

# Northwestern

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Department of **Economics**

Supplement to the Graduate  
Student Handbook for  
Students in the J.D. / Ph.D.  
Combined Degree

September 2025

This supplement modifies specific parts of the Graduate Student Handbook for the Ph.D. degree in Economics. The modifications primarily affect

- timeline,
- milestones deadlines,
- annual certification of good progress, and
- funding

to accommodate the years spent at the School of Law. Students in the combined program should read this document in conjunction with the Economics Graduate Student Handbook.

Students should also read student handbooks prepared by the School of Law regarding the requirements of the J.D. and the combined J.D. / Ph.D. program.

#### **Changes since Last Edition**

- This is the first addition

The Economics Graduate Student Handbook is reissued each summer. This supplement will only be reissued when there are changes specifically to the combined degree.

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 (TGS) and the School of Law of Northwestern University.

Updates to the Economics Department handbook during the academic year are posted on the department's website:

<https://www.economics.northwestern.edu>

under the "Graduate" tab, and in the Department's *Graduate Connection* newsletter which is issued at the beginning of September, December, and March.

## DEGREE TIMELINES

The notation after each year indicates the school in which the student is registered: The Graduate School (TGS) or the Law School.

### *Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

- Year 1: TGS: Economics nine core area courses that form the qualifying exams. (Economics 410-1,2,3; 411-1,2,3 and 480-1,2,3). Students normally admitted to candidacy at the end of year 1 on completing qualifying examinations.
- Year 2: TGS: Economics nine field sequence courses in three sequences and including at least one course in Economic History. Unlike the Economics PhD it is preferable that J.D./PhD students take these courses in year 2 rather than spread over years 2 and 3.
- Year 3: Law School: J.D. year 1.
- Year 4: Law School: J.D. year 2.
- Year 5: TGS: Two presentations and attendance at research seminar (ECON 501). Formation of dissertation committee. Completion of prospectus.
- Year 6: TGS: Third year at Law School while also conducting dissertation research.
- Year 7: TGS: Dissertation research, job market, graduation.

A potential downside to this configuration is that funding for the sixth year is provided by the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS). Unless the student obtains an RAship in the Law School or obtains outside fellowship funding, the student would have to conduct TA duties for WCAS undergraduate class on the Evanston campus in, at a minimum, Fall and Winter Quarters while in the third year of their J.D.

### *Less-Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

This configuration is less ideal because the student is selecting a dissertation topic before exposure to the law school curriculum or faculty.

- Year 1: TGS: Economics nine core area courses that form the qualifying exams. (Economics 410-1,2,3; 411-1,2,3 and 480-1,2,3). Students normally admitted to candidacy at the end of year 1 on completing qualifying examinations.

- Year 2: TGS: Economics nine field sequence courses in three sequences and including at least one course in Economic History. Unlike the Economics PhD it is preferable that J.D./PhD students take these courses in year 2 rather than spread over years 2 and 3.
- Year 3: TGS: Complete field courses if necessary. Two presentations and attendance at research seminar (ECON 501). Formation of committee. Formation of dissertation committee. Completion of prospectus.
- Year 4: Law School: J.D. year 1. Dissertation research.
- Year 5: Law School: J.D. year 2. Dissertation research.
- Year 6: TGS. Dissertation Research.
- Year 7: TGS: Third year at Law School while also conducting dissertation research, job market, graduation.

### *Less-Ideal Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

This configuration is less ideal because the student is selecting a dissertation topic before exposure to the law school curriculum or faculty.

- Year 1: TGS: Economics nine core area courses that form the qualifying exams. (Economics 410-1,2,3; 411-1,2,3 and 480-1,2,3). Students normally admitted to candidacy at the end of year 1 on completing qualifying examinations.
- Year 2: TGS: Economics nine field sequence courses in three sequences and including at least one course in Economic History.
- Year 3: TGS: Complete field courses if necessary. Two presentations and attendance at research seminar (ECON 501). Formation of committee. Formation of dissertation committee. Completion of prospectus.
- Year 4: Law School: J.D. year 1. Dissertation research.
- Year 5: Law School: J.D. year 2. Dissertation research.
- Year 6: Law School: J.D. year 3. Dissertation research.
- Year 7: TGS: Dissertation research, job market, graduation.

### *Undesirable Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

This configuration is undesirable as the student must have a job market paper ready simultaneously with the prospectus, and dissertation research occurs in only one year. It might be possible for the student to take an eighth year to complete their dissertation, but funding is not guaranteed for an eighth year.

- Year 1: TGS: Economics nine core area courses that form the qualifying exams. (Economics 410-1,2,3; 411-1,2,3 and 480-1,2,3). Students normally admitted to candidacy at the end of year 1 on completing qualifying examinations.
- Year 2: TGS: Economics nine field sequence courses in three sequences and including at least one course in Economic History. Unlike the Economics PhD it is preferable that J.D./PhD students take these courses in year 2 rather than spread over years 2 and 3.
- Year 3: Law School: J.D. year 1.
- Year 4: Law School: J.D. year 2.
- Year 5: Law School: J.D. year 3.
- Year 6: TGS: Two presentations and attendance at research seminar (ECON 501). Formation of dissertation committee. Completion of prospectus.
- Year 7: TGS: Dissertation research, job market, graduation.

## **MILESTONE MODIFICATIONS**

### *Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

Candidacy implications: Unchanged from Economics Ph.D.

Prospectus implications: Economics' milestone is that the prospectus deadline is the end of quarter 13 of TGS registration. As students rejoin TGS in the summer quarter of year 4, the deadline milestone is the end of Summer Quarter at end of year 5.

