



Ph.D. IN ECONOMICS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF MILAN AND PAVIA

COURSE AND THESIS REQUIREMENTS

Duration of the Ph.D. programme

The Ph.D. in Economics of the Universities of Milan and Pavia is a four-year programme. Scholarships are granted for the same period. During the four-year programme, students have to fulfil course requirements and write a research thesis. The Ph.D. degree is jointly awarded by the University of Milan and the University of Pavia after the thesis has been publicly defended and judged as an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the relevant field of study.¹

Attendance

Students have to personally attend Ph.D. courses and participate to other activities of the programme. These include attending seminars, meet seminar speakers and visiting professors. They must carry out their research at the University of Milan or at the University of Pavia except when they do research in a foreign institution or participate to Conferences, Workshops or other activities authorised by the Ph.D. Director. In practice, authorisations should be asked in advance for any period of leave exceeding one week.

Being a Ph.D. student is a full time job. In particular, students cannot be enrolled in other Ph.D., Master or Bachelor programmes and cannot carry out working activities except if explicitly authorised by the "Collegio dei docenti"; i.e. by the Ph.D. Faculty Board. Authorised activities include tutoring of master and bachelor students, lectures, seminars and review sessions for a maximum yearly amount of 40 hours.²

A student who fails to comply with the above rules can be suspended by the "Collegio dei docenti" (the Ph.D. Faculty) from the Ph.D. programme and consequently lose the scholarship.

Thesis Requirements

The thesis generally consists of a brief introduction and two chapters. Essays on different topics within the same field are acceptable. The two chapters must provide original contributions to the advancement of knowledge, i.e. new theoretical and/or empirical results in the chosen research field. The thesis chapters should be in the form of original (full length) research papers publishable on international scientific journals with peer review. At least one of the two chapters should be single-authored by the Ph.D. candidate. The thesis must be written in English and have an abstract in Italian.

¹ In case of maternity leave or serious illness students have to interrupt their studies (with a deferral of the scholarship). Studies can also be suspended upon students' request and subject to approval by the "Collegio dei docenti" for serious personal or family problems.

² This limit is removed after the fourth year.



The thesis is presented to the “Collegio dei docenti” (the Ph.D. Faculty Board) before the end of the final year of the Ph.D. programme. ³ Afterwards, the “Collegio dei docenti” submits the thesis to two external referees who must provide a formal written assessment of the thesis. The referees may ask for

a revision that must be completed by the Ph.D. candidate within 6 months before the thesis can be formally defended.⁴ After 6 months the thesis is in any case admitted to the final public defence.

The thesis has to be publicly defended in front of a Thesis Examination Committee of three members (one of whom must be a full professor) selected by the “Collegio dei docenti”. At least two members of the Committee cannot be affiliated with the Universities of Milan and Pavia and cannot be members of the “Collegio dei docenti”.

First year Requirements

During the first year, students must attend courses in Mathematics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Econometrics. Three or four courses (modules of about 20 hours) are usually offered in each area for a minimum of nine to a maximum of twelve courses. Students are expected to prepare a research project for the thesis, and present it at the end of the first year of the Ph.D. programme. To this end students are encouraged to identify, with the help of the Ph.D. Director, a tutor/advisor with whom to discuss their research project.

The research project should identify one or more issues to be addressed, and be motivated by a short survey of the literature; the project proposal should include a statement of research objectives, and a research strategy.

The presentation is public and takes place at the end of the first year of the Ph.D. programme (i.e. in September of the first year) in front of the Ph.D. Faculty and fellow Ph.D. students.

At the end of the first year students have to submit a short written report (two pages) of their research activity and results. The first-year report should include a summary of the research project, and indicate the participation to seminars, workshops and conferences, and any publications.

Admission to the second year

In order to be admitted to the second year, students have to pass all first-year courses by obtaining a pass grade in the first exam or in the retake.⁵ Exams can be retaken only once. Students who are not admitted to the second year have to leave the Ph.D. programme. In exceptional circumstances, the “Collegio dei docenti” can admit students to the second year if they have not failed more than two courses, showed a fairly good overall performance, and presented a satisfactory research project.

The research project must be approved by the “Collegio dei docenti”. If the “Collegio” finds the research project unfeasible or unsatisfactory, it may ask for extensions and/or modifications, and possibly for a new presentation in which revisions are discussed in front of a Committee appointed by the Ph.D. Director.

Second year Requirements

During the second year, students must attend field courses in specific research topics to be decided each year by the “Collegio dei docenti”, if possible considering the research interests of the students. Upon approval by the

³ Students must also submit a short written report (two pages) of their research activity and results.

⁴ The referees provide a new assessment of the revised version of the thesis.

⁵ Each course is a module of about 20 hours of lectures.



Ph.D. Director, a course from another Ph.D. programme can be substituted for one of these field courses. Field courses are usually given in the first term (September-December) of the second year of the Ph.D. programme.

During the second year, students have to write an original research paper for the first chapter of the thesis under the supervision of a thesis advisor previously identified among the members of the "Collegio". The paper can be in the form of a preliminary draft but should clearly state the research objectives, include a literature review, and provide original results. The paper is presented before the end of the second year (i.e., typically, in June) in front of the Ph.D. Faculty and fellow Ph.D. students.

