PhD Student Handbook

Academic Year 2025–26

Economics
College of Arts and Science
University of Missouri

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Contents

1 Introduction

This handbook is to help you (the student) understand our PhD program's policies and procedures. It highlights both the Department's role as well as your responsibilities as a student. The MU Graduate School's website (https://gradschool.missouri.edu) describes other University procedures.

Generally, the handbook for your Year 1 applies to your full time in our program; any exceptions will be explicitly communicated to you.

Terms: DDS abbreviates Director of Doctoral Studies; MU, University of Missouri, Mizzou, and the University all refer to our university; the Department is our Department of Economics.

2 Application & Admission

Please see https://economics.missouri.edu/grad/apply#phd for the latest information.

3 Arrival Logistics

There are many logistical details for travel to campus and arrival, especially for international students. This section is not comprehensive, but hopes to give you some helpful suggestions based on the experiences of past students.

3.1 Visa Application

If you need a visa, please make sure to start your visa application process as soon as possible. Since the COVID pandemic started, some students have had difficulty getting a visa interview appointment in time to start the program on time and/or delays in getting their visa approved after the interview. If you have visa-related questions, please contact your international student adviser in ISSS (assigned by the first letter of your family name).

Do not register in myZou until you have your visa.

3.2 Housing

Our students have lived in a variety of locations that they have been happy with. To help yourself find a good housing situation, first consider your own preferences about having a "roommate," transportation (e.g., are you willing and able to drive to campus?), amenities (e.g., do you want your own clothes washing machine in your apartment, or at least in your building/complex?), etc. Note that "roommate" (US English) does not actually mean you share a bedroom, but is a synonym for "flatmate" (British English), where share the kitchen/bathroom/etc. but have separate bedrooms. Also note that per-person rent is usually much cheaper if you share a 2-bedroom apartment with a roommate than if you have your own 1-bedroom.

Try to find housing as early as possible. As the number of available housing units decreases (over the spring/summer), the prices tend to increase.

Here are a few examples of housing options; names are hyperlinked.

- University Place: from this apartment building to our building is only a 0.9km (0.5mi) walk, and we have had students who enjoyed living here. The prices seem reasonable, especially if you share a 2-bedroom apartment with a roommate. Although their typical rental contract starts in mid-August (before the semester, but after math camp), some of our students have been allowed to move in earlier when they asked if that was possible.

- Tara Apartments: this is the only University-run housing option for graduate students. They are relatively understanding of students' situations, the prices are reasonable, and you will get to live near many other graduate students (probably including some from our department). There is a Tiger Line Shuttle (specifically the #402 Trowbridge Loop) that goes by Tara and takes you to the MU Student Center, but currently it only runs on weekdays during the semester, and then you still have to walk 1km (0.6mi) from the Student Center to the Locust Street Building. Also, the city bus routes do not go near Tara. Even if this is not your first choice, you may want to sign up to be on the waitlist as soon as you can because it usually fills up (just in case it ends up being your best option). Here are links to a video tour and rental prices.

- Parkway Apartments: these are among the closest to our building/downtown, only a 1.2km (0.8mi) walk, and even closer to a grocery store (EatWell), pharmacy (Walgreens), Stewart Park, the MKT trail, and the nice public library (Daniel Boone Regional Library). It is also on a city bus route (#2/red) that goes by our building as well as west to other commercial areas with stores, markets, and restaurants.

- Briarcrest Apartments: next to Parkway Apartments but also has 1-bedroom units.

- Broadway Village Apartments: from here you can walk to Stephens Lake Park or the large commercial area across the street that includes a grocery store (Hy-Vee), Chipotle, Starbucks, a cheaper hair salon (Great Clips), etc. It is 3km to our building (instead of 2.4km from Tara). It is on a city bus route (#6/green); as of Summer 2024, the bus is free and has a stop a few blocks away from our building, but only runs every 45 minutes and not early in the morning or in the evening. These apartments seem somewhat nicer and somewhat more expensive than Tara.

- Broadway Apartments: walkable to several commercial areas (including Hy-Vee supermarket, Walmart, Target, many more) and the Farmers Market, but 4km from our building; on a city bus route (#2/red), but as of Summer 2024 only runs every 45 minutes and not early in the morning or in the evening. (But if you have a car, then it is an easy drive to/from our building.)

- RHW Rentals: various properties within walking distance of our building/downtown, grocery store, library, pharmacy, etc.

- RTK Rentals: one property on Stewart Rd within walking distance of our building/downtown, grocery store, library, pharmacy, etc.

- Hinshaw Properties sounds uniformly terrible and should be avoided.

- We have had one experience with Keeneland Downs bad enough that we do not recommend living there, either. All else equal, you may want to live somewhere where other economics PhD students currently live and recommend.

If you are potentially interested in having another economics PhD student as a "roommate," please ask the DDS to help get you connected. "Roommate" is the inaccurate American word for "flatmate," meaning you share an apartment, but you have separate bedrooms. Among other motivations for sharing an apartment: usually a two-bedroom apartment is much less than twice the rent cost of a one-bedroom, so per person it is significantly cheaper to share a two-bedroom than to have your own one-bedroom.

3.3 In-town Transportation

When thinking about housing, you may also want to start thinking about transportation within Columbia. For example, how do you plan to travel from your apartment to our building (615 Locust St), or to a grocery store to buy food? There are a few options.

- Walk: if you live in certain areas, you may be able to simply walk to our building and a grocery store and other locations. (For less regular trips, you can ask another student for a ride or use Uber/Lyft/taxi.) Be especially cautious when crossing a street with a high speed limit (and/or after sunset), and beware that some cars may keep driving even after their traffic light turns red.

- Bike: again depending where you live, you may be able to bike to our building. However, there may be days that you don't want to bike due to rain (or cold), so you may want an alternative plan for such days. If you are not from the US, then you may want to learn some car driving rules, so you can better predict car behavior while you bike. Helmets are not legally required for adults, but most adults wear them.

- Bus: there is a city bus system (`https://www.gocomotransit.com/`), and some apartments may have their own shuttle bus. The city bus is mediocre: it only runs every 45 minutes and not early in the morning or in the evening, but it is reliable and has stops close to our building on the Red, Black, and Green lines, and 0.7km from our building on Gold, Orange, and Blue (which all stop at Wabash Station), and it's currently free to ride (just wait by the bus stop sign and get on when the bus stops and the doors open; then pull the cord to request the bus stops when it gets near our building).

