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**PhD Student Handbook**

**2024 - 2025**

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**Cornell SC Johnson College of Business PhD Student Handbook**

This handbook provides an overview of the key policies and processes essential for successfully navigating and completing your PhD at Cornell University. The document is structured in two parts; the first outlines the general policies set by Cornell’s Graduate School, followed by more specific guidelines categorized by field.

As a PhD student in the SC Johnson College of Business, you are governed by the policies of the Graduate School. These policies establish the framework within which your academic progress and degree completion will occur. For detailed information, you can refer to the Graduate School website and the [Code of Legislation](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/code-of-legislation/), which outlines the rules governing graduate education, as determined by the Cornell University graduate faculty.

* [Graduate School Website](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/)
* [Graduate School Code of Legislation](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/code-of-legislation/)
* [Graduate Student Assistantships Policy](https://policy.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/vol1_3.pdf)
* [Vacation Time for Assistantships](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/vacation-time-for-assistantships/#:~:text=Graduate%20students%20appointed%20on%20any,August%2021%2DAugust%2020).)
* [Graduate School News and Events Newsletter](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/about/publications-and-reports/news-and-events/)
* [Graduate School Staff Directory](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/about/staff-directory/)

# **Overview and Timeline**

Refer to the area policy documentation for details about the timing of required qualifying exams and research papers.

## **Prior to Arrival**

* Complete the [New Student To Do List](https://todo.newstudents.cornell.edu/fall-2024/graduate-professional/todolist/) sent by the university, which includes getting your NetID, housing recommendations, meal plans, ID cards, and more.
* Students whose first language is not English should take a language assessment through the [International Teaching Assistant Program](https://teaching.cornell.edu/graduate-students/ITAP) (ITAP). If necessary, they should also participate in a summer program, including the ALS 5780 course, during their first semester. This will help improve English language proficiency. The ITAP program will contact international students directly with this information the summer before their first semester.
* Attend the Graduate School Dean’s Welcome event before the start of classes. There are several other orientation opportunities listed on the [Graduate School's website](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/admitted-students/). The program and area of specialization will also hold field-specific orientations to help students learn more about the college and field requirements.
* Enroll in courses for the first semester when open enrollment starts in early August. The area faculty and Director of Graduate Studies can help you navigate course selection. More information on courses and timelines can be found on the [Academic Calendar](https://registrar.cornell.edu/academic-calendar) and [Class Roster](https://classes.cornell.edu/browse/roster/FA23).

## **Graduate School Milestones**

## **Year One**

* First Semester/Fall:
  + By the end of the third week of your first semester, select a temporary committee chair.
* Second Semester/Spring:
  + Complete the [Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)](https://researchservices.cornell.edu/compliance/rcr) training by the end of your second semester.
  + Complete the [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/).

## **Year Two**

* Third Semester/Fall:
  + Select your full [special committee](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/making-academic-progress/nominating-your-special-committee/) by the end of the third semester.
* Fourth Semester/Spring:
  + Complete the [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/).

## **Year Three**

* Sixth Semester/Spring:
  + Complete the [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/).
  + Take your [A Exam](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/making-academic-progress/advancing-to-doctoral-candidacy/) before the start of the seventh semester. There must be two full semesters between defending your A Exam and B Exam.

## **Year Four**

* Eighth Semester/Spring:
  + Complete the [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/).

## **Year Five**

* Tenth Semester/Spring:
  + Complete the [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/).
  + After thoroughly reading through the thesis/dissertation [deadlines and requirements](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/thesis-dissertation/), schedule and take your [B Exam](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/making-academic-progress/defending-your-thesis-or-dissertation/).

# **Chair and Special Committee**

Each student is responsible for putting together a special committee. This committee is composed of a faculty member from your major field who will serve as your chair, and additional members from any field or discipline in the university provided they are a member of the graduate faculty. Doctoral candidates must have one faculty member representing their major subject and two minor members, each representing one of their minor subjects.

A committee chair represents a student’s major subject and provides the student oversight necessary to conduct research.

Committee chairs typically:

* Supervise a student’s dissertation work
* Meet regularly with the student to ensure research is on track
* Suggest courses, conferences, software, faculty, etc. that are appropriate to a student’s area of interest
* Are present at A and B Exams
* Complete the Graduate School’s [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/)
* Track and provide necessary support to help the student complete their degree in a timely manner
* More information can be found on the [Graduate School's website](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/) and in the [Advising Guide for Research Students](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/advising-guide-for-research-students-2020/)

Students may nominate non-Cornell affiliates to serve as “ad hoc” members of the special committee. They serve in addition to the required members of the Cornell graduate faculty committee and are invited to participate in committee meetings as well as exam and thesis/dissertation defenses.

* The Ad Hoc Member Request form can be found on the Graduate School’s [forms page.](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms/)

Doctoral candidates must have a full special committee no later than the end of the third semester.

# **Course Enrollment**

The Graduate School imposes no specific course enrollment requirements, as these are decided by your program area and special committee. However, the Graduate School does require that students be enrolled full-time (12 credits). The Graduate School will enroll all PhD students and research master’s into a static 12 credits of GRAD 9XXX coursework each fall and spring but still allow students to self-enroll up to 18 credits of their own courses.

Each SC Johnson College of Business doctoral program has additional course requirements. Please refer to each field's course requirements as these vary by area of specialization.

# **Exams**

All members of the graduate faculty are notified of examinations and all are welcome to attend. Students are responsible for notifying the graduate field administrator at least two weeks in advance to reserve a room and send an announcement to graduate faculty. Students must submit a Schedule Exam Form for the A and B Exams to the Graduate School at least one week in advance. Otherwise, the exam results are not valid.

