

## **Graduate Students' Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Is graduate student advising mandatory? If so, how often should a graduate student meet with a faculty advisor?**

- Yes. Graduate students must meet with an assigned advisor at least once a year. Mandatory advising must be scheduled with the assigned advisor during the second half of the Fall semester (earlier for newly admitted students).
- The faculty advisor should maintain a current record of each student's progress on an advising spreadsheet.

### **2. What is the meaning of the two terms "Classified Status" and "Conditionally Classified Status"?**

- During the application review process, the admissions committee decides the preparation needs of each MA applicant. Depending on their needs, students may be admitted as "Classified" or "Conditionally Classified". Classified students have completed all of our MA program prerequisites. Conditionally classified students are admitted to the MA program subject to satisfactory (grade B or better) completion of one or more of the following: Math 226, Econ 301, Econ 302, Econ 311, Econ 312, Level 1 Written English requirement.
- After satisfactory completion of all conditional requirements, conditionally classified students must apply for a change of status to "Classified", since the status change is not automatic. Application forms are available in the Economics department office. Please bring a copy of transcript showing completion of all of the conditional requirements.
- Conditionally classified students cannot take more than 12 units of MA level courses without changing their status from "Conditionally Classified" to "Classified".

### **3. What are the Graduate English Writing requirements?**

There are two levels of English Writing requirements that graduate students must satisfy.

- Level 1. The Level 1 English Writing requirement is a pre-admission requirement. Students may demonstrate Level 1 English Writing proficiency in one of the following ways:
  - a score of at least 4.0/6.0 on the GRE or GMAT Analytic Writing Assessment;
  - a score of at least 4.5/6.0 on the essay test of the paper-based [PBT] TOEFL (a minimum score of 24/30 on the Writing section of the Internet-based test [iBT] TOEFL);
  - a score of at least 6.5/9.0 on the IELTS writing test, or a concordant score on the Pearson Test of English.

Students who are admitted conditionally on Level 1 Written English will need to successfully complete one of the following remedial English Writing courses (at additional expense) during their first semester: BUS 714, CA 514, CHS 514, SCI 614. These courses are offered through San Francisco State's Open University, as part of the College of Extended Learning. For more information about Open University, please visit their website at: <http://www.cel.sfsu.edu/openuniversity/>. Satisfactory completion of Level 1 English Writing is a must for application for Advancement to Candidacy (ATC), formerly Graduate Approved Program (GAP).

- Level 2. The Level 2 English Writing requirement is fulfilled through completion of a written paper as part of the culminating experience.

#### **4. What is the total number of units required for graduation?**

The total number of units required for the MA degree is 30 units. This includes 18 units of core courses and 12 units of electives. For students opting to write a Masters Thesis, the number of elective units required is reduced by 6. However, with effect from Fall 2007, the economics department has been phasing out the Masters' Thesis option. This will not, however, affect the students who have already planned to do the Masters' thesis.

#### **5. What are the core courses an MA student must take?**

- Econ 615 Mathematical Economics
- Econ 630 Intro Econometrics
- Econ 701 Seminar Micro Theory
- Econ 702 Seminar Macro Theory
- Econ 725 Data Research Methods
- Econ 730 Econometric Methods

The above core courses fulfill 18 units of the total requirement of 30 units for graduation.

#### **6. Do I have to maintain a certain sequence in taking courses?**

Yes, some courses have prerequisites and thus, must follow in order. For example, Econ 730 cannot be taken before Econ 630. For prerequisites, please refer to the university Course Bulletin.

#### **7. What is a suggested course schedule for completion of the MA degree?**

For students admitted with classified status and attending full-time, the following is a suggested two year schedule:

<u>First Year</u>	Fall: Econ 615, Econ 630, Econ 701
	Spring: Econ 702, Econ 725, elective

Second Year Fall: Econ 730, electives  
Spring: electives

### **8. What are the available electives that are offered to MA students?**

In addition to core courses, students must take four electives, **one of which must be a pure stand-alone graduate level course**. Currently, the department offers a small number of stand-alone graduate electives together with additional paired graduate/undergraduate electives. Instructors teaching paired electives ensure that there are additional course requirements and expectations appropriate for graduate students enrolled in the course. The paired courses we have offered in the past are:

Econ 801 paired with Econ 601: Applied Microeconomics  
Econ 811 paired with Econ 611: International Trade Theory and Policy  
Econ 805 paired with Econ 505: Graduate Applied Public Finance  
Econ 811 paired with Econ 610: International Trade Theory and Policy  
Econ 812 paired with Econ 612: International Finance and Macroeconomics  
Econ 820 paired with Econ 520: Industrial Organization  
Econ 825 paired with Econ 625: Theory of Economic Development  
Econ 850 paired with Econ 550: Economics of the Environment

Students may take up to a maximum of three paired graduate/undergraduate courses and a maximum of one undergraduate course toward the MA degree. However, one elective must be a pure stand-alone graduate level course. Students may also take certain approved electives outside of the Economics department (see below).