- Drive: for infrequent driving, you can park on the street near our building (need to pay at the parking meter) or in the Sixth & Cherry Street parking garage. You are not allowed to park in the State Historical Society parking lot (and may get a ticket or be towed if you do); they have already warned everyone in our building previously. If you plan to be driving a lot, you might consider a monthly parking permit ($80) at the 5th & Walnut Street garage or a $35/month ParkMobile permit.

3.4 Airports

There are three Missouri airports you might use:

- Kansas City (MCI): this is the farthest and least convenient (e.g., not served by the Mo-X airport shuttle); avoid if possible.

- Saint Louis (STL): this is a relatively large international airport. It is less than a 2-hour drive from Columbia. You can ask if any current student is available to pick you up from the airport, or you can try the MO-X airport shuttle (which if you pay a little more can take you directly to your apartment). You could also take a taxi or Uber, but it would cost more.

- Columbia Regional (COU): this is the closest airport, only a 20-minute drive. However, it only has flights from Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and Dallas (DFW).

International students with children: like most US states, Missouri has a law requiring children under age 4 to be in a child safety seat and requiring children through age 7 to at least have a booster seat. However, this is not required for any “public carrier for hire” (Uber, taxi, airport shuttle, etc.), only non-commercial drivers. So, you would be able to pay for a ride to Columbia from the airport, but then if you (or your friends) later want to drive your children, legally you would need to buy an appropriate car seat first. See Sections 2(1)–(3) and 4 of RSMo 307.179: https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=307.179

3.5 Mobile Phone Service

If you go to a T-Mobile store, you can easily purchase a SIM card and pre-paid month of service (for your existing phone), and start using your new US phone number to call and text immediately. If the store is not busy, it should only take 15 minutes or so. There is no contract or commitment, so you can easily switch if you find a better option after your first month here.

3.6 Bank Account

International students usually open a US bank account soon after arrival. This requires visiting a bank in person with certain documents.

There are many banks in Columbia. One international student recommends Bank of America (a large inter/national bank), who currently offers a fee waiver for students under 25 years old (if you bring proof of student status like your admission offer letter or student ID card). But there are many different banks, with similar features and incentives.

The requirements for opening an account may differ some across banks, but may include things like your I-20, I-94, passport, student ID card, proof of residency (something with your local Columbia address on it, like your rental agreement or a utility bill), and phone number, as well as a foreign address (from your home country) and foreign tax identification number (from your home country). You can also visit the Bank of America information page for visa holders.[1] Note their “Student” account requires you to be under the age of 25 years old. Their list of required documents[2] currently includes only a) a foreign address (like maybe your parents’ address in your home country), b) documentation of your local/US address (like your rental contract, which should show both your name and the full address including unit/apartment number), c) photo ID like your passport, d) another photo ID (like your Mizzou student ID card or a home country driver’s license), and e) your tax ID number from your home country; and I think they require a (US) phone number, too.

[1] https://promo.bankofamerica.com/international-banking/

[2] https://promo.bankofamerica.com/international-banking/professionals/

3.7 Medical Conditions & Emergency Information

If you have any medical condition(s) that your instructors and work supervisors should be aware of, please let them know directly. Examples include physical disabilities, seizures, type 1 or 2 diabetes, pregnancy, or neurological disorders, among many others. We also recommended that you tell the department chair, DDS, and department staff. This includes information for how we should help care for you in the case of a medical emergency, information about conditions that may interfere with your academic or work performance, or anything else that would help us understand and support you as both a student and employee.

4 PhD Academic Program

Our PhD program trains you in economic theory and quantitative methods in Year 1 core classes, after which more specialized electives are taken in Year 2. For most students (unless transferring), Section 4.1's 72 credit hour plan of coursework, research, and examination is required.

Just as academic honesty is important for professors in economics, academic honesty is important for students in economics. Our statement on academic honesty is in Appendix B.

4.1 PhD Plan of Study

The five-year schedule is below. Graduation in four years is possible with only slight modification: the comprehensive exam (dissertation proposal) moves to Year 3 Spring or the following summer/fall, and the Year 5 activities (job market, defense, graduation) move to Year 4. You may request exceptions from the DDS.

Each class is 3 credit hours unless otherwise stated.

Before Fall Semester Year 1
First Monday of August (August 4, 2025): "math camp" begins (all students)
August week before semester starts: Graduate Teaching Orientation (all students)
Early August: EPI (international students; see Section 5.3.1)

Fall Semester Year 1	*Spring Semester Year 1*
Econ 9451: Advanced Micro Theory I	Econ 9452: Advanced Micro Theory II
Econ 9453: Advanced Macro Theory I	Econ 9454: Advanced Macro Theory II
Econ 9472: Adv'd Econometric Theory I	Econ 9473: Adv'd Econometric Theory II

⇒ Qualifying exams (end of Year 1 Spring); see Section 4.6

⇒ Summer: research experience with a professor (ask DDS for suggestions)

⇒ End of summer: apply for Missouri residency (U.S. students only); see Section 5.2

Fall Semester Year 2	*Spring Semester Year 2*
Econ 9xxx field course*	Econ 9xxx field course*
Econ 9xxx or other approved elective*	Econ 9xxx or other approved elective*
Econ 9xxx or other approved elective*	Econ 9xxx or other approved elective*

*See Section 4.2; can delay one elective to Year 3 if take GRAD English (see Section 5.5)

⇒ Choose advisor/committee by summer; see Section 4.5

⇒ Research paper over summer (due Dec. 15 in Fall Semester Year 3); see Section 4.7

⇒ Summer: submit form to add MA degree

Fall Semester Year 3	*Spring Semester Year 3*
Econ 9085: Problems (PhD Students)	Econ 9085 or GRAD English (see Section 5.5)
Econ 9090: PhD Dissertation Research	Econ 9090: PhD Dissertation Research
Econ 9413*: PhD Research Workshop	Econ 9413*: PhD Research Workshop

*Choose section based on your dissertation research topic/advisor

⇒ Submit D1 and D2 forms during Year 3; see Appendix A

⇒ Year 3 Spring: submit M1 and M3 forms (toward MA degree)

⇒ Summer: file for MA degree (unless delay for OPT purposes)

