
ADVANCED SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
Policies and procedures (2009–10)

This document describes policies and procedures for the students of the Advanced School of Economics. Further inquiries should be addressed to the Director of the School or of the specific Doctoral Program in Business (DEA) or in Economics (DEC). Additional information is available at the Program website: <http://www.unive.it/sse>.

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1 First-year students

1.1 Timeline

The first year is arranged in four quarters: Fall and Winter are taken up by long courses, Spring by short courses, and Summer is mostly devoted to writing a paper. The starting date for courses is September 22th, 2009. In the preceding three weeks, an introductory course covering necessary prerequisites in Mathematics and Statistics is offered. Here is the timeline.

start date	end date	activity
Sep. 1	Sep. 18	Preparatory course in Mathematics
Sep. 21	Dec. 4	Core courses (30 hours each)
Dec. 5	Dec. 8	Reading period (no class, no exams)
Dec. 9	Dec. 18	Fall quarter exams
Dec. 21	Jan. 6	Christmas break
Jan. 7	Mar. 31	Core courses (30 hours each)
Apr. 1	Apr. 6	Reading period (and Easter break)
Apr. 7	Apr. 23	Winter quarter exams
Apr. 27	June 4	Short courses (15 hours each)
June 7	Jun. 25	Spring quarter exams
Jun. 28	Sep. 4	Summer paper

1.2 Program of courses

The eight long courses of 30 hours (4 in the Fall quarter, 4 in the Winter quarter) represent the core teaching for the first-year. They cover a reasonably stable set of topics and they are taught by resident faculty. Students can petition the Director to substitute them with other long courses offered within the School.

The short courses of 15 hours (all in the Spring quarter) accomodate special topics that may change over time. They are taught by invited professors or by special arrangements. In 2009–10, there are at least three short courses on offer. Students can petition the Director to substitute them with other (short or long) courses offered within the School.

The introductory course in Mathematics and Statistics covers the necessary prerequisites. Contents include: vector spaces, static optimization, point and interval estimation, test of hypotheses. (A more detailed description is available in the syllabus on the program website.) Attendance is mandatory, unless the students passes a preliminary screening test administered in the first week of September.

Teaching is provided at the doctoral level, which is sharply different from teaching in first-level (Lauree triennali) or second-level (Lauree specialistiche) classes. Students who have already covered the material can ask the Director for a waiver. If granted, the waiver will be given in exchange for alternate activities. Students who find the material in one class too advanced for their preparation can petition the Director for a substitution at a lower-level (usually, some equivalent class taught in a second-level course), although this kind of downward biased substitution is not encouraged.

1.3 Requirements

Each first-year student is expected to complete 285 hours of class activity. These will usually consist of the 240 hours corresponding to the eight core (long) courses and of 45 hours corresponding to three short courses. If necessary, the choice of which short courses to attend is left to the student.

To gain admission to the second year, a student is expected to achieve a passing grade in all the eight core courses and in all his short courses. The GPA over the eight core courses should not be less than $\pi \approx 3.141529\dots$ (Conventionally, grade equivalents are: A=4.00, B=3.00, C=2.00, D=1.00, F=0.00, with +/- adding or subtracting .33.) As for the three short courses, a student can take one of them on a pass/fail basis (in which case only the passing grade is recorded) and should achieve a GPA of at least 3.00 on the remaining two. [Note: A student getting one fail in a core course can be offered to take the exam again. A student getting two fails in core courses is automatically disqualified from the program. No retakes are given for short courses.]

As part of his or her activities, a first-year student is also expected to attend at least 50% of the (Monday) seminars offered at the Department of Economics or Business (according to his program) and to complete a summer paper by September 1, 2010. Seminar attendance is monitored and evaluated with a grade that enters the computation of the GPA according to the following conversion table:

% attendance	grade	points
[75%, 100%]	A	4
[50%, 75%]	B	3
[25%, 50%]	C	2
[0%, 25%]	D	3

The summer paper is agreed with and supervised by a member of the faculty. The choice of the supervisor is left to the student, who should communicate it to the Director by July 2nd, 2010.

At the end of the Spring Quarter, the Faculty examines the file of each student and decides on his or her advancement to the second year. If successfully admitted, the student is assigned a Tutor who supervises his or her activities during the second year.