### **9. Can a student take one or more elective courses from another department to fulfill the graduation requirement?**

Yes. The following courses have been recommended in the past to count as an elective:

BUS 780: Financial Accounting  
BUS 785: Financial Management  
BUS 786: Operations Analysis  
DS 853: Seminar in Data Analysis  
FIN 819: Financial Analysis and Management  
FIN 825: Seminar in Investments  
GEOG 825: Seminar in Economic Geography  
IBUS 868: Strategies in Emerging and Developing Economies  
IR 728: International Political Economy  
IR 735: Global Environmental Policy  
MATH 325: Linear Algebra

MATH 370: Real Analysis  
MATH 441: Probability and Statistics II

If an advisor must recommend an outside course not on the above list, the decision must be based on its merit, such as the extent to which the course draws on economic theories and principles, or the extent to which the course enhances mathematical/quantitative skills useful for economics. An advisor must inform the graduate coordinator of his/her decision in such cases for record keeping purposes.

**10. How many course units from other departments can be counted toward the MA degree?**

A maximum of six units from other departments can be counted toward MA degree.

**11. In addition to the core and elective courses, can I take one or more faculty-directed “Independent Study” courses to fulfill graduation requirements? How many units does an “Independent Study” course carry?**

- Yes. An “Independent Study” (Econ 899) can be planned with the formal approval of a faculty member who agrees to direct a student for a semester-long study, as per rules.
- An “Independent Study” carries up to three units. Based on the assessment of the student’s workload, the faculty member directing the study decides the number of units the study can carry.
- Only students with a GPA of 3.25 or better are allowed to take Independent Study.

**12. Can credits for some of the courses from a previous institution be transferred and used as a replacement for some of the above courses?**

- Yes. An adviser, upon a student’s request, may recommend such a replacement based on the particular merits of and student performance in the course. A Request for Graduate Program Transfer Unit form must be completed and signed by the advisor and graduate coordinator. The form should be submitted along with the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) Form (formerly Graduate Approved Program (GAP)) form. For more information and to download the form, go to: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/unit-evaluation.htm> Note that a maximum of 6 units can be transferred and that units will only transfer if the course taken elsewhere was not applied to the award of a previous degree. If the course was applied to the award of a previous degree, while we may accept the course as an equivalent to satisfy one of our own requirements, you will still need to complete the units within our program (i.e., take one or two additional electives). In this case, there is no need to complete the Transfer Unit Form.

**13. How and when do I complete the culminating experience (comprehensive written exam)?**

In order to satisfy the culminating experience requirement, you will be asked to write a critical summary and assessment (“referee report”) of a scholarly article, which will be assigned to you. You will write your report under timed, proctored conditions during your final semester in the program. Your examination committee will give you several articles, well in advance, to read and assess. You will write your report on one of these articles; however, you will not know which article you will be writing on until the examination period. Your committee will also give you guidelines in advance, and you are encouraged to prepare outlines that you may bring to the examination in order to help organize your writing.

**14. If I have already planned to take the Masters Thesis route, how do I plan and organize the process leading to Thesis oral defense?**

- (NOTE) With effect from Fall 2007, the Economics Department has discontinued supporting Masters’ thesis.
- A student must allow at least two semesters to start and complete the Masters Thesis.
- The student must decide his/her Thesis oral defense committee as early as in the second semester of his/her enrollment into the MA program. .
- The Masters Thesis committee will consist of a chairperson and two other faculty members.
- The committee members must be either tenured or tenure track faculty.
- It is the students’ responsibility to have the Chair and the committee members agree to serve on the Masters Thesis committee.
- It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the Masters Thesis oral defense on a date agreeable to all the committee members. Normally, the Masters Thesis oral defense is scheduled at the end of the final semester of the student’s enrollment.

**15. What is an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form? (formerly, Graduate Approved Program (GAP) )**

- The ATC form must be filled out and submitted to Graduate Division after completing 9 units of MA level courses, but before completing the last 6 units of courses. This form must be signed by the faculty advisor, graduate coordinator, and the Dean before it goes to the Graduate Division for final action. The form must be filled out online and can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/forms/econ.pdf>
- Students should submit their ATC form during the semester just prior to their final semester. The official ATC deadline is posted at graduate division (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/degree-completion-deadline.htm>).
- Only students with 3.0 or better GPA and with *Classified* status can submit ATC forms.

**16. Other Deadlines. When do students submit the Proposal for Culminating Experience and Application for Award of Degree (Graduation Application)?**

The deadline for submitting the Proposal for Culminating Experience is the same as the deadline for the Advancement to Candidacy, which is normally late October/early November for students graduating in Spring or Summer. The deadline for Application of Award of Degree is normally early February for students graduating in Spring or Summer. Students must check the official deadlines posted at the Graduate Division website: (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/degree-completion-deadline.htm>)

**17. What do I do if I am notified that I have been placed on probationary status?**

- If you are notified that you have been placed on probation, you must meet with your advisor and have him/her sign the Mandatory Graduate Probation Advising Form. You will not be able to register for courses until this form has been submitted to Graduate Division.
- If after the next semester, your GPA is still below 3.0, you will be academically disqualified. In this case, you must meet with your advisor and have him/her sign a petition for Reinstatement Following Disqualification.
- If the semester after reinstatement, your GPA remains below 3.0, you will be administratively disqualified from the program, and can only be reinstated with an appeal by the department to the Graduate Studies Appeals Committee. This is the last possible appeal, and clearly can be made only in cases showing the strongest potential and progress.
- The above forms can be obtained at the Graduate Division website:  
<http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/probation.htm>

**18. Where do I get all the necessary forms, such as the ATC form, Application for Award of Degree, probationary status forms, etc.?**

All the necessary forms can be downloaded from the Graduate Division site at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/current-form.htm>. A majority of them can be filled out online.