

## Graduate Learning Objectives and Program Learning Outcomes for the Master of Arts in Economics Program

The Department of Economics establishes the following Graduate Learning Objectives, and Program Learning Outcomes with an associated curriculum map, and an assessment plan with an associated action plan. Each year this document is to be updated and filed with the Office of Graduate Studies at the end of the full academic year.

### Graduate Learning Objectives and Program Learning Outcomes

The Department of Economics graduate learning objectives and program learning outcomes (PLOs) represented below shall form the basis for our annual assessment plan and future academic program review.

The PLOs listed below are designed with the goal of placing our students into post-degree positions in secondary education, non-profits, business and consulting, government and private agencies, and other fields that draw on the knowledge and skills of graduates with an MA in Economics.

Graduate Learning Objectives	Program Learning Outcomes
<i>1. Develop an advanced understanding of microeconomic and macroeconomic theory</i>	<i>1.1 Understand the foundations, basic framework, and complexity of microeconomic and macroeconomic theory</i>
	<i>1.2 Recognize the contribution and limitations of traditional theories</i>
	<i>1.3 Explore newer economic theories and modeling of more complex situations</i>
	<i>1.4 Apply introduced theories in a discussion of research interests</i>
<i>2. Demonstrate the ability to apply econometric methods</i>	<i>2.1 Use basic regression analysis, estimation, and/or forecasting</i>
	<i>2.2 Express economic theory in the form of econometric models</i>
	<i>2.3 Use econometric techniques in economic research settings</i>
<i>3. Develop an in-depth understanding of one research field of interest within economics</i>	<i>3.1 Read and discuss research articles in chosen field of interest.</i>
	<i>3.2 Understand the current state of knowledge in this research field.</i>
	<i>3.3 Confidently discuss important findings and limitations of existing research</i>
<i>4. Engage in and conduct economic research</i>	<i>4.1 Identify and clearly state a Master's thesis topic</i>
	<i>4.2 Analyze stated topic using relevant modeling techniques</i>
<i>5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate within the discipline</i>	<i>5.1. Apply both oral and written communications skills within the discipline to present research findings</i>

These learning objectives and outcomes are addressed in most of the courses in our curriculum. The curriculum map below provides the connections between these courses and the objectives and outcomes.

### Curriculum Map

Course Work	PLO 1.1	PLO 1.2	PLO 1.3	PLO 1.4	PLO 2.1	PLO 2.2	PLO 2.3	PLO 3.1	PLO 3.2	PLO 3.3	PLO 4.1	PLO 4.2	PLO 5.1
ECON 200A (C)	X	X			X	X							
ECON 200B (C)	X	X				X							
ECON 200C (C)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
ECON 200M (C)	X					X							
ECON 213 (E)			X			X		X	X				
ECON 230 (E)		X	X					X	X				
ECON 238 (E)		X	X					X	X				
ECON 241 (C)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
ECON 251 (E)			X					X	X				
ECON 260 (E)		X	X					X	X				
ECON 263 (E)		X	X					X	X				
ECON 265 (E)		X	X			X		X	X				
ECON 290 (E)		X	X					X	X				
ECON 295 (E)													
ECON 299 (E)			X	X			X	X	X				
ECON 500 (T)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### Assessment Plan

The Department of Economics gathers direct and indirect evidence of student outcomes at different stages of the graduate program to assess whether the stated learning objectives and outcomes are met by the program.

The department will revisit its method of assessment each year, and adopt new methods and rubrics for each Program Learning Outcome, as appropriate. We intend to follow the schedule in the table below to assess all program learning outcomes over a 5-year cycle.

The department's graduate committee will be primarily responsible for the assessment of the graduate program and will report their findings and recommendations to the department prior to submitting a revision of this document to the Office of Graduate Studies. During this assessment process, the graduate committee will also consider the success or failure of past actions taken to improve or maintain the program's ability to provide a PLO when deciding on what next action steps to recommendation.