### *Less-Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

Candidacy implications: Unchanged from Economics Ph.D.

Prospectus implications: Unchanged provided prospectus is complete by the end of summer quarter at end of year 3 before starting at the Law School.

### *Less-Ideal Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

Candidacy implications: Unchanged from Economics Ph.D.

Prospectus implications: Unchanged provided prospectus is complete by the end of summer quarter at end of year 3 before starting at the Law School.

### *Undesirable Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

Candidacy Implications: Unchanged from Economics Ph.D.

Prospectus implications: Economics' milestone is that the prospectus deadline is the end of quarter 13 of TGS registration. As students rejoin TGS in the summer quarter of year 5, the deadline milestone is the end of Summer Quarter at end of year 6.

## **ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF GOOD PROGRESS**

These listings refer students to the appropriate section of the "Annual Certification Of Good Progress" portion of the Economics Ph.D. student handbook.

### *Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

Year 1: TGS: See "End of year 1"

Year 2: TGS: See "End of year 2" (progress on field sequences)

Year 3: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.

Year 4: Law School: See "End of year 2" (Econ 501 paper draft)

Year 5: TGS: see "End of year 3"

Year 6: TGS: see "End of year 4"

Year 7: TGS: Graduation or see "End of year 5 and subsequent years"

*Less-Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

- Year 1: TGS: See “End of year 1”
- Year 2: TGS: See “End of year 2”
- Year 3: TGS: see “End of year 3”
- Year 4: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 5: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 6: TGS: see “End of year 4”
- Year 7: TGS: Graduation or see “End of year 5 and subsequent years”

*Less-Ideal Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

- Year 1: TGS: See “End of year 1”
- Year 2: TGS: See “End of year 2”
- Year 3: TGS: see “End of year 3”
- Year 4: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 5: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 6: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 7: TGS: Graduation or see “End of year 4”

*Undesirable Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

- Year 1: TGS: See “End of year 1”
- Year 2: TGS: See “End of year 2” (progress on field sequences)
- Year 3: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.
- Year 4: Law School. No annual certification required for Economics.

Year 5: Law School: See “End of year 2” (Econ 501 paper draft)

Year 6: TGS: see “End of year 3”

Year 7: TGS: Graduation or see “End of year 4”

## **FUNDING MODIFICATIONS**

Note that funding while a student in TGS is provided by the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS).

### *Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

Year 1: WCAS University Fellowship.

Year 2: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)

Year 3: Law School

Year 4: Law School (through Spring Quarter). WCAS Summer University Fellowship unless working as an RA or in a paid internship.

Year 5: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)

Year 6: Third year of law school while funded by WCAS. Unless the student obtains an RAship in the Law School or obtains outside fellowship funding, the student would have to conduct TA duties for WCAS undergraduate class on the Evanston campus in, at a minimum, Fall and Winter Quarters while in the third year of law school.

Year 7: WCAS Dissertation Year University Fellowship. No summer funding.

### *Less-Ideal Configuration with Two Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

Year 1: WCAS University Fellowship.

Year 2: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)

Year 3: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)

Year 4: Law School



- Year 5: Law School (through Spring Quarter). WCAS Summer University Fellowship unless working as an RA or in a paid internship.
- Year 6: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)
- Year 7: Third year of law school while funded by WCAS on WCAS Dissertation Year University Fellowship. No summer funding.

*Less-Ideal Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 4*

- Year 1: WCAS University Fellowship.
- Year 2: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)
- Year 3: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)
- Year 4: Law School
- Year 5: Law School
- Year 6: Law School (through Spring Quarter). WCAS Summer University Fellowship unless working as an RA or in a paid internship.
- Year 7: WCAS Dissertation Year University Fellowship. No summer funding.

*Undesirable Configuration with Three Consecutive J.D. Years Starting in Year 3*

- Year 1: WCAS University Fellowship.
- Year 2: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)
- Year 3: Law School
- Year 4: Law School
- Year 5: Law School (through Spring Quarter). WCAS Summer University Fellowship unless working as an RA or in a paid internship.
- Year 6: WCAS Teaching Assistant (TA) or Research Assistant (RA)
- Year 7: WCAS Dissertation Year University Fellowship. No summer funding.

## *Summer Funding*

The law school does not fund summers for their J.D. / Ph.D. students, so all summers while students are in their law school years are funded by their Ph.D. program. However, students must decline summer university fellowship funding if they have a paid outside job or internship.

## *Funding for a Potential Year Eight*

Students' admission letters specify the nature of the funding. Typically, WCAS and Law School funding is offered for a combination of seven years excluding the summer at the end of the seventh year (27 quarters) with either five years from WCAS and two from the Law School or four years from WCAS and three from the Law School (with the modification that the summer quarter on the return from the Law School to TGS is funded by TGS).

In addition, students are allowed to "bank" up to four quarters of WCAS funding if they hold:

- alternative funding that is completely external to Northwestern such as external fellowships during quarters that they would otherwise be funded by WCAS, and
- the law school funds one or more summer quarters.

These banked quarters can be used in the summer of the seventh year and/or the fall, winter or spring of the eighth year.

Even if the student has no banked quarters, the Economics Department attempts to support students beyond the 27 quarters for an additional three quarters. But we are under no obligation to do so. Students can seek RA funding or apply for outside fellowships.

## *Funding for a Potential Year Nine*

TA and internal fellowship funding is not available to students in the ninth and higher years. Students can seek RA funding or apply for outside fellowships, but we cannot guarantee obtaining an RA position.