

Regulations of the 1-year Master of Arts Program in Economics, Data, and Policy

Last updated: August 12, 2024

Basic Information

Name of the Program: MA in Economics, Data, and Policy (1 year)

Abbreviation: MA EDP (1yr)

U.S. accreditation: 2024

Austrian accreditation: 2024

Program duration: 1 year

1. Overview of the program

The duration of the MA in Economics, Data, and Policy 1-year program is one academic year. The academic year is partitioned into three terms: Fall, Winter, and Spring term.

Incoming students are specifically admitted to one of two tracks: Research (pre-PhD) Track or Global Economic Policy Track. Hence, no track changes are possible, and at most one track can be completed.

Incoming students start their studies with a Pre-session in Mathematics course before the Fall term. Students on the Economic Policy track write a placement test during the first class to decide whether to take the basic or the advanced level course or whether they qualify for a waiver. Students on the Research track must take the advanced level course. They must still take the placement test so we can gauge their level and to see if they qualify for a waiver.

The pre-session Mathematics course ends with an examination. Students cannot continue in the program without passing this exam. If they fail on the first try, a single retake is possible.

During the program students must complete all mandatory courses. Progress through the program is as follows:

- Fall: mandatory, mandatory elective and elective courses;
- Winter: mandatory, mandatory elective and elective courses. At the beginning of the term students must propose a thesis research topic and start working on their MA thesis with the help of their assigned supervisor(s).
- Spring: devoted solely to thesis work. Students must enroll in the mandatory thesis seminar. The thesis defense is integrated into the thesis seminar in the form of an oral presentation. The thesis submission deadline is at the beginning of June.

Section 3 (Coursework) contains more information on the track-specific requirements.

2. General requirements

2.1. Credit and GPA requirements

Credit requirements

Students must take a minimum of 30 US/60 ECTS credits during the program. More specifically, students must acquire at least 24 US/48 ECTS taught credits by the end of the Winter term, unless the student was unable to complete the required credits due to a properly documented medical condition.

In the Spring term, students are awarded 2 US/4 ECTS taught credits for the mandatory Thesis seminar course and an additional 4 US/8 ECTS credits for completing and submitting their thesis. Thus, together with the 24US/48 ECTS taught credits, students will have completed at least 30 US/120 ECTS credits by the end of the program.

GPA requirements

Students must achieve a minimum GPA of 2.66 for the 24 US/48 ECTS taught credits as well as for the 30 US/60 ECTS credits completed overall. In other words, students cannot have a cumulative GPA lower than 2.66 at the end of the Winter term or at the end of the Spring term.

2.2. Examinations

Graded courses in the MA in Economics, Data, and Policy program generally end with a written final examination (or final paper). Assessment of a course may include, apart from the final examination, a midterm examination, homeworks, assignments, tests, term papers and seminar presentations, as decided by the instructor and stated on the respective course syllabi.

Examinations are in writing and taken in the classroom. Strict conditions regulate the exams:

- Students must leave all belongings behind before entering the exam room.
- As a rule, students may not keep the exam questions after the end of the written exam.
- Cheating in any form during the examination leads to an automatic failure, and possibly further disciplinary actions. If repeated, this might lead to an expulsion from the University contingent on the decision of the CEU Disciplinary Committee.
- Graded exams of the mandatory courses can be checked by students for one week after grades are published (unless otherwise specified by the instructor).
- In case of sickness, students are required to notify their coordinator before the exam begins and later provide a medical certificate.
- Missing an exam without giving prior notice results in an automatic failure.

Instructors may specify additional rules on their course syllabi.

2.3. Unsatisfactory progress

A maximum of one retake exam per course (mandatory, elective or mandatory elective) is allowed. Retaking exams in more than three (3) mandatory courses is not allowed. A failed retake examination in a mandatory course will result in automatic dismissal from the program. A failed retake examination in an elective course will lead to zero earned credits from the course towards the diploma, but the course will still count towards the total credits when calculating the GPA, thus lowering the student's GPA. A failed retake examination in a mandatory elective course will result in automatic dismissal from the program in case no other mandatory elective can be substituted from the same group of mandatory electives. In case another mandatory elective can be substituted, a failure will have the same consequences as a failure in an elective course.