**Lines of Evidence for Assessing Graduate Program Learning Outcomes**

<b>Date</b>	<b>PLO</b>	<b>Direct Lines of Evidence</b>	<b>Indirect Lines of Evidence</b>	<b>Lead/ Resources</b>	<b>Evaluation Parameters &amp; Timeline</b> Exit (E); Follow up with Alumni (F); Qualification for Culminating Experience (Q)	<b>Evaluation of PLO</b>
2016-2017	5.1	ECON 241 and 200C Final Papers and Oral Presentations	Instructor Assessment	Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Written Communication VALUE Rubric and Oral Communication VALUE Rubric, produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (see below). The department expects 100% of our graduate students to achieve at least a score of 2 on the Written Communication and Oral Communication VALUE Rubrics during Early Assessment. <b>Timeline:</b> ECON 241 (Early Assessment), ECON 200C (Q)	
2016-2017	5.1	Theses and Oral Defenses		Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Written Communication VALUE Rubric and Oral Communication VALUE Rubric, produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (see below). The department expects 100% of our graduate students to achieve at least a score of 3 on the Written Communication and Oral Communication VALUE Rubrics. <b>Timeline:</b> E	
2017-2018	4.1 4.2 4.3	Theses and Oral Defenses		Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> E	
2018-2019	3.1 3.2 3.3	ECON 241 and 200C Final Papers and Oral Presentations	Instructor Assessment	Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan. <b>Timeline:</b> ECON 241 (Early Assessment), ECON 200C (Q)	
2018-2019	3.1 3.2 3.3	Theses and Oral Defenses		Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> E	
2019-2020	1.1 1.2	ECON 200A and 200B Final Exams	Instructor Assessment	Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> Early Assessment	
2019-2020	1.3 1.4	Thesis		Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> E	
2020-2021	2.1 2.2 2.3	ECON 241 and 200C Final Papers and Oral Presentations	Instructor Assessment	Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> ECON 241 (Early Assessment) ECON 200C (Q)	
2020-2021	2.1 2.2 2.3	Theses and Oral Defenses		Graduate Coordinator	<b>Evaluation Parameters:</b> Rubric and Expectation to be determined during annual review of assessment plan <b>Timeline:</b> E	

To accommodate submission of the annual assessment report and action plan by the end of the academic year, the following timeline will be followed.

<b>Assessment Plan Steps</b>	<b>Date</b>
Collection of Direct and Indirect Evidence	March 15
Assessment of Evidence and Past Actions	March 30
Submission of Assessment and Action Plan to Department	April 30
Submission of Assessment and Action Plan to Office of Graduate Studies	May 20

### **Assessment Methods**

#### *Learning Objective 1:*

The Department of Economics uses student performance on their final exams in ECON 200A: Advanced Macroeconomic Theory and ECON 200B: Advanced Microeconomic Theory to assess whether PLOs 1.1 and 1.2 are met by the program. Final exams for students who successfully complete these core classes with a “B” or better grade will be assessed by the department graduate committee, in consultation with faculty instructors of these courses, using a department, agreed-upon rubric to determine to what extent these PLOs are met by our program at the end of their first year. This assessment will also ask for reviewers’ comments and suggested actions. These courses are offered in the spring semester and are typically taken by first year graduate students. A questionnaire for the instructors of these courses provides indirect line of evidence that along with the assessment of the exams will be used by the department to determine if action steps are necessary to address deficiency in meeting these objectives.

The Department of Economics uses ECON 500: Master’s Thesis to assess whether PLOs 1.3 and 1.4 are met by the program at the conclusion of their culminating experience. All graduate students in the program must complete a thesis that requires them to design and carry out an applied economic research project, culminating in a written thesis and oral defense. To successfully complete the thesis and oral defense, the student is expected explore newer economic theories and model more complex situations than seen in ECON 200A and ECON 200B as well as apply economic theory in their discussion of their research. The development of PLOs 1.3 and 1.4 begin in a student’s elective coursework, culminating with their thesis research. We do not assess these PLOs in the elective courses since students may just be beginning to appreciate economic theory and its application, leading to a wide range of performance. Instead, we focus on the culminating experience, ECON 500 since this provides an assessment at the end of the program when a student will have fully developed their understanding of economic theory as it relates to their thesis. The department graduate committee, using a department, agreed-upon rubric will assess theses and oral defenses, at the conclusion of the degree, to determine to what extent PLOs 1.3 and 1.4 are met by our program. This assessment will also ask for reviewers’ comments and suggested actions that will be used by the department to determine any necessary actions.

#### *Learning Objectives 2 and 3:*

The Department of Economics uses ECON 241: Applied Econometric Analysis and ECON 200C: Advanced Applied Economics to provide early and intermediate assessment, respectively, of the program’s ability to provide Learning Objectives 2 and 3 (PLOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). These classes are taught in the fall semester and are taken sequentially. Each class requires students to conduct an applied economic research project, culminating in a written paper and oral presentation. Final papers and oral presentations for those student who successfully complete these core classes with a “B” or better grade will be assessed by the department graduate committee in consultation with faculty

instructors of these courses, using a department, agreed-upon rubric to determine to what extent these learning objectives are met by our program at the end of a student's first semester and third semester of graduate studies. This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions. In addition, a questionnaire for the instructors of these courses will provide an indirect line of evidence that along with the assessment of the final papers and oral presentation and the theses, discussed below, will be used by the department to determine if action steps are necessary to address deficiency in meeting these objectives at these point in the student's academic career.