2 Second-year students

2.1 Timeline

The second year is arranged in two semesters: the Fall semester is taken up by advanced courses offered in Venice, the Spring semester is devoted to a period of research and study in a foreign institution. (The sojourn abroad may extend in the third year.) The starting date for courses is October 6th, 2008. This has been set slightly later than usual to allow students to attend the electives offered by the Doctoral Program in Economics and Management of the University of Padua from September 1st to October 3rd. Here is the timeline.

start date	end date	activity
Sep. 21	Dec. 18	Fall semester (including exams)
Dec. 22	Jan. 6	Christmas break
Jan. 7	June 26	Spring semester (abroad)

The choice of the institution where students spend their time abroad is made by the School, and it is based on students' input and on the relative rankings. The process of selecting institutions and acquiring the status of visiting students is long, so negotiations usually start several months before the expected departure date. Students should begin to worry about their destinations early in September of their second-year.

2.2 Activities

Overall, there are at least eight courses of 15 hours each on offer during the Fall Semester 2009–10. These courses are meant for second-year students, but they are open to all students in the School regardless of their year of course. They cover a wide range of topics that may change from year to year. They are taught by resident faculty. Students can petition the Director to substitute them with other courses offered within the School. The complete list is available at <http://venus.unive.it/sse/pag/coursescurrent2009.html>.

2.3 Requirements

Each second-year student is expected to take at least five of the second-year courses during the Fall semester, achieving a passing grade in five courses and a GPA of no less than $\pi \approx 3.141529\dots$. The School recommends a working load of six, but the choice of how many courses to attend is left to the student. (If a student takes more than five courses, the requirements are measured against his best five grades.)

When abroad, the activity of a student must adjust to the institution he is visiting. As a rule of thumb, a student is expected to attend advanced classes equivalent to between 30% and 70% of the standard workload at the host institution, and use the rest attending seminars or doing research. A detailed plan is drawn during the first month of residence abroad. Students report on their progress to their Tutor or — if they have none — to the Director of the Program. (Typically, this occurs in June of the following year.) Upon returning from their sojourn abroad, students are expected to turn in a detailed written report of their activities to the Director. This report is submitted to the Faculty as part of the evidence on which admission to the third year is decided.

As part of his or her activities, a second-year student is also expected to attend at least 66% of the weekly (Monday) seminars offered at the Department of Economics or Business (according to his program) during the period in which he is in residence. Seminar attendance is monitored and evaluated with a grade that enters the computation of the GPA according to the following conversion table:

% attendance	grade	points
[80%, 100%]	A	4
[66%, 80%]	B	3
[50%, 66%]	C	2
[0%, 50%]	D	3

3 Third-year students and later

3.1 Activities

Third-year students and later devote most of their time to working on their dissertation. The content and composition of the dissertation should be discussed with and approved by the Main Advisor. Typically, a dissertation collects at least three independent papers of publishable quality; that is, papers that are complete, original, provide a review of the literature, and are in general fully understandable. At least one must be single-authored and no more than one can be coauthored with faculty from any academic institution. Similar rules apply by analogy to monographs.

Students in their third year or later are expected to be in residence and be actively part of the research environment in Venice. They are expected to attend the Doctoral Reading Seminar and at least 75% of the weekly (Monday) seminars offered at the Department of Economics or Business (according to their program).

Each third-year student is also expected to serve one semester as teaching assistant for one first-year designated core courses. The assignment is decided by the Director of the School by the first week of July of the preceding year.¹ Students can approach professors of designated courses and offer themselves as teaching assistants; however, a professor is under no obligation to accept a student's offer. Students in their fourth-year or later can volunteer to serve as teaching assistants in exchange for a small stipend. In case of conflict, priority is given to third-year students.

It should be noted that the School cannot offer fellowships beyond the third year, although it may help students in their fourth year to find other means of financial support such as teaching or grading or being a research assistant. The standard way to obtain financing for the fourth year is to apply for a position as Teaching Assistant ("esercitatore" or "tutor"). Most of such positions require a working knowledge of Italian. Due to budget limitations, the Faculty of Economics may reserve Teaching Assistant positions to doctoral students who have (or have not) completed their third-year.

3.2 Requirements

The evaluation of third-year students is based on four items: 1) progress in their dissertation; 2) activities as Teaching Assistant in the Program; 3) presentations made within the Reading Seminar; 4) seminar attendance.

A student entering his third year is expected to find a thesis advisor within the resident faculty by September and in any case no later than the end of October. The choice of

¹ This is done using the student-propose-first version of the Gale and Shapley matching algorithm.

this main advisor must be communicated to the Director of the Program by November 1st. (Work on the dissertation may be done also with the assistance of secondary advisors, but the main advisor retains full responsibility for supervising the student's progress.) Students are strongly advised to begin their search earlier than the deadline: if a match is found, the School can nominate the Main Advisor early in July. A student can have more than one thesis advisor, possibly from different academic or research institutions; however, the Main Advisor must be from the University of Venice.