Fall Semester Year 4	*Spring Semester Year 4*
Only take Econ 9085 if graduating early[†]	Only take 6 credit hours this semester[†]
Econ 9090: PhD Dissertation Research	Econ 9090 or GRAD English (see Section 5.5)
Econ 9413*: PhD Research Workshop	Econ 9413*: PhD Research Workshop

*Choose section based on your dissertation research topic/advisor

[†]See minimums in Section 4.3; note 72 credit hours total required for graduation

⇒ Comprehensive exam (dissertation proposal) and D3 in Year 4; see Section 4.8

Year 5

Econ 9090 (at least 2 credit hours per semester, 1 in summer)

⇒ Job market; see Section 4.11

⇒ Dissertation defense (final oral exam) and D4 around March or early April of Year 5

⇒ Graduation in May

⇒ Year 5 Spring: file for MA degree (if haven't yet)

If a Year 5 student has not yet passed the comprehensive exam (dissertation proposal), then they must participate fully in one of the Econ 9413 research workshops (but official enrollment is not required). Such students only need to register for 1 credit hour each semester (assuming all other courses have been completed), but such international students must submit a reduced course load request through myStatus (go to "F-1 student," then "Reduced course load"), which will ask for the academic advisor to confirm the student has completed all formal coursework. Also, the Graduate School requires the comprehensive exam to be passed at least seven months before the dissertation defense.

The Econ 9413 research workshop lets you practice presenting your in-progress research and practice listening and asking questions about your peers' research. You choose which section to attend based on your dissertation research topic/advisor.

4.2 Elective Courses and Fields

As seen in Section 4.1, Year 2 is the only time you need to choose your courses. Course listings are available online. All possible economics (ECONOM) courses are listed in the course catalog, but some are not offered regularly. To see the courses actually offered, visit the Schedule of Classes on myZou, selecting the desired term (semester), subject "Economics," and Course Number "greater than or equal to" 9000; then click the Search button. Our website is less promptly and reliably updated but has an example syllabus for most classes.

With prior written approval from the DDS (i.e., email to ask before you register), you may also take certain 9000-level and 8000-level courses in related departments and have them count toward your required six elective courses. In particular, you might consider the following courses if they align with your research interests.

- AAE 8410, 9220, or others
- FINANC 9300 or 9400
- STAT 8710, 8720, or others

Although uncommon, with prior written approval from the DDS, you may do a "readings course" with a faculty member to count as an elective, registering for 3 credit hours of Econ 9085. The faculty member will provide the reading list (or syllabus) to the DDS, who will share it with anyone else upon request.

You complete the field requirement by taking two economics elective courses in the same area, as listed below. This is usually completed in Year 2, unless the desired field will only be offered in Year 3. If you take one course in a field, then the Department promises to offer another course in that field within a year (possibly a readings course; see above).

- Public Economics: Econ 9415, 9416, 9455
- Monetary Economics: Econ 9430 and 9431
- Quantitative Microeconomic Policy Analysis: Econ 9446 and 9447
- Econometrics: Econ 9474 and 9476

Note: depending on the topic, Econ 9001 may also count toward a field; for example, in Fall 2023, Econ 9001 was a public finance course taught by Dr. Mayo and thus counted toward the Public Economics field.

4.3 Minimum Credit Hours

Typically, you take 9 credit hours every fall and spring semester (3 courses times 3 credit hours each) before your comprehensive exam, and after that 2 credit hours every fall and every spring. You also register for 1 credit hour of Econ 9085 each summer (to maintain student status, which facilitates your stipend payment). However, sometimes (after Year 1) you may need to drop a course during the semester for some reason, leaving you with fewer credit hours than you had planned. That is ok as long as you satisfy certain minimums, which are the same as for international students: 9 if not TA/RA/GI (unless finished with formal coursework, then 1); 6 if TA/RA/GI; and after passing the comprehensive exam (even if not TA/RA/GI), 2 in fall, 2 in spring, and 1 in summer.

See also the notes toward the end of Section 4.1 if you will be a Year 5 student who has not yet passed your dissertation proposal (comprehensive exam).

If you are an international student with questions about this or any topic, you may find and contact your international student adviser (assigned by student's family name) through International Student and Scholar Services.

4.4 Transition to Research

The transition from taking classes to doing research is difficult. Some thoughts and suggestions are here: `https://kaplandm.github.io/advice_phd.html`

4.5 Advisor and Committee

The DDS serves as advisor to all PhD students who do not yet have an advisor. It is strongly encouraged to find an advisor by May of Year 2. You will have opportunities to learn about faculty research and work with faculty before that. An advisor must be a Doctoral Faculty Member in Economics as listed in the registrar's catalog.

Your committee includes your advisor plus three other members. At least one of the three must be doctoral faculty. At least two of the three must be from Economics; the third may be from Economics or another department (like Statistics, Political Science, etc.). You should discuss options with your advisor and try to decide in Fall of Year 3.

There is a small but non-zero probability that you will want to change your advisor or other committee members later. Logistically, this uses the Change of Committee Form. The form requires the signature of the DDS, so please discuss this with the DDS before filling out the form. The DDS should not try to change your preferences but may be able to better inform you of all the potential costs and benefits of such a change, to help you make the best decision for your personal situation. The form also requires the signature of your advisor, so please also discuss this with your advisor before filling out the form, for the same reason. If you are having problems with your current advisor that lead you to want to switch, then you only need the signature of your new advisor; but usually this is not the reason for switching, in which case it is polite to discuss with your current advisor, too.

4.6 Qualifying Examination

After earning at least a C in each Year 1 course, you take the qualifying examination (or "quals") in late May. Although technically a single exam, there are three parts taken on three separate days, one each for microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics. In the summer, you may re-take any part(s) not passed in May. If any part is still not passed after these two attempts (May, summer), then you may continue in our MA program or ask about transfering to another Mizzou PhD program, like in Agricultural and Applied Economics or in the Truman School.

In case of emergency, you must contact the DDS as soon as possible, with as much documentation of the emergency as possible. The DDS can decide whether or not the missed exam counts as one of your two attempts.

