

Teachers College, Columbia University
Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis
Program of Study Guide for
Economics and Education

Degree: PhD
Major Code: ECON

This Academic Program of Study Guide has been developed to assist you in planning your course of study at Teachers College. Below you will find the Study Guide for the Ph.D. program in Economics and Education.

We hope this Study Guide provides a helpful introduction and orientation to your program. Given the richness and complexity of graduate and professional programs at Teachers College, these Study Guides are intended to be illustrative, rather than definitive.

Congratulations, again, on your admission to graduate study at Teachers College, Columbia University!

Economics is a powerful tool for scholars and educational practitioners who wish to develop a better understanding of educational institutions and decisions. The program in Economics and Education at Teachers College was one of the first of its kind and has maintained its position of leadership in this rapidly growing field. Students in the program develop an array of skills in the application of economic concepts and theory, in benefit-cost analysis and other evaluative procedures, and in the statistical treatment of mass data. Within broad college and university guidelines, students may pursue individually designed programs that satisfy their unique interests and career objectives.

This 75-point program is intended for individuals who want to acquire advanced training in the theory, methods, and practices in the economics of education. It is a selective program to prepare individuals for leadership roles in teaching, research, or administrative settings. The coursework for this program consists of three parts: core courses, courses in research methods, and courses in a specialized area of study. Students should take 9 points representing a substantive specialization, proposed by the student and approved by the student's advisor, such as higher education, early childhood education, field experimentation, or a regional focus.

For a detailed description of the PhD program coursework, totaling 75 points, please see the PhD Program Worksheet.

Transfer Credits:

Students are allowed to transfer 30 credits from an outside institution. The maximum Columbia University transferable credit amount is 45 credits. TC's Transfer Credit Coordinator will determine which of a student's graduate course credits are eligible for transfer (courses must have been taken for a grade; undergraduate courses, even if taken as part of a master's level program, are not eligible for transfer). The student's advisor will then determine which eligible credits can be applied toward program requirements. Please refer to the website of Office of the Registrar for more details. Here is the link: <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/registrar/transfer-credit/>.

Period of Eligibility for the PhD:

Students must complete all degree requirements in no more than seven years. Students with an applicable master's degree or 30 points of advanced standing prior to doctoral admission are to complete requirements within six years.

Other Requirements to Fulfill:

All students should consult the Teachers College PhD Requirements Bulletin, available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website, and familiarize themselves with the additional post-coursework requirements for PhD students.

- Competence in a language other than English

All PhD students in the Economics and Education program, including international students, must demonstrate competence in one language other than English. Statistics courses may be

used to fulfill the language requirement. For more information about using Statistics courses to fulfill the language requirement, please consult the PhD Requirements Bulletin (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website).

- Certification Examination

All students must pass a certification examination as part of their PhD requirements. Students are encouraged to take the exam no later than the semester in which they have completed 60 points or when they have completed up to 70-80% of their coursework. However, they should consult with their advisor as to their readiness to sit for the exam. Certification exams are held three times a year, in October, February, and June, at Teachers College, however, please see the timeline below for more guidance regarding this program. Applications for taking the certification exam are available in the Office of Doctoral Studies. The application must be completed by the student, signed by the advisor, and returned to Office of Doctoral Studies by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar.

The certification exam has two parts:

1. Take-home exam. This exam seeks to incentivize students to critically engage and comprehend both important studies in the economics of education “canon,” and with the literature most relevant to an area of particular interest to them. In the week prior to the start of classes in their 3rd year, students will be asked to write essay form responses to questions asking them to critique and synthesize the theoretical and empirical contributions from a set of papers chosen by the EDPE faculty, the student’s adviser, and the student.
 - a) EDPE faculty will designate a set of 10-15 papers from an overall list of papers in “the canon” that each student will be responsible for on the exam.
 - b) In addition, students, consulting with their adviser, will choose a set of 10-15 additional papers that focus on an area of interest.
 - c) In the week prior to the start of classes, students will be given the exam questions and asked to prepare written answers over a 7-day period. Students do not need to be on-campus for the exam—it can be taken remotely.
 - d) Faculty will provide students with an overall list of papers that will be considered “the canon” by April 30.
 - e) Students currently in the second year or above in the Program who have not yet completed the literature review should plan on taking the exam. Reach out to your adviser with any concerns you may have.
 - f) Exams will be graded by October 15. Students that do not pass will be given one opportunity to retake the exam in January.

