Agricultural and Applied Economics, Ph.D.

Doctoral students are required to develop comprehensive proficiency in economic theory, mathematics, econometrics, and major and minor fields of concentration. In addition to the prerequisites for the master’s program, doctoral applicants should also have mathematical statistics and linear algebra. Candidates for the Ph.D. degree must complete the general requirements of the Graduate School, as well as further requirements which are detailed in the department’s application material and website (http://www.aae.wisc.edu).

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics offers graduate degree programs leading to the master of arts, master of science, and doctor of philosophy. Long recognized as one of the top programs in the nation, the department is an active center of research and graduate training in environmental and natural resource economics, the economic development of low-income countries, agricultural economics, community economics, and more recently, resource and energy demand analysis.

Graduate students select courses from among the department’s advanced offerings in these areas. Active department seminar and workshop series complement formal classroom instruction. In addition, nearly all students work as graduate research assistants on projects with individual faculty members. Faculty and students carry out research in virtually every region of the globe, with Latin America, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa as the areas of strongest geographical concentration. More details on the structure of the graduate programs can be found in the department’s graduate student handbooks (http://www.aae.wisc.edu/gradprogram/handbook).

While members of the faculty define themselves professionally in terms of the areas of applied economics within which they work, the graduate programs are predicated on the notion that good applied economic analysis requires rigorous and thorough training in economic theory and econometrics. Both the master’s and the Ph.D. curricula are grounded in comprehensive training in economic theory and econometrics. The Ph.D. curriculum relies on the doctoral core in theory and econometrics offered by Wisconsin’s outstanding economics program. When matched with the department’s applied courses, which teach students how to use advanced methods to conceptualize and answer contemporary economic problems, this strong core training prepares students for a variety of challenging careers. Wisconsin graduates have taken positions in academic research and teaching; economic consulting in the private sector; and economic staffing in public agencies and nongovernmental organizations at the local, state, national, or international level. A majority of the department’s Ph.D. graduates take faculty positions at universities and colleges.

Department faculty are affiliated with a broad range of institutes and centers across the campus, including the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, the University Center for Cooperatives, the Renk Agribusiness Institute, Center for Community Economic Development, and the area studies programs. Each program has its own rich intellectual life of seminars and other activities.

The department provides office space, a lounge, and IT support for its approximately 60 graduate students. The Taylor–Hibbard Club, the department’s graduate student organization, serves as a link between graduate students and the faculty, elects student representatives to department committees, and promotes academic and social activities for its members.

Funding

The department offers a number of research assistantships, and students have competed well for university-wide fellowships. The department’s students have also received nationally competitive fellowships and research grants from the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Fulbright programs, and others. New students applying for the Ph.D. who wish to be reviewed for the university fellowship competition must complete their applications by December 15.

Requirements

Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

Doctoral Degrees

Ph.D.

Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement

51 credits

Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement

32 credits

Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement

Half of degree coursework (26 out of 51 total credits) must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (https://public.my.wisc.edu/portal/f/u124l1s4/p/CourseGuide-Browse-Courses.u124l1n31/detached/render.up?pcm=view&pP_action=advancedSearch&pP_form-submit=true).

Prior Coursework Requirements: Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 18 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Prior Coursework Requirements: UW–Madison Undergraduate

No credits from the UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.
PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENT: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL
With program approval students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED
Required courses in advanced economic theory (ECON 711 Economic Theory-Microeconomics Sequence and ECON 713 Economic Theory: Microeconomics Sequence; ECON 712 Economic Theory-Macroeconomics Sequence or ECON 714 Economic Theory; Macroeconomics Sequence) and econometrics (ECON 709 Economic Statistics and Econometrics I and ECON 710 Economic Statistics and Econometrics II). A 9-credit major field in one of four areas: international development, environmental and resource economics, economics of agriculture, and community economics. Contact program for list of specific courses.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS
All doctoral students are required to complete a 9-credit minor.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT
3.00 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS
Students holding research assistantships are required to maintain an overall 3.2 GPA; grades of B or above in all core curriculum coursework.

PROBATION POLICY
The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

ASSSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS
Candidates are required to pass two preliminary exams, one in microeconomic theory and one in their major field. In addition, a dissertation proposal must be approved in an oral defense.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Students must pass the microeconomic theory requirement before the beginning of year 3. Students must finish all required coursework and pass the major field exam before the beginning of year 4. Students must defend a dissertation proposal before the end of the first semester of year 4.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may require to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
No language requirements.

ADMISSIONS
Students may be admitted for graduate work upon meeting the requirements for admission to the Graduate School. The department requires the minimum scores determined by the Graduate School on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). In addition, the department requires that applicants provide test score results from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) general test (verbal, quantitative, analytical writing).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Articulates research questions on the cutting edge of agricultural and applied economics.
• Formulates ideas and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within agricultural, environmental, development, or community economics.
• Creates scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to their chosen major field within agricultural and applied economics.
• Demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
• Advances contributions of their chosen field of study to society.
• Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner, both orally and in written form.
• Demonstrates the ability to collaboratively formulate and analyze ideas at the cutting edge of agricultural and applied economics.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Fosters ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Coxhead (chair), Barham, Chavas, Cox, Deller, Foltz, Gould, Harris, Jones, Klemme, Phaneuf, Provencer, Rutherford, Stiegert; Associate Professors Alix-Garcia, Hueth, Mitchell, Schechter, Shi; Assistant Professors Du, Grainger, Parker