4.7 2nd-year Research Paper

You must submit a complete, original research paper by December 15 of your Year 3. There is no page minimum, but it should have at least one core result and include most of the sections typically found in a journal article on your topic. Because normative research progress varies across fields within economics, you should ask your advisor for more specific details about what is expected for your 2nd-year paper. Ideally, by the end of your Year 2 Spring, your advisor and you will have a concrete plan for how to meet those expectations to guide your work over the summer and into the fall. Writing is often the most difficult part, so make sure to leave yourself at least a couple months just for writing and revising (and revising more).

The paper is evaluated by your three committee members (see Section 4.5) if you have them, or else by faculty appointed by the DDS (in consultation with your advisor, if applicable). Besides additional feedback, the three faculty will assign one of the following assessments:

- Pass;
- Revise & Resubmit (not enough progress, but can revise and submit again in two months);
- Fail: student must transfer to Economics MA (or another PhD program).

If your desired field courses (Section 4.2) are not offered in your Year 2 but will be in Year 3, then you may ask the deadline to be August 15 before your Year 4. The request must be emailed to the DDS by September 1 of your Year 2; the Graduate Studies Committee will accept or reject the request within two weeks.

After you pass the 2nd-year paper, you can pick your fourth committee member and then submit the D1 (and D2) forms. The DDS will email you details.

4.8 Comprehensive Examination (D3)

The comprehensive exam is given by your committee. Although the committee may choose otherwise, there is a typical format. The written section is usually the research paper(s) that you have completed so far. The oral section is usually your "dissertation proposal defense," in which you present both completed research and plans for the remainder of your dissertation, and you respond to questions from your committee (and any other attendees).

There are some logistical caveats, like: it must be at least seven months before your dissertation defense; you can still pass even if one committee member votes otherwise; the D3 form must be submitted within two weeks; etc. See the Graduate School's website for details. (Note: a different web page says it must take place when MU is "in session," but a

27jun2024 email from Diane Coleman says that while that's preferred, it's ok if not, as long as a note explaining why is sent when the D3 form is submitted.)

4.9 Dissertation and Defense (D4)

Your dissertation communicates your original, significant research. The exact structure depends on your research and your advisor's preferences, but often there are three chapters, of which the first two could reasonably be submitted to academic journals. The Graduate School's website describes formatting and other logistical details, and the Department has developed a LaTeX template for your convenience (ask the DDS if you have not received it before you want to start working on your dissertation). You should ask for feedback from your committee as you write your dissertation because they will eventually judge whether or not it is acceptable.

Note: when the Graduate School says "cannot be coauthored," they mean you must do 100% of the writing, but it is still ok to work on research with another student or faculty member.[3] Your committee may have stricter requirements about joint research that appears in your dissertation.

The dissertation defense is similar to the oral part of the comprehensive exam. You present your dissertation research, and your committee asks you questions. (Others may also ask questions; the defense is public.) If successful (no more than one dissension or abstention), then your D4 form is filed.

Besides the D4, you must also: have your committee members sign the signature page of your dissertation; apply for graduation; and submit your dissertation and signature page to the Graduate School (through the Canvas site they invite you to). Note the deadlines are before the end of the semester; you can Google "Mizzou D4 deadline" to find the current dates.

4.10 Satisfactory Progress

"Satisfactory progress" means: a) following the schedule in Section 4.1 (unless permitted otherwise by DDS), including submission of D1, D2, D3, and D4 forms, and submission of forms to earn an MA degree in Year 5; b) receiving at least a C grade in each course and cumulative GPA of at least 3.0; c) passing the research paper and qualifying and comprehensive examinations; d) if applicable, retaking the EPI every September until you score 4.

[3] Source: email from Ashley Siebenaler to Dave Kaplan, September 13, 2021; full quote: "Typically, for our case, coauthored would refer to it being written by multiple authors."

4.11 Job Market

During Year 5, you will be on the job market. Most of your time will be spent preparing and submitting applications, practicing for interviews, and doing interviews, besides related tasks like travel logistics. This means you will not have much time for research.

The Department wants to help you succeed. Your committee members will write recommendation letters (after you ask them) and help you revise your job market paper; we can practice "mock" interviews with you; we have LaTeX templates and examples; we can give you feedback on a practice job talk; we have some funding for travel to first-round AEA/ASSA interviews; and for whatever else you need, we will do our best to help. See our job market guide for details and links.

5 Funding and Expectations

You can expect to be offered funding through Year 5, working as a teaching assistant (TA), research assistant (RA), or graduate instructor (GI). The work positions are typically "half-time" (average 20 hours per week; 0.5 FTE). Funding is reviewed each semester and may be changed or discontinued due to lack of satisfactory progress (Section 4.10), violation of requirements in your official appointment letter, or poor work performance. All these positions provide a stipend (salary) plus waivers for tuition and medical insurance (i.e., your tuition and insurance premium will be paid for you). The tuition waiver does not cover certain "fees," which you can pay from your stipend. (Technically, non-resident tuition is "tuition" plus a "non-resident fee"; both are paid for you.) Contact the DDS or review your funding offer letter for the current annual stipend amount.

5.1 University Policies

Please read and understand the University's expectations and policies related to you, as both a student and employee. You may find the Standard of Conduct as well as the more detailed Collected Rules and Regulations here: `https://accountability.missouri.edu/university-policies/`.

5.2 Residency

If you are a U.S. citizen, then you are expected to apply for MU to recognize you as a Missouri resident at the end of your first summer. The department will reimburse your application fee. At `https://registrar.missouri.edu/residency/online-process/` you can find more information. You will work with our department staff to make sure you have all the required documentation. It is required that you submit an official “travel authorization” before any travel outside Missouri over the summer.

5.3 Types of Positions

Position-specific details follow; explicit responsibilities and expectations for all positions are listed in Section 5.4.

5.3.1 Teaching Assistant (TA)

TAs work with faculty members in lower-level undergraduate classes, some upper-level undergraduate classes, and occasionally graduate classes. Duties may include holding office hours to answer student questions, replying to student emails or online posts, attending class, proofreading exams, proctoring (supervising) exams, and grading; see Section 5.4 for more. A “grader” is a TA whose position is focused on grading.

All incoming students are required to register for the Graduate Teaching Orientation (GTO). You should receive a registration link by email in June or July; the orientation is sometime during the week before classes start.

See also Section 5.5 for English proficiency requirements for all international students.

5.3.2 Research Assistant (RA)

RA positions are generally offered by individual faculty members, who decide whom to hire and what the work entails.

