



Department of Economics
Graduate Handbook
2020 - 2021

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Important Dates	3
Registration	4
Academics	4
The MA Program	
The MAEP Program	
The PhD Program	
Comprehensive Exams	
Thesis	
Promotion to PhD	
Course Listing	
Seminars	
Regulations and Procedures	5
Graduate Student Regulations & Responsibilities	
Graduate Academic Advising	
Supervisory Committees	
Graduation Procedures	
Change of Status	
Leave of Absence	
Facilities	7
Mail Service, Postage, and Use of Letterhead	
PEDAL Lab	
Office Use and Keys	
Grad Intranet	
Access to Information Business System (MOSAIC)	
Finance	7
Tuition Fees	
Payment Information	
Graduate Scholarships and Awards	
Employment at McMaster	8
Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant Information	
Employment Regulations	
Careers	8
Coop Program	
Student and Campus Living	9

Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Economics at McMaster University! The Department includes faculty experts in microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, experimental economics, health economics, international economics, labour economics, monetary economics, population economics and public economics. Much of our research is applied to policy issues and utilizes advanced quantitative techniques. At the graduate level we offer a M.A. and a Ph.D. in Economics, as well as an M.A. in Economic Policy. All of our programs permit students to obtain training in economic theory and quantitative methods as well as opportunities to take courses in a wide range of areas of specialization. The graduate programs at McMaster are of a modest size, designed to provide a personalized approach to training with many opportunities for interaction with faculty in the Department.

In a typical year there are 15-20 students enrolled in each of our Masters programs, 25 students are currently enrolled in the doctoral program, and about 5-8 students are admitted annually. Students graduating from our programs do well on the job market. Our Masters students typically obtain positions in the public sector at both the federal and provincial levels in a diverse set of economic and policy areas such as finance, health, education, social policy, and the environment, or in the private sector in financial institutions (e.g. CIBC, RBC), large employers with research divisions, and research organizations (e.g., Dymaxium, I3 Canada).

Due to **COVID-19**, the Fall 2020 term will be **virtual**. Students will be notified at some point in September whether the Winter 2021 term will be virtual, in-person or a mix of both.

Important Dates	
September 1, 2020	Welcome Orientation
September 8, 2020	Undergraduate and graduate classes start
September 12, 2020	Grad Studies Games Night
September 25, 2020	Final date to add courses
November 13, 2020	Final date to drop courses without failure
October 12 – October 16, 2020	Fall break week, no classes will be held
December 9, 2020	Last day of graduate classes
TBD	Final exams for fall term economics courses: TBD – exams typically run for two weeks following the end of the fall term. Please do not book flights home before that time.
January 6, 2021	Graduate classes start
January 22, 2021	Final date to add courses
February 15 – February 19, 2021	Reading week break, no classes will be held
March 19, 2021	Last date to drop courses without failure
April 9, 2021	Last day of graduate classes
TBD	Final exams for winter term economics courses: TBD – exams typically run for two weeks following the end of the winter term. Please do not book flights home before that time.

Registration

The on-time registration is available from July 7, 2020 to August 4, 2020. Late registration will be available from August 5, 2020 to September 9, 2020 with a late fee. Failure to register will jeopardize the student's privilege to remain as a graduate student at McMaster University. Students will need to be fully registered in order to access university functions and facilities. Graduate students are required to register prior to the start of the term for which they have received admission. Those students offered a Teaching Assistantship must be at McMaster for the start of the undergraduate classes to begin their TA duties.

You can follow instructions on how to register in MOSAIC [here](#). Note that to complete registration at least one course needs to be added for each term. The course catalog can be accessed via the Student Center in MOSAIC, giving a complete list of available courses offered for the current academic year. If you are not taking an academic course in a particular term, there are two different placeholder courses. SGS 700: full time students and SGS 701: part time students. If a student does not add a course in each term the student will not have completed their enrollment. This will mean that when we run a transcript that term will not appear. This will affect the ability for a student to order an accurate transcript, request enrolment letters, payment of scholarships and calculate tuition.

International students must also present their Passport with a valid study permit at the School of Graduate Studies upon arrival to complete their registration.

For more detailed instructions on registration, click [here](#).

Department Contacts

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Academics

Masters of Arts in Economics

The Masters program in Economics is a one-year program that provides students with the training needed to pursue two primary career paths: (a) further study of economics at the PhD level; (b) work as an economic analyst in the public or private sectors. More information on the Masters program in economics can be found [here](#).

Masters of Arts in Economic Policy (MAEP)

The Masters program in Economic Policy is a one-year program that provides students with applied, policy-oriented training in economics that prepares them primarily for work as an economic analyst in the public or private sectors (though some students go on for PhD study in either economics or policy). More information on the MAEP can be found [here](#).