The minimum passing grade for a mandatory course is C+ (equivalent to 2.33 grade points). If a student passes a retake exam, they will receive RP (2.33 points) and this grade will be shown on the transcript.

All retake examinations are to be scheduled within a month after the exam results are published (holidays excluded).

As a rule, class attendance is mandatory. The specific attendance requirement for each course is set by the instructor and is explained in the syllabus.

2.4. Changing course registration

Once the registration and drop period is over, students admitted to a late starting course may change their registration status (from grade to audit, from audit to grade, or drop):

- until the end of the week in which the first 100-minute session started, initiated by the sending email to Program Coordinator (no fee, no approval from instructor needed)
- until mid-way through the course (with a late registration fee as regulated by SRP and written approval from the instructor), initiated by sending the Professor's approval to Program Coordinator

No further changes allowed after a course is half-way over.

2.5 Relevant CEU regulations

The general rights and obligations of students are outlined in [Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations](#); Annex 2 describes the default grading scheme. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated in the program. In all suspected cases an official process will be opened. Sanctions include failing the course or even being expelled from the university, for details see the [CEU Code of Ethics](#) and the [CEU Plagiarism Policy](#). A full list of all CEU policies relevant to students can be found [online](#).

2.6 Transfer to another track

Not possible.

2.7 Completing more than one track

Not possible.

3. Coursework

Mandatory, elective and mandatory elective courses offered in the MA in Economics, Data, and Policy program count both toward the degree and the GPA. Credits taken above the required number of credits also count toward the GPA. Students can register for a given course only once over their period of study.

3.1 Mandatory courses

The following mandatory courses are to be taken by all students on the Research (pre-PhD) track:

- Pre-session in Mathematics (advanced)
- Data Analysis 4 (advanced)
- Academic Writing 1 and 2
- Thesis seminar
- Thesis

This is a total of 10 US mandatory credits.

The following mandatory courses are to be taken by all students on the Global Economic Policy track:

- Pre-session in Mathematics (basic or advanced)
- Data Analysis 4 (basic)
- Academic Writing 1 and 2
- Global Economy: Emergence and Current Issues
- International Economic Policy
- Economic Policy Seminar
- Thesis seminar
- Thesis

This is a total of 16 US mandatory credits.

3.2 Mandatory Elective courses

Apart from the mandatory and elective courses, students must choose from a list of mandatory electives.

On the Research track, students must take at least 8 US credits from the “Advanced Skills” module:

- Statistics for Econometrics
- Advanced Econometrics 1
- Advanced Econometrics 2
- Advanced Microeconomics
- Advanced Macroeconomics
- Advanced Microeconomics

In addition, students on the Research track must take at least 6 US credits from the “Research in Economics” module:

- This module includes PhD electives; the exact course offering is subject to change from year to year. The accreditation document contains the full list.

On the Global Economic Policy track, students must take at least 6 US credits from the “Topics in Policy Analysis” module:

- Policy Internship
- Economic Policy and Global Strategy
- International Economic Integration

- Fiscal Policy in Practice
- Development Economics
- Impact Evaluation: Policy Applications with R

3.2.1 Internship as a mandatory elective

Students on the Research (pre-PhD) track may complete a research internship for 2 US credits in the Fall or Winter semesters. In practice, this means an RA position approved by the Program Director. The research internship credits count toward the completion of the “Research in Economics” mandatory elective module.

Students on the Global Economic Policy track may complete a policy internship for 2 US credits in the Fall or Winter semesters. In practice, this could be an RA position or an internship with an outside organization. In both cases, the approval of the Program Director is required. *An internship with an outside organization will be approved only if it does not conflict with the student’s coursework in the program.* The policy internship credits count toward the completion of the “Topics in Policy Analysis” mandatory elective module.

3.3 Elective courses

Students must take a sufficient number of elective courses in the Fall and Winter terms to accumulate 24 US/48 ECTS taught credits by the end of the Winter term. If the minimum number of mandatory elective credits are taken on the Research track, then 6 more elective credits are required. If the minimum number of mandatory elective credits are taken on the Economic Policy track, then 8 more elective credits are required.