Successively, and in any case no later than December 15th, the student will have to submit a project for the dissertation approved by his or her Main Advisor to the Faculty Council. By June 30th, the student will present at a public seminar an original paper based on his or her ongoing research. By the following September, he should have at least a first draft of the dissertation.

The Italian government expects that students complete their dissertation by the end of their third year. However, the School recognizes the difficulty of achieving this target and is well aware that the average time to graduation in the western countries is close to five years. Therefore, a student can petition to delay the expected date for his doctoral graduation. Due to law restrictions, however, graduation must be attained within five years and a half at most.

3.3 Dissertation and European Doctorate

Dissertation. The application for admission to the final defense of the doctoral dissertation must be filed by the 30th of October of the third year. (Or else the student needs to file a petition for delay.) The final dissertation must be filed by the 31st of the following January. The final version must be approved and signed by at least three professors, at least two of which must be from the University of Venice; clearly, one of the signatures is expected to come from the Main Advisor. The preface of the dissertation must contain the following signed declaration: “The undersigned . . . , in his/her quality of doctoral candidate for a Ph.D. degree in . . . granted by the University of Venice, attests that the research exposed in this dissertation is original and that it has not been and it will not be used to pursue or attain any other academic degree of any level at any other academic institution, be it foreign or italian. See the official “Regolamento del Dottorato” for more details.

Final exam. The Final Exam consists in thesis defense in front a committee of at least three professors that are not affiliated with the School and who have not been directly involved in any way with the theses. The Examination Committee is chosen by the Faculty Council.

European Doctorate. The European University Association (formerly known as the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences) has drawn up a common “European doctorate” brand. This designation can be added to a national doctorate which was obtained fulfilling the following four conditions regarding co-supervision, assessment by an international jury, multilingualism and mobility of the graduate:

1. The PhD thesis defence will be accorded if at least two professors from two higher education institutions of two European countries, other than the one where the PhD thesis will be defended, have given their judgement concerning the manuscript.²
2. At least one member of the jury should come from a higher education institution in European countries, other than the one, where the PhD thesis will be defended.
3. Part of the defence must take place in one of the official languages, other than the one(s) of the country, where the PhD thesis will be defended.
4. The PhD thesis must partly have been prepared as a result of a period of research of at least one trimester spent in another European country.

The School requires (and makes sure) that Conditions 1,2, and 3 are fulfilled. Upon successful completion of their studies, students who also fulfill Condition 4 will also be awarded the “European Doctorate” certification.

4 Additional information

4.1 Rules of conduct

Students are expected to undertake exams, do their homework and write their papers in good faith. Cheating or plagiarism are severely sanctioned: even a single instance may be sufficient for dismissal from the program. (For a detailed description of what constitutes academic dishonesty, see f.i. <http://www.sunysb.edu/economics/graduate/policies/>)

Any student on a fellowship from SSE is required to obtain an approval from his Coordinator before taking any job involving any form of teaching or research activity at the University of Venice. (Clearly, the teaching assistantship requested from third-year is exempt from this requirement.) Any other job, including teaching positions (or teaching assistantships) elsewhere must be approved by the Faculty Council. Omitting to inform the Coordinator or to ask for approval may imply a reduction of the fellowship. This rule does not apply to teaching assistantships within the program. Please note that the School is not opposed to students experiencing a light teaching load during their doctoral studies; in fact, this is actively encouraged from the third year on.

The “Regolamento del dottorato d’eccellenza” available from the website of the University of Venice (<http://www.unive.it>) provides general regulations for all programs administered within SSE. In particular, students who receive a fellowship should be aware of its articles 6 and 9, which discipline the case in which a student who has been enjoying a fellowship wishes to withdraw from the program.

4.2 Class representatives

Each class should elect a class representative at the beginning of the academic year. The class representative is designated to file complaints on behalf of the class or provide assis-

² Students are required to make sure that the referees get the full dissertation at least 15 days in advance of the final exam.

tance in matters of general interest to the class. For this purpose, a class is defined as a cohort of students at the same level of seniority in the same program; e.g., there should one representative for the first-year DEA and one for first-year DEC, one for the second-year DEA, and so on.

One student from the School is elected as a representative in the Council, the main governing body for the School.

4.3 Email and internet

Upon enrolment, students are given a computer account at the University of Venice. This account provides an email address at unive.it, some disk space for setting up the personal webpage, and access to the electronic library of the University of Venice (which includes JSTOR and several collections of journals) from everywhere in the world.

The Program has a webpage at <http://venus.unive.it/sse/> which contains updated information. All students are required to provide the Director with their official email address, which is published on the Students' webpage. It is the students' responsibility to inform the Director of changes in their email address.

4.4 Office space and facilities

Students have access to common offices at the Department of Economics and at the Department of Business in San Giobbe.