PhD in Economics

The PhD program provides students with the rigorous training in modern economic methods needed to become an independent economic researcher working in either the academic or non-academic sector. More information on the PhD program can be found [here](#).

Promotion to a PhD in Economics

Current MA or MAEP students who are considering continuing their education in our PhD program directly following completion of their current degree, are encouraged to speak directly with the Graduate Chair. All students are required to apply to the program, applications are accepted from Nov 15 to Jan 15 of each year with entry into the September of that year.

Course Listing

While offered classes may vary year to year, a list of the most frequently offered graduate courses can be found [here](#)

Math Camp (Economics 765)

This course consists of two exams held in the first week of September covering mathematical and statistical methods commonly used in economic modeling. To help students, the Economics Department offers a voluntary 10 day preparation camp in August. For more information, click [here](#)

SGS 101 & 201

In addition to the placeholder courses (as required), all new students (who will be receiving a credential from McMaster) are required to take SGS 101: Academic Research Integrity and Ethics and SGS 201: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These courses should be completed during the first term and will be made available on line in the first month of the term.

Seminar Series

A robust seminar series is offered in the department typically on Wednesdays at lunchtime and Friday afternoons in KTH 334. **This year the seminars will be held virtually.** Graduate students are encouraged to attend. Many of the department visitors are willing to set aside time to meet with graduate students. This is an opportunity for you to discuss your research, and is good practice for employment interviews. For more information, click [here](#).

Regulations and Procedures

Graduate Student Regulations & Responsibilities

All students are advised to familiarize themselves with their Graduate Student responsibilities as listed by the School of Graduate Studies, found [here](#).

A failure (which is a grade below B-) in any graduate course triggers a withdrawal from the graduate program unless the department petitions to allow you to stay. Note that MBA students can pass their courses with a grade below B-, but for Economics grad students, B- is the minimal passing mark, even for MBA courses.

M.A. students sometimes can postpone a course or two until the following fall and lengthen their program, but there is normally no additional financial aid. In addition, tuition must be charged for any additional terms, and this change must be approved at the School of Graduate Studies. The only comparable option for Ph.D. students is to ask for a leave of absence, which means giving up all T.A. and scholarship income. It also must be approved by the School of Graduate Studies, and is usually granted for health reasons.

All incoming PhD students are required to complete mandatory courses in their first year. As well, in May and June, the microeconomics and macroeconomics comprehensive examinations must be written. In the second year the remaining electives should be taken. All comprehensive exams must be completed within 24 months of admission to the PhD program. For current M.A. students considering the PhD program, there is no reason they cannot maintain the same progress, completing many of the PhD requirements while still

in the MA year. This means that, from the time of beginning the MA program, it may be possible to finish the PhD program in 3 or 4 years. Most students, however, take one year for the MA degree and four years for the PhD degree.

Graduate Academic Advising

The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee is the advisor for all MA students, and PhD students until they obtain a thesis supervisor. A student who is having academic difficulties should consult their advisor as early as possible.

PhD Supervisory Committees

The completion of the supervisory committee report is an annual requirement by the School of Graduate Studies to ensure that a student's progress is monitored throughout the duration of the program. In anticipation of the meeting, students are expected to prepare the section including details of the progress made through the previous year including courses completed, comprehensive examination preparation/writing/oral defense, thesis proposal, research, chapters written/revised, conference presentations, and publications. These details are presented to the supervisor in order to complete the Progress section identified in Part A. In conjunction with the supervisory committee members, specific goals must be outlined in Part B to ensure the student has a clear idea of the expectations set forth for the coming year. These goals form the foundation of assessing the progress made in the next year's report. The form also includes a section for additional comments (Part C) that should be shared with the student, department chairs and School of Graduate Studies. The final section requires each of the supervisory committee members to rate the student's progress based on their ability to achieve the goals set out in the previous report. The scale includes the following ratings:

- E – Excellent
- G – Good
- M – Marginal
- U – Unsatisfactory

If the committee determines that the progress is either Marginal or Unsatisfactory, they must include a detailed explanation in the comments section of what the student must accomplish within the next 6 months to remedy the situation. The committee must convene for a follow-up meeting with the student no later than 6 months after the original meeting to assess if the student has improved their progress since the last report. If the student continues to make unsatisfactory progress, the School of Graduate Studies will request a recommendation from the department of whether the student should continue in the program.

Graduation Procedures

In order to be cleared to graduate, students must maintain a B- average in all completed studies and have completed SGS 101 and 201. PhD students must have submitted their thesis by the session before their convocation date and be prepared to defend. Check the [School of Graduate Studies](#) for useful tips for completing your degree and your thesis.