Per university-level regulation, students are entitled to take courses outside their program without formal approval up to a limit of 4 US/8 ECTS credits per year. These credits are counted as elective credits toward the degree.

Courses outside the Economics, Data, and Policy program are those that do *not* appear in the program’s “diet” (i.e., the official course list accessible in Time Edit and SITS). Courses that are officially cross-listed from other departments are part of the diet. Thus, the 4-credit quota applies to courses that are not cross-listed (and are typically offered by other departments).

No additional “outside credits” are allowed in the 1-year program.

4. Master’s thesis and defense

4.1. Thesis supervision

At the beginning of the Winter term of their 1st year, students submit the proposed title of their MA thesis together with a short research plan. The Department assigns an MA thesis supervisor

to each student based on this proposal. For further information on the student-advisor match and the thesis writing process please see the Thesis Guidelines [HERE](#).

Students may request to work under the supervision of a CEU professor outside the department, but this is subject to the approval of the Head of Department. In exceptional cases a change of supervisors is possible if a request is filed with the Head of Department with sufficient justification.

In working on their master's thesis, students must follow the timeline set out in the [THESIS CALENDAR](#). Students must submit a thesis outline and a first draft to their supervisors by the appropriate deadlines. At the same time, students must participate in the mandatory Thesis seminar and give presentations as detailed below.

Failure to comply with these rules or lack of communication with the supervisor may result in the supervisor's withdrawal from supervision. Students without supervisors cannot submit a thesis. Supervisors are assigned only once a year, at the beginning of the Winter term, so a decline of supervision means that the student cannot submit a thesis before the following academic year.

4.2.Thesis submission

The final thesis must be submitted in two ways:

- An electronic copy of the thesis must be uploaded to the Electronic Thesis Database (ETD).
- An electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted to the program coordinator. The exact way of doing this will be communicated ahead of time (email, CEULearning, etc.)

Both submissions must be identical and must be completed by 4 p.m. on the day specified in the MA Thesis Calendar. Late submission and upload will be punished by subtracting a grade every 48 hours.

4.3.Thesis defense and grading

The oral thesis defense is integrated into the mandatory Thesis seminar. The Thesis seminar is run by two faculty members (henceforth, 'thesis czars' or 'czars') who also organize and evaluate the defense. The overview of the process is as follows. There are at least 3 required presentations during the thesis seminar:

- Initial idea,
- Progress report,
- Defense presentation.

Depending on the number of students, students may be partitioned into groups. For each group, one czar is designated to attend all required presentations. The defense presentation takes place at least one week before the submission deadline. At the defense, students are expected to deliver a

polished presentation with meaningful results but can still receive comments to be incorporated into the final version of the thesis. The defense presentation is open to the public.

The thesis grade is made up of two components – the defense presentation and the supervisor's report on the final thesis. One czar is in charge of each defense. This czar takes notes, asks questions, and provides comments with the aim of improving the final submission. The defending student should incorporate these comments into the final version of the thesis to the extent possible. The final thesis is due by the submission deadline, at the beginning of June, as specified in the Thesis Calendar. The student's supervisor then submits a written thesis report to the czars and recommends a grade. The final grade is assigned by the respective czar based on i) the defense notes and ii) the supervisor's report. The final grade may be substantially different from the supervisor's recommendation if warranted by the live presentation and/or the relative rank of the thesis in comparison to other students.

4.4. Thesis submission deferment

By university regulations, students can defer the thesis submission and defense for up to two years after completing their coursework. The request should be sent before the final title of the thesis is due.

Deferred theses can be submitted and defended only twice during an academic year:

- (i) during the regular thesis defense and submission period in the Spring term (end of May/beginning of June);
- (ii) at the end of the Fall term, as specified in the MA Thesis Calendar.

The evaluation procedure for a deferred thesis is similar to the regular one. In case of a Spring defense, the deferred thesis should be defended in the Thesis seminar organized that year and then submitted by the regular submission deadline. In case of a Fall defense, the thesis should be defended in front of the faculty members who ran the Thesis seminar in the Spring term of the previous academic year and then submitted officially to the Electronic Thesis Database. Of course, in the case of a deferred thesis as well, the supervisor's report is used in part to determine the grade.