5.3.3 Graduate Instructor (GI)

Instructor experience is very helpful for getting an academic job, and you can expect to have had this opportunity offered to you before you start the job market process in Year 5. The one caveat is that (for international students) an EPI score of 4 is required.

Each GI is responsible for their own lecture section of a class, but the Department will provide support and resources. Often a GI teaches one of many sections for the same class, in parallel with a faculty member teaching the other sections.

5.3.4 Graduate Fellowships

There are a few types of fellowship. Least commonly, the Department may provide a graduate fellowship that does not require any work. More commonly, the Department may provide a supplemental fellowship in addition to the base assistantship stipend. Additionally, we nominate the best students to compete for a limited number of university-wide fellowships, which may replace or supplement the Department assistantship.

5.4 TA/RA/GI Responsibilities

Our current assistantships (funding) are "9-month" positions. They are so called because your actual work runs from roughy mid-August through mid-May, which is nine months, although you are paid equal monthly amounts over 10 months (August through May). (You may also opt for your pay to be spread over 12 months, but this is worse; it's the same as if you took part of your 10-month pay and locked the cash in a box until June and July; if you need somebody to hold your money for 0% interest, please let me know!) In the summer, you are free to focus on your dissertation research. You can also try to earn additional money in the summer, with the obvious trade-off.

Additional responsibilities include the following.

- You are required to be in town (Columbia, MO) starting Monday of the week before classes start, to attend any pre-semester planning meetings, and you are required to remain in town through the end-of-semester grade submission deadline, unless your supervisor explicitly says otherwise in writing.
- Any TA may be asked to "proctor" (supervise) an exam for any course, not only the assigned course. This helps balance the proctoring load more evenly across TAs whose assigned courses have different amounts of proctoring work.
- You should contact your supervising faculty member as soon as possible after receiving your appointment letter.
- You should work responsibly and ask your supervisor for help when needed.
- The standard TA/RA position (0.5 FTE, "half-time") is for 20 hours of work per week on average. Although you may work less some weeks, you should be prepared to work 20 hours each week.
- As a GI/TA, you may not cancel a class, discussion, or office hours unless absolutely necessary. If possible, another TA should substitute for you to avoid cancellation. You must discuss with your supervising faculty before any cancellation or substitution. (A GI's supervisor is assigned based on the course they're teaching.)
- As a GI/TA, you may be expected to interact with students. If you have reasons (e.g., medical) to refrain from close interaction with students, please let your supervisor know as soon as possible.
- As a TA, you are expected to follow instructions given by either the head TA or the

instructor (including GI). Failure to comply may result in reduction or withdrawal of future funding. Exceptionally good work will also be recognized and rewarded if possible.

- In large lecture courses, all substantive matters regarding a TA's duties are to be decided by the supervising faculty in consultation with the assistants.
- Consider how you look, smell, and dress when interacting with your supervisor or students, and try to appear professional. For example, wear clean clothing, bathe regularly, avoid strong-smelling cologne/perfume, avoid gratuitously offensive clothing, etc. Of course, there are some legally protected aspects of your appearance that you do not need to change just because a student doesn't like it; for example, if a student doesn't like being taught by a woman, you are not required to present as male. Please use your best judgment, or ask the DDS (or your supervisor) for advice about a particular situation.

5.5 English Requirement for International Students

International students have additional English language requirements and opportunities for growth.

Incoming international students have additional events through the International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP). The English Proficiency Interview (EPI) is essentially an oral English proficiency test (in interview format) in early August; you will be registered by the Department.

You should try to score well on EPI because it determines your eligibility for teaching positions, and (as part of making satisfactory progress) you will continue to take it annually until you earn the highest score. The highest score (4) is required to be a graduate instructor. If you do not get the highest score, then you will take the EPI again the next year, and meanwhile you may take an English language class (see options below). The second-highest score (3) is required to lead your own discussion section as a TA. The lowest score (1) may only be a "grader."

If you want to improve your EPI score, there are various English language classes and programs available, including the following. Currently, if you pass the ITAP-recommended English course (based on your EPI score), then you are **guaranteed at least a 0.5-point increase of your score**. The GRAD classes are detailed here. Any student quotations are from economics PhD students who previously took the classes. Course numbers are subject to change; your score report is the best reference for the appropriate course to take.

1. MU Accent Expansion Program (AXP, `https://umurl.us/amp`)

- Target: for students and others "who wish to improve their communication skills for everyday work/social interactions and/or public speaking."
- Cost: a few hundred dollars for summer (12 sessions), and twice as much for fall or spring (24 sessions); check website for exact cost.
- Comment (positive): "I enrolled in the AMP last summer, and it was very helpful to improve my English pronunciation. Although I paid by myself, it was worth doing it. AMP matches one instructor with one student (one-on-one meeting), so it gave me a lot of help compared to other programs at Mizzou."
- Comment (negative): "it was minorly useful only for reducing foreign accents but not useful (at all) to improve one's English overall speaking ability."

2. ELSP _4400: Oral Communication (details on the English Language Support Program web page; formerly ELSP _0400)
   - Target: students who score 1 (or low 2/2P, or NR).
   - Cost: free (if your advisor emails somebody at the Graduate School, then it is covered by your tuition waiver).
   - Comment (from student who did not think AMP was very useful): "better than the AMP courses (though not significantly)"; also, depends a lot on how good the instructor is (some "really good," some less good), and instructors change frequently.
   - Comment from another student: "In my opinion, the ELSP 0400 class didn't really help much. Of course, it helped in some sense since it is English class. However, considering the time spent in there, I think it is inefficient. The class was held with more than 10 students and there are few opportunities to speak."
3. GRAD 8100 (was GRAD 7302 / ITAP 7302); not currently offered
   - Target: students who score 1.5.
   - Cost: free.
   - Comment (from student who did not think AMP was very useful): "better than the AMP courses (though not significantly)"; also, depends a lot on how good the instructor is (some "really good," some less good), and instructors change frequently.
4. GRAD 8200 (was GRAD 7303)
   - Target: students who score 2.
   - Cost: free.
   - Comment (from student who did not think AMP was very useful): "better than the AMP courses (though not significantly)"; also, depends a lot on how good the instructor is (some "really good," some less good), and instructors change

frequently.