At the end of the second year students have to submit a short written report (two pages) of their research activity and results. The second-year report should include a summary of the research paper, and indicate the participation to seminars, workshops and conferences, and any publications.

Admission to the third year

To be admitted to the third year, students have to pass all second-year courses⁶ and write an original research paper that has the potential to satisfy the requirements of a thesis chapter.

Exams of second-year courses may take the form of a written exam or a presentation or a short essay, possibly to be evaluated with a pass/fail decision. Exams can be retaken only once. Students who do not pass one or more courses have to leave the Ph.D. programme.

The research paper has to be approved by the "Collegio dei docenti" for the student to be admitted to the third year. If the paper does not provide original results or cannot be expected to meet the requirements for a thesis chapter, then it is not approved by the "Collegio dei docenti" and the student has to leave the Ph.D. programme.

Third year Requirements

During the second year, students must attend field courses in specific research topics to be decided each year by the "Collegio dei docenti", if possible considering the research interests of the students. Upon approval by the Ph.D. Director, a course from another Ph.D. programme can be substituted for one of these field courses. Field courses are usually given in the first term (September-December). During the second year, students have to write an original research paper for the second chapter of the thesis under the supervision of a thesis advisor previously identified among the members of the "Collegio". The paper can be in the form of a preliminary draft but should clearly state the research objectives, include a literature review, and provide original results. The paper is presented before the end of the third year in front of the Ph.D. Faculty and fellow Ph.D. students. The presentation focuses on the results obtained during the third year, usually, presented in the second chapter of the thesis

⁶ If a second-year course is replaced with the course of another Ph.D. programme, students must pass this latter course.



At the end of the third year students have to submit a short written report (two pages) of their research activity and results. The year report should include a summary of the research paper, and indicate the participation to seminars, workshops and conferences, and any publications.



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Admission to the fourth and final year

To be admitted to the final year, students have to pass all third-year courses and write an original research paper that has the potential to satisfy the requirements of a thesis chapter. Exams of third-year courses may take the form of a written exam or a presentation or a short essay, possibly to be evaluated with a pass/fail decision. Exams can be retaken only once. Students who do not pass one or more courses have to leave the Ph.D. programme. The research paper has to be approved by the “Collegio dei docenti” for the student to be admitted to the fourth year. If the paper does not provide original results or cannot be expected to meet the requirements for a thesis chapter, then it is not approved by the “Collegio dei docenti” and the student has to leave the Ph.D. programme.

Fourth year requirements

During the fourth and final year, students have to complete their Ph.D. thesis under the supervision of the thesis advisor. The thesis is presented at the end of the final year in front of the Ph.D. Faculty and fellow Ph.D. students. The presentation focuses on the results obtained during the final year, usually, presented in the second chapter of the thesis. The thesis should fulfil the requirements indicated above. If the work does not meet the requirements for a thesis, then it is not approved by the “Collegio dei docenti” and the student has to leave the Ph.D. programme.

At the end of the final year students have to submit a written final report on their research activity and results during the four-year period of the Ph.D. programme. The final report should include a summary of the thesis, and indicate any publications.

Interdisciplinary courses

To enrich their cultural backgrounds on topics not strictly related to economics, Italian law requires that Ph.D. students attend interdisciplinary courses, such as Data Analysis, Research Methods, Computer Programming, Research Ethics, Communication, etc.

Research Periods Outside the Universities of Milan and Pavia (Visiting Periods Abroad and Visiting Periods in Italy)

1. Visiting Periods Students are encouraged (but not obliged) to do research in a foreign Institution (a university, a research institute, or an international organization). Students may also spend research periods at other Italian universities or research institutions in Italy. Visiting periods usually follow first-year courses. Course attendance at other institutions in the same metropolitan area does not exempt the student from participating in the PhD program's mandatory activities in the home Universities.

2. Total Length For the 4-year PhD program, the cumulative time spent outside the home Universities (combining both visiting periods abroad and visiting periods in Italy) cannot exceed a total of 16 months. The doctoral activity must be carried out for at least 32 months at the home Universities (Milan and Pavia).

3. Scholarship Increase. The scholarship amount is increased by 50 percent for research periods spent abroad

approved by the “Collegio dei docenti”, for a total duration not exceeding 12 months. This limit may be extended up to 18 months only for students in a joint-supervision (*co-tutela*) with a foreign university. There is no scholarship increase for visiting periods in Italy.

4. Exceptions Exceptions to the 16-month limit may be granted by the “Collegio dei docenti” exclusively for documented research needs strictly related to data collection, work with restricted-access data or fieldwork (e.g., VisitInps or similar programs).

5. Approval Procedure Visiting periods must be scientifically justified (e.g., to work with a specific supervisor or to access specific research facilities) and must be formally authorized by the “Collegio dei docenti”. Any request for a period abroad or a visiting period in Italy must be endorsed by the thesis advisor and approved by the “Collegio dei docenti”. The request must include:

- A formal letter from a researcher at the hosting institution willing to supervise the student;
- A clear description of the research activities to be performed. The request is evaluated based on the coherence of the research project with the expertise of the host researcher and the host institution.

The student may be asked to return to the home seat if the “Collegio dei docenti” so decides based on the progress reports provided by the external and internal advisors.



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