2. Empirical paper. The goal of the paper requirement is to nudge students into the process of conducting an empirical research study, and to align the certification requirement with an assessment of the most important skills required to be a successful researcher.

- a) Students must approve an outline for the paper with their adviser by October 15 of the third year of study, including confirmation that the project is feasible (e.g., the necessary data can be obtained in a timely fashion).
- b) The paper is due to each student's adviser by the Friday after Spring term classes end (early/mid-May).
- c) Papers will be graded by the end of June. Students that do not pass the paper requirement will be given an opportunity to revise the paper, with revisions and a revision memo (a document explaining how adviser comments were addressed) due within 6 weeks of receiving comments from their adviser.

A doctoral student will not be considered as having passed the certification exam unless he or she has successfully passed both the first and second parts of the certification exam. Both parts are graded on a pass/fail basis by two program faculty.

- Program Plan

Once a student has passed the certification exam and fulfilled the language requirement, the student must complete a Program Plan listing courses taken (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website).

- Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

All students are expected to enroll in two semesters of EDP 7500 for a total of 3 points as part of their 75 points of coursework. Students are expected to complete and defend their proposal no later than the second semester of EDP 7500. Whether students complete and defend their proposal while they are enrolled in EDP 7500, or in a later semester, students must enroll in EDP 7501 for zero points during the semester in which they defend their proposal.

When the student schedules his or her dissertation proposal hearing, the student is responsible for completing Part I of the Dissertation Proposal Hearing Report (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website) and having the rest of the form completed and signed by the required individuals upon successful completion of the proposal hearing.

After a successful dissertation proposal hearing, the student must apply to the Teachers College Office of Sponsored Programs for an Institutional Review Board (IRB) letter approving his or her dissertation research. The application for the IRB letter is available on the website of the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Once the student receives the IRB letter, the student should submit hard copies of the following completed and signed documents to Katherine Y. Chung, the Program Manager for Economics & Education, in ZB 212:

- (1) Program Plan;
- (2) Dissertation Proposal Hearing Report; and
- (3) IRB letter.

At this time, the student is also responsible for emailing a pdf of the Proposal to ods@tc.columbia.edu.

At this time, the program and department will determine whether the student is eligible for the M. Phil. degree. If so, the department will recommend the student for the M. Phil. Degree. For more information about the awarding of the M. Phil. Degree, please consult the PhD Requirements Bulletin (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website).

- Doctoral Dissertation Research, Writing and Defense

Once a student has (1) completed two semesters of EDP 7500 for 3 points; (2) enrolled in one semester of EDP 7501 for zero points; and (3) successfully completed the proposal hearing (which in most cases will be during the second semester of EDP 7500), the student is required to register continuously, every Autumn Term and Spring Term, whether or not in attendance. Continuous registration (except for summer terms) is required up through and including the term in which the oral dissertation defense is held (TI 8900). If the student is not enrolled in any regular courses, he/she will need to register instead for EDPE 8900 (Doctoral Dissertation Advisement).

Although EDPE 8900 does not carry any points of course credit, the student will be charged for three tuition points for each term of EDPE 8900 enrollment. However, students should NOT delay their proposal hearings as a way to avoid these charges; in practice this simply slows down students' progress towards completion, which is far more costly. There are many other ways to avoid paying tuition unnecessarily; for example, students working on campus can receive up to 3 tuition points each term. Please consult the Teachers College Financial Aid website for information about grants and other funding possibilities to help defray the costs of continuous dissertation advisement.