5. GRAD 8300 (was GRAD 9304)
    - Target: students who score 3.
    - Cost: free.
    - (No student comments.)

5.6 Internships

Some students consider doing an "internship" while still a student. This generally means working full-time for an employer other than the University, but for a fixed length of time; for example, working for Amazon for 10 weeks during the summer. Your assistantship would be paused during that time period and resume when you return.

If you are considering this, *please discuss with your advisor as well as the DDS.*

There are two main benefits. The biggest benefit is that if you happen to really like your employer, then you have a much better chance of getting a full-time job offer from them; not guaranteed, but often at least 20%. You also get some "real work" experience that can be somewhat helpful for getting other jobs in the same industry/sector, as well as information about your own job-type preferences.

However, there are significant costs. The biggest is the opportunity cost of not making progress on your dissertation. Some students have needed to delay graduation by one year. One student (who had been warned about this but was making excellent dissertation progress) had this suggestion for the Handbook: "make **slowing your research progress** a much larger font and maybe bolded." They also mentioned missing an opportunity to present at a conference because their employer did not allow missing that many work days. So, please consider the costs and benefits carefully.

5.7 Conference Travel

See Section 6.2.

5.8 Leaves of Absence Related to Pregnancy and Parenting

The Graduate School has many policies at this link and additional resources linked here.

6 Graduate Student Awards

Thanks to the great financial generosity of many donors, we make a number of awards to our many outstanding graduate students. (Students also win campus awards and conference awards for their research.) Departmental awards are usually given in late summer or fall, based on recommendations by the DDS to the department chair, with input from the Graduate Studies Committee and other faculty when helpful. For past winners and additional details, visit our website.

6.1 Awards, Fellowships, and Scholarships

The Dr. John Kuhlman Graduate Fellowship supports an excellent student while honoring the legacy of a renowned Mizzou economics professor.

The Stanley R. Johnson Fund for PhD Student Excellence in Economics supports students doing dissertation research while honoring a Mizzou economics professor and department chair whose decades of service here included numerous awards and honors.

The Whitney Hicks Graduate Student Fellowship in Economics supports graduate students while honoring the life and legacy of a Mizzou economics professor and department chair whose 1965–2000 career included awards for research and teaching.

The Maw Lin Lee Memorial Scholarship celebrates the life of a beloved Mizzou applied econometrics professor while offering financial support to help graduate students focus more on academics and research.

The Korea Studies Graduate Student Scholarship is awarded for academic merit to a student fluent in Korean and/or interested in studying the Korean economy. The department chair (or a committee/persons authorized by the chair) selects recipients and decides award details, with the approval of the Dean of the College of Arts and Science.

The Norman Bowers Scholarship is for students working on dissertation research on labor topics with a strong policy focus. It is awarded for quality dissertation research, with special preference for focusing on the well-being of vulnerable groups in the labor market or for exemplifying the careful use of empirical data, especially internationally comparative data.

Sometimes the Harry Gunnison Brown Fund is used to award outstanding students. Reasons may include exemplary first-year coursework and qualifying exam performance; excellence in teaching; or promise for making a significant research contribution.

6.2 Financial Awards for Conference Presentations

The Department may provide partial financial support for student presentations at professional meetings. You should ask the DDS for support as early as possible, to maximize the probability of available budget. You must also apply for CPTA funding from the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) and a Professional Presentation Travel Scholarship from the Graduate School.

Before you travel, you must also complete the following.

- Travel Authorization through eCompliance (https://ecompliance.missouri.edu/); put the current department chair as "Supervisor."
- Domestic Travel Registry: https://international.missouri.edu/travel-registry/domestic-travel-registry/

7 Student Groups

We have two of our own groups detailed below, besides other campus-wide groups you may be interested in. In particular, you may be interested in campus groups like (click for links) the Asian American Association, South Asian Student Association, Queer Liberation Front, and the Legion of Black Collegians, among many others.

7.1 Economics Graduate Student Association (EGSA)

EGSA serves the graduate students in the Department of Economics as a professional student organization at the University of Missouri. Its mission includes:

- promoting communication between its members and faculty;
- obtaining information about economic fields;
- promoting the economics profession;
- addressing specific concerns of graduate students in the Economics Department.

EGSA officers (like president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary) are elected each year by fellow students. A modest budget is usually provided for EGSA events.

7.2 Graduate Women in Economics (GWE)

Our GWE group was founded to encourage mentoring relationships between female students and female faculty members, to help address female underrepresentation at all stages of the economics profession. Our group's mission is to unite female graduate students who study economics at Mizzou and to improve their university experience through social events and professional development.

8 Campus Resources and Workshops

8.1 Campus Resources: Non-academic

The University of Missouri is a large university with many resources freely available to you. You can find most of them easily with Google or browsing the University of Missouri website. Here are a few examples (names are linked to websites).

- MU Care Team: helps you find and use campus resources, whether for mental health or other concerns (physical health, family emergency, financial issues, etc.)
- MU Graduate Career Coaches: set up an appointment and/or browse the linked resources, for any stage in your PhD, from getting ideas about different types of careers and understanding your strengths, to getting detailed help with your job application materials.
- MU Student Health & Well-Being: includes contact info for MU Counseling Center, MU Student Health Center, and Wellness Center
- MU Disability Center

8.2 Campus Resources: Academic

There are also many academic resources outside our department, including the following.

- Writing Center: get one-on-one help, online or in person
- MU Library: the Economics (and Business & Entrepreneurship) Librarian is currently Gwen Gray (`GrayG@missouri.edu`), who can help you with accessing journal articles and books (even that MU does not have), finding datasets, and more
- MU Graduate Career Coaches: just in case you skipped the non-academic section, I want to make sure you see this resource because it is very helpful!

8.3 Graduate School Workshops

The Graduate School offers a variety of workshops throughout the year. Most are not particularly relevant or helpful to economics PhD students specifically, but there are a few you might be interested in. Here are the experiences of some economics PhD students in these, similar to the English class experiences shared in Section 5.5.

- Dissertation Bootcamp: this offers valuable non-academic skills for successfully completing your dissertation (which eventually you will realize is not mostly dependent on how "smart" you are). Because it is practically helpful, it often fills up well before the deadline. In Fall 2022, the main topics were communication with your advisor; motivation; self-care (including mental and physical health); and writing difficulties and tips. Our student said they have not struggled in most of those areas so only found the writing part helpful, and suggested 2nd-year students may find it the most helpful, as well as any student who would appreciate help in the covered areas.

