

Northwestern

Department of **Economics**

B.A./M.A. Degree Student Handbook

September 2026

Changes since Last Edition

- Revised non-discrimination statement

This handbook is reissued as necessary and represents the policies and degree requirements of the Department of Economics as of the date on the cover.

The requirements in this document are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, the general degree requirements and the policies on satisfactory progress, probation and exclusion adopted by The Graduate School of Northwestern University.

Updates to the handbook during the academic year will be posted on the Department's website:

<https://www.economics.northwestern.edu>
under the "Undergraduate" tab.

The program gives outstanding, qualified undergraduate majors an opportunity to earn both a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College and a Master of Arts degree from The Graduate School. Because the program is very demanding, admission is highly selective. Interested students should talk with the Director of Undergraduate Studies early in their careers at Northwestern. The program provides excellent preparation for further graduate study in economics or for professional positions in economic research.

Degree Requirements

Total Units Required: 9

Course	Title
Core Courses	
ECON 401	Mathematical Methods of Economic Theory
ECON 410-1	Microeconomics
ECON 411-1	Macroeconomics
<i>Either</i>	
ECON 410-2 & ECON 410-3	Microeconomics
<i>or</i>	
ECON 411-2 & ECON 411-3	Macroeconomics
Economic History or Development	
One of those listed below	
ECON 315-0	Topics in Economic History
ECON 323-1	Economic History of the United States Before 1865
ECON 323-2	Economic History of the United States 1865 to Present
ECON 324-0	Western Economic History
ECON 325-0	Economic Growth & Development
ECON 326-0	The Economics of Developing Countries
ECON 327-0	Economic Development in Africa
ECON 420-1	American Economic History
ECON 420-2	European Economic History
ECON 425-1	Development Economics
ECON 425-2	Development Economics
ECON 425-3	Development Economics

Course	Title
Electives	
Three additional approved Economics (300- or 400-level) courses, to be selected in consultation with, and approved by, the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Can include one unit of ECON 499-0 for students writing an independent thesis.	

Notes

- Economics 401 *Mathematical Methods of Economic Theory* is an intensive, four-week mathematics course taught immediately prior to the fall quarter. It provides the proper mathematical background for graduate-level economics. The course addresses topics even mathematics majors may not have seen. The topics include linear algebra, multivariate calculus, convexity, constrained optimization, and some dynamics. This course is required for B.A./M.A. candidates. Students will register for credit and grade in the fall quarter.
- An average grade of B (3.0) is required in courses taken for the M.A. degree, and candidates must have no incomplete grades on their records.

Other M.A. Degree Requirements

Examinations: final oral examination

Research/Projects: none specified

Master's Thesis: A thesis, either an independent one for the M.A. or one for honors in Economics or Math Methods in the Social Sciences that is administered through those programs under an Economics advisor. The thesis must be an original piece of economic research of journal-article length. The thesis must be submitted no later than four weeks before the end of the student's final quarter and found acceptable by two graduate faculty readers. A final oral examination on the thesis is conducted by the faculty readers. Students writing an independent thesis must enroll in ECON 499-0 *Independent Study* for the quarter in which the thesis is submitted. Students writing a suitable thesis for honors in their undergraduate degree must register for an additional graduate-level (300 or 400-level) economics course that is selected in consultation with, and approved by, the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Preparation

Potential candidates must carefully plan their first three years of undergraduate study in order to qualify for consideration. The following conditions must normally be met by the end of the candidate's junior year.

- An exceptionally high grade point average (of at least 3.8) in economics and other courses.
- Completion with strong grades of Economics 381-1,2 *Econometrics* or MATH 386-1,2 *Econometrics for MMSS*.

- Completion with strong grades of preparatory courses in mathematics
 - MATH 320-1,2 *Real Analysis* or MATH 321-1,2 *MENU: Real Analysis*
 - MATH 300 *Foundations of Higher Mathematics* or MATH 291-3 *MENU: Intensive Linear Algebra and Multivariable Calculus*
 - MATH 226 *Sequences and Series* or MATH 281-2 *Accelerated Mathematics for ISP: First Year*
 - MATH 250 *Elementary Differential Equations*
 - MATH 240 *Linear Algebra* or equivalent course
 - Calculus through MATH 230-2 *Multivariable Integral Calculus* or MATH 285-3 *Accelerated Mathematics for MMSS: First Year* or equivalent courses.

The MENU and MMSS programs are particularly well-suited for this preparation.
- Development of an idea or ideas for a potential thesis topic, and identification of potential thesis advisor(s).

Course Credits

In their final year, the candidate must satisfy The Graduate School's requirements of three quarters of full-time graduate study, which consist of at least three, but no more than four, courses each quarter bearing graduate credit. Graduate-credit courses are those listed by The Graduate School; they include most courses at the 300 level and above.

The Graduate School allows a maximum of three courses to count towards both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. The M.A. degree requires 9 units. At most three units of these can be used to satisfy the 45 units required by WCAS to obtain an undergraduate degree.

Thesis Requirements

A thesis, either an independent one for the M.A. or one for honors in Economics or MMSS that is administered through those programs under an Economics advisor. The thesis must be an original piece of economic research of journal-article length. The thesis must be submitted no later than four weeks before the end of the student's final quarter and found acceptable by two graduate faculty readers. A final oral examination on the thesis is conducted by the faculty readers. Students writing an independent thesis must enroll in ECON 499 *Independent Study* for the quarter in which the thesis is submitted. Students writing a suitable thesis for honors in their undergraduate degree must register for an additional graduate-level (300 or 400-level) economics course that is selected in consultation with, and approved by, the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Additional Information

Undergraduates interested in this program should consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies early in their studies, certainly no later than the fall quarter of the junior year.

After obtaining the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, students submit a formal application to enter the program to The Graduate School.

Read additional information by The Graduate School on Bachelor's/Master's Combined Degrees at:

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/admission/academic-programs/explore-programs/combined-degree.html>

Topics include status as an undergraduate or a graduate student and implications for financial aid.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Northwestern University prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnicity, caste, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, height, weight, or any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance or any other classification protected by law in the matters of admissions, employment, housing or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and any other federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation.

Read The Graduate School's full statement, including contact information for compliance officers at:

<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/policies/nondiscrimination-statement.html>