Guidelines for MA ECON Comprehensive Examination

Eligibility
MA ECON students who chose the comprehensive examination should expect to take the exam during their last quarter in the program. In addition, the following requirements must also be satisfied in order to register for the exam (Bus 596):

- The student must have passed the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) and must have been “Advanced to Candidacy” (G3);
- The student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or higher in the program with no grades below C and no outstanding “Incomplete” (I) grades;
- The student must not be on academic/disciplinary probation.

Exam Requirements
Students are required to pass the following three requirements in order to receive “Credit” (CR) for Bus 596: I) a written exam on Microeconomics; II) a written exam on Macroeconomics; III) a take-home project on a research topic elected from the Department’s project pool. Students need to prepare two bluebooks and take the two written exams together on campus on the same day. Also, students may pass the three requirements individually.

Registration:
Students must register for BUS 596 by the add deadline in each quarter to participate in the comprehensive exam. Once enrolled, a confirmation letter from the College will be sent to each student with the date, time, and location of the written exam. Students are also encouraged to meet with the department advisor to learn more about the exam.

Preparation
The take-home research project requires the student to demonstrate competency in both data analysis and report writing. The student is expected to use an econometric software package to conduct data analysis, evaluate empirical findings, and report them. The project report should be about 10 to 15 pages long (including references, tables, figures, and other illustrations). A list of possible research topics from which the student can choose is available at the department office. With advisor approval, the student should finalize his/her choice of the topic before the quarter in which the student plans to take the written exam. The student may start working on the project after the advisor approves the topic. The completed written report is to be submitted to the department office a day before the written exam.

Since the written exam covers both microeconomics and macroeconomics which are typically taught by different instructors, the student is individually responsible for informing the relevant instructor in advance about his/her intention on taking the exam and for obtaining information on how to prepare for the test. The number of questions in each exam may vary from quarter to quarter. Samples of the past exam questions are available at the department office.

Offerings
Except in the Summer quarter, the comprehensive exam (Bus 596) is offered three times a year in every Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. The written exam is usually scheduled in a three-hour block on the Friday of the 4th week of the quarter.

Evaluation and Records
Department faculty who wrote the questions/projects will be responsible for evaluating students’ work. “Pass/Fail” grades will be assigned individually for the research project and the exams on Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. Students must receive “Pass” in all three parts in order to pass the comprehensive exam and receive “Credit” (CR) for Bus 596. Students will be able to view their CR/NC grades for BUS 596 through GET at the end of the quarter. After receiving the grade, a student who has questions regarding how the project or a particular exam is graded can contact the department advisor. The advisor will direct the student to the appropriate grading instructor to discuss the project or the exam. After being graded, students’ exams (including bluebooks and reports) will be kept by the Department for one year.

Reexamination
Students are allowed a maximum of three attempts to complete the comprehensive examination requirements.