Dissertation Proposal

During the first semester after successfully completing the Field paper, the candidate should begin searching for a dissertation topic as well as two appropriate advisors. During this semester, the candidate may register for ECON 9998 with the Director of Graduate Studies. Not later than the beginning of the second semester after completing a Field paper, the candidate must have two members of the Department's faculty who have consented to serve as the provisional dissertation committee. From this point forward, students must register each semester for 12 credits in ECON 9998 and ECON 9999. The role of the Committee at this early stage is to assist the candidate in finding a feasible research topic and to provide initial direction of his or her efforts. The candidate may alter the Committee's make-up should changes in the student's interests or other circumstances make this desirable. During the first semester in which a candidate registers for Econ 9999, the principal advisor will require the candidate to write a paper. The paper will be a literature review, unless the advisor and candidate agree on an alternative.

Before scheduling a proposal defense a candidate must obtain the signatures of two faculty members who will serve as the candidate's provisional committee.

The proposal should be presented no later than three semesters after the Field paper is successfully completed. Proposal presentations will be conducted only in spring and fall semesters during the periods in which classes are in session, excluding final examination periods. No more than two presentations will be scheduled during a single week.

The candidate must present an 8-15 page statement of the proposed research to the DGS one week before the scheduled proposal for distribution to the faculty. The statement must have been approved by the candidate's provisional committee.

The dissertation proposal should set out the major questions to be explored and describe the methods and the data (if any) to be employed. The statement should be specific enough and detailed enough that the faculty can predict with reasonable assurance whether the work is a contribution to knowledge and can be successfully completed. Students should refer to the specific [guidelines](http://economics.virginia.edu/sites/economics.virginia.edu/files/ProposalGuidelinesandPermissionForm_SampleTitlePage.pdf)  for the proposal.

Following the proposal presentation, the provisional committee, interested faculty, and the DGS will weigh the comments of participants and decide whether or not to approve the proposal.

When the proposal is approved, the DGS will formally appoint a supervisor and second reader. Later those two will co-opt a third reader to complete the dissertation committee. (If circumstances dictate, and with approval of the DGS, a person not a member of the Department's faculty may be selected as second or third reader.)

If a candidate proposes in the last semester of the three semester limit, and the proposal is not approved by the faculty, the candidate must re-propose the following semester. If the candidate proposes in a semester prior to the three semester limit and the proposal is not approved by the faculty, the candidate must re-propose by the semester following the end of the original three semester limit.

If the candidate fails at the re-proposal, or fails to re-propose on schedule, he/she will not be permitted to continue in the program.

*No student will be permitted to continue in the program whose dissertation proposal is not approved within four semesters of the successful completion of the 2nd Year Summer Paper.*