

FAQ

Currently Enrolled Grads

Q: When do I need to finalize the selection of my Thesis Chair?

A: By end of the “add” period of your 1st semester (same for 4+1 students). You are assigned a temporary advisor when you arrive, but this person will automatically be dropped as your advisor the following January.

Q: When do I need to finalize my Minor Member(s)?

A: By the end of the 2nd semester of your 1st year (last day of classes) – for 4+1 students, they should finalize them by the end of fall break if possible, if not, definitely by the end of their 1st semester. Your Minor Member will require you to take 1-3 classes, so you need to identify this person early enough to fulfill their requirements. *Be sure to coordinate this choice with your thesis chair.*

Q: Is it possible to have a major and minor within DEA?

A: Yes, theoretically, it is possible to have your minor within DEA, but it is strongly encouraged that minors are outside of DEA.

Q: How do I waive out of a course?

A: **First**, speak with your thesis advisor about the desire to waive out of a course requirement. **Second**, meet with the professor of the required course and discuss your level of competency in that area (it is best if you can present them with an old syllabus and course assignments). If they determine (through dialogue, exams, etc) that you indeed have sufficient understanding of the material, you will ask them to sign a statement to that effect. **Third**, prepare a brief statement, have the professor of the course and your advisor sign it, and then submit it to the DGS. Course time conflicts are NOT a valid reason for requesting a waiver.

Q: I know that in some graduate fields, there is a “paper option” for theses and dissertations, what does that mean and what is the policy in DEA?

A: The “paper option” means that a student may, if their committee agrees, write a series of papers for their thesis or dissertation. Typically, one might write a general introduction and conclusion (chapters) as book ends and then approximately three papers (chapters). The DEA field has agreed that this is an option for PhD dissertations, but not for Master’s theses.

Q: What steps do I need to take when planning my thesis defense?

A: You should first confer with your committee chair and members. When you are getting ready to defend your thesis, please also contact DEA’s Graduate Field Assistant, 1411 MVR. There is a document that can be sent to you electronically that will help you to prepare for your defense. Also, please check online at: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/thesis-dissertation>, for additional information from the Cornell Graduate School’s Thesis & Dissertation webpage.

Q: Do International Students have to take any additional language tests?

A: DEA requires that all incoming International Students whose first language is not English pass an International Language Assessment (ILA). Upon admission, international students will be scheduled for an ILA, and will be informed of the date and time of their appointment by DEA’s Graduate Field Assistant.

Q: For Doctoral students – what are the requirements for Statistics courses?

A: PhD students are required to take 2 statistics classes. These courses:

- must be graduate level courses; not undergraduate level courses
- cannot be an independent study (an independent study *with a statistician* could be a 3rd course, but would not count as one of the required 2 courses)
- may be taken at another institution if it is at a graduate level and if pre-approved by the faculty (i.e., student should provide syllabus for review in advance).

Q: What is the funding amount for the thesis grant funding offered by the department?

A: As long as we have funds available, DEA offers one-time thesis grant funding for 2nd year MA/MS students and PhD students in Fall and Spring.