- More insights coming later! (CV review; coping with impostor syndrome; writing a diversity statement; etc.)

9 Nonacademic Advice and Resources

To succeed in a PhD program, nonacademic issues are often just as important as academics, sometimes more. As I have seen myself, even the very "smartest" students can fail to make progress if they do not: sleep well, manage their time well, manage expectations and anxiety around progress/advisor meetings, maintain their mental health and seek extra help when facing especially stressful life events (that often occur during grad school!), etc.

Here are just a few links to advice from various sources; you can readily find more online.

- Healthy Sleep Tips (from MU Counseling Center); mentions keeping a regular sleep schedule (even weekends), sleep environment, bedtime routines, stimuli to avoid, and exercise

- Nonacademic Advice from a Grad Student (from American Mathematical Society); mentions coping with impostor syndrome, hobbies, prioritizing, and scheduling your time efficiently

- Nonacademic Advice for Grad Students (from American Psychological Association); mentions exercise, social time, role models, recognizing excessive stress, and seeking help (which here you can start through the MU Care Team)

10 If You Encounter Problems (Academic or Nonacademic)

Generally, if you have any problem of any sort (non-academic as well as academic), you are encouraged to let the DDS know. Especially at the PhD level, non-academic issues can be just as important as academic issues, and we want to help support you however we can. If your problem is with the DDS, then you may tell the Department Chair. The following subsections have notes about specific problems you may encounter.

10.1 Discrimination and harassment

To report incidents of discrimination or harassment, please see the information on the website of the Office of Institutional Equity.[4] In the US, it is illegal to discriminate against or harass individuals because of their sex, race, nationality, age, disability, or a variety of other categories, as detailed on the linked website. You are also welcome to discuss anything you observe with the DDS, although please note that the DDS (like most MU employees) is a “mandated reporter” who is obligated to report any information even if you request confidentiality (i.e., the DDS/faculty cannot offer you confidentiality). Note that certain University employees are exempt from mandated reporting, including health care providers and counselors.

10.2 Probation

Although not common, you may be put on probation for either academic or non-academic reasons. Academic reasons are listed in Section 4.10; there is also a GPA-related probation from the Graduate School.[5] Non-academic reasons include severely and/or continuously unprofessional behavior in your assistantship, or violations of the Standard of Conduct in CRR 200.010.[6] Probation is an opportunity for you to correct whatever needs to be improved, in which case you will be taken off probation. It is good for everyone involved if this happens, so please ask your advisor and the DDS for help. However, if the problem persists or worsens, then your funding may stop (termination of employment) and/or you may be dismissed from our academic program.

[4] https://equity.missouri.edu/reporting-and-policies/
[5] https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/grading-credit/
[6] https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.010_standard_of_conduct

10.3 Appeals

In the rare and unfortunate case that you're dismissed from our academic program and/or your assistantship, you are entitled to appeal the decision. First, you must appeal within our department, following the requirements specified by the Graduate School at the link below. We will form a committee to review the relevant policies and evidence. You may nominate one faculty member to serve on the committee, and the DDS will choose the other two members (potentially including the DDS). The committee should form a decision within three weeks, unless there are extenuating circumstances that require more time to reach a decision. In the case of academic dismissal, if the department upholds the decision, then you may appeal to the Graduate School following the guidelines linked here:
https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/probation-termination-and-appeals/

A Required Forms

Like any Mizzou PhD student, you must complete forms D1 through D4. The DDS can help answer any questions you have and should send you a partially filled form and instructions when it is time for you to complete each form. All forms are available online here.

D1 Form (Qualifying Examination Results and Doctoral Committee Approval): This form is used to report results of the PhD Qualifying Exam. It also serves as an official record of the members of a student's doctoral committee and insures that the configuration of the committee meets stated requirements.

D2 Form (Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree): The purpose of this form is to plan the program of study which the student will follow and certify that all doctoral committee members approve the program, including the recommended hours of transfer credit. The D2 is submitted with our Department-specific "PhD Program of Study" that lists all classes taken or planned to satisfy degree requirements, and which must be signed by the committee members and DDS.

D3 Form (Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Results): The purpose of this form is to record the official result of the doctoral comprehensive examination.

D4 Form (Report of the Doctoral Dissertation Defense): The purpose of this form is to record the official results of the dissertation defense.

B Departmental Statements on Academic Honesty

B.1 Artificial Intelligence

Please read the University's statement on the appropriate use of artificial intelligence in your academic work: `https://oai.missouri.edu/chatgpt-artificial-intelligence-and-academic-integrity/`

The University statement is more about coursework than dissertations, but you can replace "instructor" with "advisor" to adapt it for dissertation research. Large language models (LLMs, like GPT, Copilot, Gemini, etc.) can be helpful for brainstorming ideas, finding relevant literature, and refining your sentence structure and grammar, among other tasks. But, LLMs are also prone to "hallucinations," in which they may confidently state false information. This is especially true for high-level PhD research. It is your responsibility to critically assess any LLM output, whether an idea, a citation, or a revised sentence. Or, quoting from Copilot's response to my prompt for a hallucination warning: "Trust, but verify. Your academic integrity and the quality of your research depend on it. Stay vigilant, stay critical."

B.2 Foundational Ideas

[*Ed.: this and the following subsections were written and adopted by the department decades ago. They are more difficult to read due to the complex vocabulary and grammar, but the ideas are important. For a simpler discussion of plagiarism, see also resources linked from the Mizzou Library.*]

Honesty is essential in the pursuit of knowledge and in the learning environment of a campus. Open and forthright inquiry is the basis for the development of knowledge, while deception undermines the exchange and verification of ideas. In a learning environment, each student expects to be given the same opportunities and to be judged on the same basis as every other student. If one student seizes an advantage through deception or collusion, all students are not being treated fairly.

The Department seeks to promote a healthy intellectual atmosphere. We state as a principle that:

> Cheating or dishonesty in any form is inconsistent with academic inquiry. Any effort to gain an advantage not freely given to all students is dishonest. This is true whether the effort is successful or not, whether the action happened "a little bit" or "a lot," or whether the individual is giving or receiving assistance.

Violations of standards of academic honesty may apply to any academic work, including exams, problem sets, and course papers, as well as student theses, dissertation proposals or dissertation drafts. Violations carry severe penalties, ranging from failure in the particular assignment or course to expulsion from the University.