Change of Status

To request a Change of Status, please fill out the form on the School of Graduate Studies web page

Leave of Absence

Leaves of absence are normally granted on a term-by-term basis and, whenever possible, should commence at the beginning of a term (i.e. January 1, May 1, or September 1). During the period of a leave the student cannot expect to be given guidance on their thesis or be entitled to use the University's facilities. During a leave of absence no tuition will be charged, nor will the student be eligible for any scholarship support. The

length of time for completing the degree and for eligibility for scholarship support will be extended by the duration of the leave on the resumption of studies. A student should resume studies at the beginning of a term. Leaves of absence affecting Teaching Assistantship duties are covered by the Collective Agreement with Local 3906 of CUPE.

Reasons for Leaves of Absence:

A leave of absence for up to one year is permitted for reasons of

1. Illness
2. Reasons related to family responsibilities such as pregnancy and child rearing
3. Personal circumstances

Students who have successfully completed at least one full year in a graduate program may apply for a Leave of Absence for up to one year for other personal circumstances, including severe financial problems, provided that the student's supervisor and the department support the request.

Facilities

***Access to some of these facilities may be impacted due to COVID-19. The Department will provide students with updates as the situation progresses**

Printing Services

Student Printing is available in KTH 118 , the fee will charge to student's account.

Photocopier Services

Student Photocopier is available in KTH 118, the fee will charge to student's account.

Mail Service, Postage, and Use of Letterhead

Mail is delivered to the Departmental Office once a day. Delivery is around 9:00am. Mail will be placed in the students' individual mailboxes in KTH 118.

Secure Empirical Analysis Lab (SEAL) The SEAL lab is a medium security facility that specializes in transforming and analyzing administrative data collected for purposes other than research. We have established working partnerships with multiple data providers at various government levels. For more information on current projects, please visit: <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/seal>

Office Use and Keys

You will be given an access code to shared office space in Kenneth Taylor Hall, where you can access your departmental mailbox, printer, photocopier and computers. MSOffice XP and Stata 9 are available, as well as external (off-campus) internet access.

The office space is intended to be used for academic purposes, including meeting with your students (if you have a Teaching Assistantship) and studying – sleeping in offices is not permitted.

Recognizing that this is a shared work environment, students are expected to keep their personal space in offices clean and to minimize any excessive noise or activity that may impede or negatively affect other students working in that area. Repeat offenders may be temporarily (or permanently, depending on offense) removed from shared spaces.

Graduate Intranet

Every student has access to the Department of Economics Graduate Intranet. The intranet is a resource for all students to keep up to date on relevant departmental information that is private from non-department students and the greater community. This resource includes information on comprehensive exams, career placement information and other relevant information such as graduate studies regulations and guidelines for ethical editing of theses/dissertation. For access to the intranet, please contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Access to Information Business Systems (MOSAIC)

MOSAIC is McMaster's business and administration system that provides students with convenient access to self-service capabilities so that they may efficiently navigate their academic, financial, and personal information. This system includes student registration, student accounts, finances, transcripts, and many other functions bundled together in a Student Center. To access MOSAIC, log in with your MAC ID and password at mosaic.mcmaster.ca

Finance

Tuition Fees and Payment Information

Information on Graduate Program fees can be found on the Student Accounts and Cashier's website or click [here](#). For information about the Department of Economics Tuition and Financial Support, please review in the programs section of the department [website](#). Please note that co-ops taken in the spring/summer term are charged a co-op fee instead of the tuition fee. Co-ops taken in the following terms trigger an additional co-op fee equal to one term's tuition fee.

Graduate Scholarships and Awards

The School of Graduate Studies announces scholarship competitions throughout the academic year. Students are strongly encouraged to apply to any competition for which they meet the eligibility requirements. For students who think they might be continuing in a graduate program next year, it is very important to apply for external scholarships, and the deadlines come very early. Complete OGS applications are due to the department in early-mid October, SSHRC in early November. Success in these competitions can add substantially to your funding. The two most important competitions are the OGS (information forthcoming) and the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada \(SSHRC\)](#) doctoral fellowship.

We urge every student who is planning to continue to apply for both, if eligible. Applications are done online. A SSHRC scholarship is valued at \$17,500 per year. Only citizens or Permanent Residents of Canada may apply. The OGS is valued at \$15,000 per year, and is open to all graduate students in Ontario. The OGS is not automatically renewable, though students can re-apply each year. A printed copy of your application, including references, and university transcripts must be submitted to the graduate secretary by the specified deadline. If you get references from a professor from another university, please ask him/her to send the letter directly to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, Department of Economics, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4M4.

Employment at McMaster

Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant Information

If you are a full-time student, the graduate school monitors how many hours you are working on campus. In any term in which you have a full TA, you are considered to be working 130 hours and any further employment on campus requires the approval of the Associate Dean through the Graduate Advisor. Further TA information can be found [here](#). You should follow certain regulations and guidelines to ensure your

success as a TA. These rules and other helpful tips for teaching students can be found in the Department of Economics TA/Invigilator Handbook.