The Department of Economics uses ECON 500: Master's Thesis to assess whether stated Learning Objectives 2 and 3 are met by the program at the conclusion of a student's academic studies. As mentioned above, all graduate students in the program must complete a thesis that requires them to design and carry out an applied economic research project, culminating in a written thesis and oral defense. To successfully complete the thesis and oral defense, the student is expected to master the skills found in Learning Objectives 2 and 3. The department graduate committee, using the department, agreed-upon rubric for assessing the papers and oral presentations in ECON 241 and ECON 200C will determine to what extent Learning Objectives 2 and 3 are met by our program, by applying this rubric to completed theses and oral defenses. This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions that will be used by the department to determine any necessary actions.

#### *Learning Objectives 4:*

The Department of Economics uses ECON 500: Master's Thesis to assess whether stated Learning Objective 4 (PLOs 4.1 and 4.2) is met by the program. As mentioned above, all graduate students in the program must complete a thesis that requires them to design and carry out an applied economic research project, culminating in a written thesis and oral defense. To successfully complete the thesis and oral defense, the student is expected to master the skills found in Learning Objective 4. The department graduate committee, using a department, agreed-upon rubric for assessing theses and oral defenses will determine to what extent Learning Objective 4 is met by our program, at the conclusion of the degree. This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions that will be used by the department to determine any necessary actions.

#### *Learning Objectives 5:*

The Department of Economics uses ECON 241: Applied Econometric Analysis and ECON 200C: Advanced Applied Economics to provide early and intermediate assessment, respectively, of the program's ability to provide Learning Objective 5 (PLO 5.1). These classes are taught in the fall semester and are taken sequentially. Each class requires students to conduct an applied economic research project, culminating in a written paper and oral presentation. Final papers and oral presentations for those student who successfully complete these core classes with a "B" or better grade will be assessed by the department graduate committee in consultation with faculty instructors of these courses, using a department, agreed-upon rubric to determine to what extent this learning objective is met by our program at the end of a student's first semester and third semester of graduate studies. This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions. In addition, a questionnaire administered to the instructors of these courses will provide an indirect line of evidence that along with the assessment of the final papers and oral presentation and the theses, discussed below, will be used by the department to determine if action steps are necessary to address deficiency in meeting these objectives at these points in the student's academic career.

The Department of Economics uses ECON 500: Master's Thesis and oral defenses to assess whether stated Learning Objective 5 (PLO 5.1) is met by the program at the conclusion of a student's academic studies. As mentioned above, all graduate students in the program must complete a thesis that requires them to design and carry out an applied economic research project, culminating in a written thesis and oral defense. To successfully complete the thesis and oral defense, the student is expected to master the skills found in Learning Objective 5. The department graduate committee, will assess completed theses and oral defenses using the department, agreed-upon rubric for assessing the papers and oral presentations in ECON 241 and ECON 200C to determine to what extent Learning Objective 5 is met by our program, at the conclusion of the degree by applying this rubric to completed theses and oral defenses. This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions that will be used by the department to determine any necessary actions.

In the upcoming assessment cycle, the department graduate committee will use the Written Communication VALUE Rubric and the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric, produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (see below) to determine the extent to which PLO 5.1 is met by our program, following the awarding of the MA in Economics degree.

Further, in the upcoming assessment cycle, the department adopts the following explicit standard of performance: "We expect 100% of our graduate students to achieve at least a score of 2 on the Written Communication and Oral Communication VALUE Rubrics at the time of Early Assessment, and we expect 100% of our graduate students to achieve at least a score of 3 on the Written Communication and Oral Communication VALUE Rubrics at the conclusion of their culminating experience."

This assessment will also ask for reviewers' comments and suggested actions that will be used by the department to determine if actions are necessary to address deficiency in the program to provide this objective.

## Written Communication VALUE Rubric



	<b>Capstone</b> 4	<b>Milestones</b>		<b>Benchmark</b> 1
		3	2	
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b> <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<b>Content Development</b>	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

## Oral Communication VALUE Rubric

	<b>Capstone</b> 4	<b>Milestones</b>		<b>Benchmark</b> 1
		3	2	
<b>Organization</b>	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
<b>Language</b>	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
<b>Supporting Material</b>	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
<b>Central Message</b>	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

