expertise to a particular student's area of interest.
4. Provide opportunities to present research and receive feedback (e.g., department seminars as well as regional or national conferences)
5. Establish a continuous feedback mechanism, such as an exit survey, to ensure that program goals and the processes in place to achieve them (i.e., those listed under each goal) are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Learning Goal 4: To utilize both oral and written communication skills to effectively communicate such understanding in a variety of formats

A. Assessment of student achievement of Goal 4

Goal 4 details: Students should know the standard structure of, and be able to communicate effectively in, the following written and oral formats: research articles, research report for a client in business or government, short internal memorandum, newsletter article designed for a wider audience, effective oral presentation of research or extension reports in both academic and non-academic settings, such as research seminars, executive briefings, internal training, and speech / keynote address.

1. Evaluation and timely feedback from instructors in graduate courses where written requirements is compulsory (such written requirements help synthesize topics taught in class)
2. Evaluation and feedback by students' thesis or Plan B research written and oral presentation skills by the student's thesis or Plan B advisory committee.
3. Successful completion of either a Master's thesis or Plan B research paper in student's area of interest.
4. Evidence of successful presentations made at professional or scholarly conferences
5. Acceptance of thesis or Plan B paper by scholarly journal
6. If the subject matter warrants, students are asked to brief local executives or FBE alumni on their research. This professional audience will then fill out an extension-style evaluation form.

B. Roles of the program in helping students to achieve goal 4

1. Sharing examples of students' thesis from the past that were nominated for regional or national awards.
2. Sharing examples of research articles that students in the program in the past presented in academic seminars and regional/national conferences.
3. Using the graduate course reading lists to expose students to excellent examples of various written and oral presentation format (e.g., articles in *Choices*, etc.).
4. Teaching students to write research briefs in memorandum format as a part of written assignments in graduate courses
5. Encouraging and facilitating students to present their research or give training to other students (both in-class and outside the classroom). Faculty will then provide feedback on good and bad presentation skills.
6. Encouraging graduate instructors to use high standards of communication skills (both oral and written).
7. Periodic review and evaluation of course content to ensure course offerings and syllabi are aligned with student learning goals in general.

8. When feasible, inviting guest speakers to graduate courses so that students are familiar with different communication and presentation skills. This will complement those of the instructor.
9. Encouraging graduate students to attend seminars hosted by the Department each semester
10. Encourage and provide financial support (when feasible) to graduate students to attend business and professional meetings where they are exposed to many research and keynote presentations.
11. Period review of assessment tools through a continuous feedback mechanism, such as an exit survey, to ensure that program goals and processes in place to achieve them are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.