The instructor in each class will provide the students at the beginning of the semester with guidelines in areas unique to that class. If the student has any doubt about the application of course policies, the student should obtain clarification from the instructor before any questionable action is taken.

The following are general practices in Economics. When an instructor determines that other policies are required for a particular class, the guidelines provided by the instructor replace these general rules. The guidelines below are meant to provide an indication of academically honest actions. Not every circumstance is covered. The examples below are for clarification and do not change the basic principle that any act which results in a misrepresentation of fact or the gaining of an unfair advantage is dishonest.

B.3 In-Class Examinations

Unless specified otherwise by the instructor, examinations are "closed book," meaning that during the test referring to any source of information, such as notes or books, is prohibited.

Passing information between students, like speaking or showing exams, is not permitted.

B.4 Class Assignments and Take-Home Examinations

In the case of take-home examinations, communication with any individual (save the instructor) regarding course material or the exam is prohibited. Even very general discussions about any topic related to the examination should not occur during the period between receipt of the examination questions and the submission of all examination papers.

Take-home examinations may be either "closed book" or "open book." In the case of closed book examinations, the student may not refer to any source of information. An examination is assumed to be closed book unless indicated otherwise by the instructor. In open book examinations, access to personal written notes and published material is permitted but other sources of information, such as the notes of another student or discussions with anyone other than the instructor, may not be used.

Class assignments differ from take-home examinations. Students may consult with one another regarding course content; however, the completed assignment must be the student's own intellectual product. Unless the instructor explicitly permits groups of students to work together, team or group efforts are not allowed.

In class assignments where students respond to questions based on assigned readings, it is not necessary to provide a citation for the material because the source is known by the instructor. (Note, this is in marked contrast to a term paper or research papers, where citations *always* must be provided; see below.) However, under no circumstance may a student copy or closely paraphrase any source materials in producing answers. It is also strictly prohibited to copy, paraphrase, or use in any manner the answer of another student.

B.5 Academic Papers

Any student paper submitted in the course of academic studies must be the student's own work. Students may, however, solicit and incorporate the suggestions by others, both in matters of content and style. Where the help of particular individuals is significant, it is appropriate to include in the paper a written acknowledgement identifying them by name. This includes the case where the student obtains the services of an editor to help improve the paper's prose. Where an important substantive point made in the paper is based on a suggestion, the individual who made the suggestion is often identified in a footnote. The exception is that the contributions of the student's instructor or advisor need not be cited in this way. Whatever help the student receives, the basic content must be that of the student; the extent of contributions by others must be clear to the instructor or advisor.

The use of written materials with insufficient attribution, normally without the approval of the author, is called plagiarism. The issue of plagiarism is most problematic in a research paper or assignment that requires a student to describe the work of others, or in work that describes a student's own research that builds on published work. The central rule to be followed is that the student should write the text so that the reader of the paper will be able to determine which ideas or arguments are the student's own, and which are due to others. In addition, the prose must be original to the student, except for direct quotations where it is clearly indicated that the text is copied directly. Such indication is provided by using quotation marks or indenting the quoted passage.

The standards for academic papers (assigned research papers, literature reviews, research proposals) are very strict. Any idea or argument that is not credited to some source is assumed to be the original work of the student. Hence, it is important that the reader be told explicitly when any idea or argument is taken from the work of others.

There are several ways of providing the reader with information on sources. In the simplest approach, the text provides the reader with an explicit discussion of how the student has used the literature. (E.g., "As Solow (1989) argues…"; "We can see from this model (adapted from Becker (1982, p. 20)….") Alternatively, footnotes can be used (e.g., a footnote could read, "The theory presented in the following section comes from Marshall (1927), as cited in Jones (1990)"). Any equation or model based on another's work that is presented in a student paper should cite the source. Even if the student has modified an equation or model, the reader must be given the source of the original. (E.g., a footnote following an equation might say, "This model is similar to that of Andrews (1984, p. 22), although I have omitted prices and included a productivity shifter.") In the case of the equation, a figure, graph, table, or direct quotation taken from another source, it is desirable to indicate in the citation the page number, as well as the article or book. In the examples above, a reference list must be provided at the end of the student's paper showing full bibliographic detail on each reference cited. Alternatively, such information can be provided in a footnote, or, in some cases, in the text. Whatever approach is used, there should never be any question in the reader's mind where the ideas presented come from.

It is not acceptable to paraphrase a source, even changing words, if the original sentence structure is maintained. Consider the following example.

It is acceptable to write:

> In a recent paper, Brock (1992, p. 168) noted, "In the decade of the 1980s the banking systems of a number of economies—including those of Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Norway, Texas, and Venezuela—collapsed in the face of external shocks. However, the collapses did not occur immediately following the

> external shocks. In general, macroeconomic stability efforts were followed by investment booms before the collapses."

It is normally not "good style" to quote a source at great length unless there is a particular reason to do so; however, extended quotations, if properly attributed, do not constitute academic dishonesty.

The following is also acceptable:

> Brock has recently noted that in those cases over the last ten years where banking systems have collapsed due to external events, an investment boom has immediately preceded the collapse. Such investment booms appear to have resulted from government guarantees on foreign loans established to stabilize the economies (Brock, 1992, p. 168).

However, the following would be plagiarism, even though the reference is given:

> In the last decade, banking systems in Argentina, Chile, Malaysia, and several other economies collapsed as the result of external shocks. Yet these collapses did not occur immediately. Macroeconomic stability efforts were followed by investment booms, which preceded the collapses (Brock, 1992, p. 168).

This is to be viewed as plagiarism because the sentence structure and paragraph cadence are borrowed from Brock. The citation tells the reader only that the information is taken from Brock, or that the Brock paper provides support for the assertion made in the paragraph. Since quotes are not used, the presentation is assumed to be that of the writer.

A student's claim that he or she did not intend to plagiarize is not an acceptable defense. It is the responsibility of the student to avoid inadvertent plagiarism by using necessary care in research methods as well as citation style.

A useful discussion of plagiarism, especially as it relates to paraphrasing, is found in J. Gibaldi and W. S. Achtert, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Modern Language Association, 1984), pp. 19–23. See also, MU School of Law, 1992 Student Handbook, pp. 50–51.