The department has also recently established a graduate TA award to honour the contributions that graduate teaching assistants make to undergraduate education at McMaster University.

The payroll for the graduate students is handled by Human Resources (HR). The bi-weekly payment to the graduate students is made by direct bank deposit. Students must complete and submit to HR the direct deposit information form. A Statement of Earnings is available in Mosaic. Should you have any questions concerning your payment, please contact the department administrative assistant.

Employment Regulations

CUPE 3906 is the largest union for academic employees on McMaster's campus. They represent TAs and RAs in lieu by way of member-driven committees and local staff. The union has been dedicated to upholding high standards of education at McMaster University by ensuring its members are well-equipped to perform their duties. For more information and inquiries, please visit CUPE3906.org

Careers

Co-op

Placements are currently available for MA and PhD students.

Career opportunity and advice is available for MA, MAEP and PhD students via Avenue 2 Learn. For access to career information, please log into Avenue 2 Learn. If you experience difficulties, please speak with the Grad Admin Assistant. For inquiries regarding coop placements or career advice, please contact the Graduate Placement Officer at 905-525-9140 X 23218.

Student and Campus Living

Social Opportunities

The Department of Economics offers many social and networking opportunities throughout the year for both students and staff, including networking sessions and annual coffee break potlucks.

Off-Campus Housing

While on-campus residence is not offered for graduate students, McMaster provides an Off-Campus Resource Centre to help students find suitable housing. If you are looking for housing starting in September you should probably start looking about 2 months in advance to ensure yourself of a good selection of units. The OCRC serves primarily as a rental listing service for landlords, but also provides other valuable housing-related resources such as bus route maps, referrals to local legal clinics, and information for tenants and families. Take careful note of the walking distance to the campus (Kenneth Taylor Hall in particular).

Parking and Transit

For those who will need parking, note that parking is allocated on a first-come first-served basis. Parking availability on campus is very limited. McMaster's main campus is easily accessed by municipal (HSR bus service) and GO Transit, and is also bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Graduate Student Life

The School of Graduate Studies is dedicated to enhancing your experience at McMaster and helping you develop your professional, academic, and research career. A wide range of resources are available for you to develop your skillset, including peer-facilitated writing circles, off-campus space for community-based

research, a study space dedicated to use by grad students and postdocs, grant-writing workshops, resume assistance, and opportunities to communicate research with the broader McMaster and Hamilton communities.

[Graduate Students Association \(GSA\)](#)

The GSA is your voice on University committees. This group of dedicated graduate students give their time to ensure our graduate community is represented at every level of University governance. The GSA also organizes events – intellectual, athletic and social – to enhance the graduate student experience, as well as runs the popular on-campus pub, [The Phoenix](#).

[International Student Services \(ISS\)](#)

International Student Services provides core services and programs for registered international students, exchange students, visiting scholars, and their families.

[McMaster University International Students Advisor](#)

This website provides a handbook for international students at McMaster and announces various events and social activities geared towards international students studying at McMaster.

[Student Wellness Centre](#)

Whether you have a health emergency, a question about nutrition or contraceptive option, a sprain or strain, aches and pains or a bad case of the flu, the Student Wellness Centre operates a full health and counselling clinic staffed with physicians, nurses, wellness educators, psychologists, counsellors and a psychiatrist. You can access health services on campus in the Campus Health Centre, located in MUSC B101 ext. 27700 or at wellness.mcmaster.ca. They provide medical care similar to a family physician and healthcare is available throughout the year for all students. There is also a pharmacy located in MUSC.

[If you need information about your Health Plan](#)

[Campus Dentist](#)

Located in the Student Centre (behind Travel Cuts), Campus Dentist offers checkups, fillings, wisdom teeth extractions and teeth whitening. New patients and emergencies are welcome, and all insurance plans are accepted.

[If you need information about your Health Plan](#)

[Student Accessibility Services](#)

Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. SAS works with full-time and part-time students, as well as prospective students, assisting with academic and disability-related needs.

[Student Success Centre](#)

Offers a wide variety of career and professional development services, as well as leadership training opportunities.

[MacPherson Institute](#)

MacPherson Institute is designed to enable your success in teaching and learning.

[Human Rights & Equity Services](#)

Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES) aims to make McMaster a community where all students, staff and faculty can learn, work and live in equality and respect by promoting an environment free of sexism, racism, heterosexism, discrimination against people with disabilities and all other forms of

harassment and discrimination. Services provided include Consultation and Advice, Awareness and Education, and Resolution of Complaints.

Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office provides impartial, independent, and informal dispute-resolution advice and assistance to all members of the McMaster University community, free of charge. It is available to handle university related complaints and concerns, whether they are academic or non-academic problems.