Students have other options to avoid the dissertation advisement fee for limited periods in which they are not receiving advisement. For example, students can receive two semesters of "personal exemptions" for "research, special study, or experience elsewhere; [or] work on the dissertation not requiring use of University facilities or resources," or they may apply for a waiver for special circumstances, including when a faculty adviser is ill or on sabbatical. Finally, students may take a leave of absence for maternity leave or extended illness. For more details about eligibility,

please consult the PhD Requirements Bulletin (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website).

Once a student is ready to defend the dissertation, with agreement from the student's advisor, the student may schedule the final defense. Students are responsible for arranging the date, hour, and location at which all members of the Final Oral Defense Committee can attend the final defense. Students may schedule the final defense for any time during the regular academic year, in consultation with the sponsor and committee members. The student must file with the Office of Doctoral Studies a Notification of Intention to Defend the Dissertation. Students should familiarize themselves with the applicable deadlines for the semester in which they plan to defend, as they come early in the semester. These dates are available on the Teachers College Academic Calendar.

All students are required to enroll in TI 8900 (Dissertation Defense: PhD), for the term in which the oral defense is scheduled. The student will be charged a special fee for TI 8900, which is listed in the Teachers College academic catalog.

For important additional information about the defense committee, final defense, procedures following the defense, and the granting of the PhD degree, including applicable Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requirements, please consult the PhD Requirements Bulletin (available on the Office of Doctoral Studies website).

Additional Policies and Comments:

Students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of degree requirements. Program faculty will annually review each student's progress. Where there are concerns about satisfactory progress, students will be informed by the program faculty. If a student is performing below expectations, the program will provide a plan and timeline for remediation so students know the expectation for them to continue in the program. If satisfactory progress is not maintained a student may be dismissed from the program.

Services for Students with Disabilities: The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration (163 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only to students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation.

Statement on Academic Conduct: A Teachers College student is expected to refrain from any conduct, including cheating, plagiarizing, or purchasing documents submitted for academic evaluation, that calls into question his/her academic and/or professional probity. Decisions regarding academic evaluation in all aspects of students' work at the college, including course work, certification examinations, clinical or field experiences, and preparation of dissertations, are within the sole jurisdiction of the faculty concerned, including as appropriate, the department or program staff members. Disciplinary actions (e.g., reprimand, suspension, or dismissal) in cases of academic misconduct can be imposed by the Vice Provost or the Committee on Student Conduct.

Resolution of Student Academic Program Concerns: Any student who has a concern regarding an academic matter may seek assistance. The procedure for resolving academic program concerns (see note of grade correction process below) begins with either the faculty member (if the concern is related to a course) or the student's advisor. If the student is not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved at this first level, or if speaking with the faculty member presents a conflict of interest for the student, the student should proceed to speak with the Program Coordinator in the area in which the academic concern resides. If the student is not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved through the Program Coordinator, the student should proceed to speak with the Chair of the academic department in which the academic concern resides. If the student is still not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved through the Department Chair, or if speaking with the Department Chair presents a conflict of interest for the student, the next step is to contact the Office of the Vice Provost. At any stage of the process, students are welcome to seek the advice and guidance of the Ombudsman, who is charged with attempting to informally resolve student dissatisfaction of an academic nature on a completely confidential basis.

Grade Correction Procedure: The instructor for a course has the responsibility for setting the requirements for a course and making an evaluation of students' work. Once a grade has been given, the instructor is not free to change the grade unless the instructor indicates to the Registrar that an error was made in the original grade transmitted. If a student believes that an error has been made, he/she must take the initiative in bringing about the necessary correction prior to the conclusion of the semester immediately following the semester in which the course was taken. The normal procedure for effecting a correction would be through direct discussion between the student and the instructor. If redress cannot be attained through such discussions, the student may next appeal to the department chairperson of the department offering the course. If resolution cannot be attained through appeal, the student may next appeal to the Dean. In situations where the student feels that such an appeal process might not be in the student's interest, counsel and assistance can be sought from the Office of the College Ombudsman and the Office of the Vice Provost.