

AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS, PHD

for the Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural and Applied Economics

PhD Program Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy is a research-oriented degree that prepares successful candidates for positions in higher education, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the research and management functions of the private sector. In consultation with a faculty advisor, students develop an area of specialization to fit their career aspirations. Typical areas of specialization include:

- agricultural finance
- environmental and natural resource economics
- family and consumer economics
- farm and agribusiness management
- international and policy economics
- price analysis and agricultural marketing
- regional economics and public policy

Students pursue coursework in theory, quantitative methods, and their area of specialization; pass a written core exam, a second-year research paper requirement, an oral preliminary examination which includes the formal proposal for dissertation research; and complete and defend a dissertation. The core courses cover the theory and quantitative methods upon which advanced research, teaching, and service in ACE are based. The specialty courses build on the knowledge gained in the core courses and provide an understanding of the application of economic theory and the tools of economic analysis. Students are encouraged to complete substantial coursework in other departments, such as economics, finance, and business administration.

Admission

Graduate College requirements apply, including a 3.0 (A = 4.0) GPA for the last two years of undergraduate coursework and any graduate work completed. International applicants whose native language is not English are required to follow the Graduate College's Minimum Requirements for Admission. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test scores are required for all applicants. Applicants to the Ph.D. program are required to provide a sample of their academic writing. Students having an inadequate background in theory or quantitative methods will be asked to take additional coursework to prepare for graduate study. Students may commence study in either semester, but initial enrollment in fall semester is preferable. An applicant with a master's degree in an appropriate discipline will be considered for the Ph.D. degree. Applicants with a baccalaureate degree can apply directly to the PhD program, but will need to demonstrate sufficient preparation to be admitted.

Student Thesis and Dissertation Research

Our students' research uses economics to address important social and economic challenges. Thesis and dissertation topics include designing policies for environmental protection and resource management,

evaluating international efforts to reduce poverty and hunger, and enhancing the performance of commodity and speculative markets.

Graduate Teaching Experience

Although teaching is not a general Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of the graduate experience in this program and is strongly recommended for those intending to pursue an academic career.

Financial Aid

Graduate fellowships, assistantships, and tuition and fee waivers are awarded on a competitive basis.

Fellowships. The department offers fellowships from internal resources and by nominating students for college and campus fellowships. These fellowships, often combined with assistantship support, provide monetary stipends and, in most cases, exemptions from tuition and some student fees. Recipients must register for the equivalent of at least 12 hours of graduate credit in each semester and four hours in an eight-week summer session. Fellowship holders are encouraged to involve themselves with research and teaching in the department.

Assistantships. Research and teaching assistantships provide an opportunity for graduate students to work with faculty. Most research assistantships are funded by grants and contracts involving the analysis of contemporary issues. Most assistantships carry waivers of tuition and some fees.

Tuition and Fee Waivers. Waivers may be awarded. In most cases they are awarded to students with fellowship support from certain external programs.

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A 3.0 (A = 4.0) GPA is required in all courses completed in the program.

For additional details and requirements refer to the department's Graduate Program information for the Ph.D. degree (<https://ace.illinois.edu/academics/graduate-degrees/doctor-philosophy-agricultural-and-applied-economics/>) and the Graduate College Handbook (<https://grad.illinois.edu/handbooks-policies/>).

Entering with approved B.S./B.A. degree

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		24-28
4 hours (minimum) of quantitative methods beyond the courses specified in the core		4
16 hours at the 500 level to define two fields of expertise. At least 8 of those 16 hours must be in ACE		16
ACE 561	Adv Res and Scholarly Comm	4
ACE 599	Thesis Research (max applied toward degree)	48
Total Hours		96

Entering with approved M.S./M.A. Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Core courses		24-28
4 hours (minimum) of quantitative methods beyond the courses specified in the core		4
16 hours at the 500 level to define two fields of expertise. At least 8 of those 16 hours must be in ACE		16
ACE 561	Adv Res and Scholarly Comm (Advanced Research and Scholarly Communication)	4
ACE 599	Thesis Research (max applied toward degree)	32
Total Hours		64

Other Requirements

Requirement	Description
Other requirements may overlap	
Minimum Hours Required Within the 16 excluding indep study, 599 and Unit at the 500-Level:	core courses
A written paper in the form of a journal article approved by the research paper committee and presented at a department conference.	
Written Core Exam Required	Yes
Preliminary Exam Required	Yes
Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required	Yes
Dissertation Deposit Required	Yes
Minimum GPA:	3.0

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1. Develop a knowledge base in, and demonstrate an understanding of how to use, microeconomic concepts to set up and analyze economic problems and implications.
2. Identify, summarize, interpret, and critique relevant scholarly literature.
3. Demonstrate the ability to identify important research problems and formulate well-defined research objectives (e.g., testable hypotheses).
4. Identify and use appropriate quantitative methods to accomplish research objectives.
5. Effectively use written and verbal communication skills to present economic concepts and analyses.
6. Understand features of agriculture and natural resources (e.g., inherent risk, institutions, unique government policies, and cultural importance of food) that make them unique for applications of economic principles.
7. Practice highest levels of professional conduct (e.g., in professional activities take responsibility, be accountable, show integrity, have strong ethics, and respect diversity).

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Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

Agricultural and Consumer Economics Department Website (<https://ace.illinois.edu/>)

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College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

College Website (<https://aces.illinois.edu/>)

Admissions

Grad College Admissions & Requirements (<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/>)