### **Qualifying Exam (Q Exam):** The Q Exam is an essential milestone in the PhD journey. These exams are administered through each field’s specific area of concentration and are designed to assess your foundational knowledge and readiness to advance in your research. Each concentration within the SC Johnson College of Business may have different formats, expectations, and timelines for the Q exams, so it is critical to consult with your faculty advisor for specific guidelines. Typically, the exams evaluate your grasp of key concepts, methodologies, and theories in your chosen field, ensuring you are well-prepared to engage in high-level research.

### **Advancing to Doctoral Candidacy (A Exam):** The A Exam is also known as the Examination for Admission to Candidacy. This oral exam may include a written component, as determined by your special committee. You can take the exam after completing two registered semesters in your program, but before beginning your seventh semester—unless special permission is obtained from the Dean.

### **Defense of Thesis/Dissertation (B Exam):** The B Exam is an oral defense of your thesis or dissertation. This exam can be taken after completing all degree requirements, but not earlier than one month before completing the minimum number of enrolled semesters. At least two semesters of successful registration must be completed between the passing of the A exam and the scheduling of the B exam.

* Exam forms required for the Ph.D. degree include “[Schedule A Examination and Research Compliance Form](https://qafederation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://shibidp.cit.cornell.edu/idp/shibboleth&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2ff6782fe4-9e07-4a1a-af6d-6b2eb8182bd4),” “[Schedule B Examination](https://qafederation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://shibidp.cit.cornell.edu/idp/shibboleth&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f1087f68e-dca7-47eb-ada5-66ae19ed9004),” “[A Exam Results Form](https://qafederation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://shibidp.cit.cornell.edu/idp/shibboleth&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f7655f27d-868c-4edd-b29a-e94a6e8b44be),” and “[B Exam Results Form](https://qafederation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://shibidp.cit.cornell.edu/idp/shibboleth&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2fc1ec3a11-e9bf-49bb-815d-0aea5a353a5b).”

The outcome of the A and B exams is determined by a committee of faculty members. This committee is selected by the student in consultation with their academic advisor and may include subject matter experts relevant to the student's research. The exam committee reviews the student's performance based on a written exam, oral exam, or defense; and they collectively decide whether the student passes, conditionally passes, or fails.

* The results are often shared within three days of completing the exam. The outcome may be communicated verbally after the exam, followed by formal documentation.
* If revisions are required (especially for a dissertation or thesis), the committee will specify the necessary revisions. These might include additional research, rewriting sections, or addressing specific feedback. A timeline for completing the revisions is also provided.
* A conditional pass may be granted, where the student must meet a specific criteria such as revisions or additional work to fully pass.
* If the student does not meet conditions within the specified timeline, the exam result may revert to a failure, and the student may be required to retake the exam or withdrawn from the program.
* If a student fails the B Exam, they have the option to earn a terminal master's degree and if they have the necessary coursework and research requirements.

# **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training**

Every graduate student pursuing a research degree is required to complete [training](https://researchservices.cornell.edu/resources/rcr-training-online) on Responsible Conduct of Research, addressing issues of authorship, peer review, plagiarism, and research misconduct. Each student must complete online training through Cornell’s [Office of](https://www.oria.cornell.edu/rcr/index_edit.cfm) [Research Integrity and Assurance](https://www.oria.cornell.edu/rcr/index_edit.cfm) (ORIA) prior to the end of the second registered semester.

For more information, please visit the Graduate School’s [Responsible Conduct of Research](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/responsible-conduct-of-research/) webpage.

# **Petitions**

The Graduate School allows students to request exemptions from certain regulations when reasonable, and with appropriate justification, by submitting a petition form. Examples of what can be petitioned include more time to fulfill their committee, delay the A or B Exam, In Absentia, leave of absence, etc. If the field approves, the petition will go to the Graduate School for final approval.

# **Seminars and Workshops**

It is a field requirement that students attend relevant workshops and seminars in their respective areas. Many of the workshops and seminars are listed on the college’s [blog page](https://blogs.cornell.edu/workshops/).

# **In Absentia**

Research degree students who have successfully enrolled in two on-campus semesters may apply for In Absentia status to conduct approved research or study 100 miles or more away from the Cornell campus while still under guidance of the special committee.

To apply for In Absentia status, submit an [In Absentia Request](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms/)with a study plan approved by the special committee outlining how you will accomplish your degree requirements. Approval by the Graduate School is required. In Absentia students are charged $200 tuition per semester.

When students are in approved In Absentia status, they are eligible for fellowships, assistantships (excluding Teaching Assistantships), the student health plan, and educational loans. The same limitations on employment apply for In Absentia students as for on-campus students; time away from campus is expected to focus on making academic progress.

For more information, visit the Graduate School’s [In Absentia](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/in-absentia/) webpage.

# **Student Progress Review**

The annual [Student Progress Review](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgradschool.cornell.edu%2Facademic-progress%2Frequirements%2Fstudent-progress-review%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cyz695%40cornell.edu%7C52b2b4702c2a4006907008dc2337f6ee%7C5d7e43661b9b45cf8e79b14b27df46e1%7C0%7C0%7C638423971758693120%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zh2RnGDp6xvcfCs2aKz2DlJR5E3NlI9U8i5qAALFuX4%3D&reserved=0) (SPR) is a required Graduate School milestone for PhD students, including those graduating. The SPR is an interactive process that supports the regular exchange of constructive, written feedback between advisees and advisors. Students on leave of absence are excluded from this requirement. The Graduate Field Coordinator will send an email with the SPR link and the student’s portion of the SPR will be due approximately February 15th each year. The Special Committee Chair’s portion will be due approximately March 30th each year.

### **SPR Process**

1. Meet with your advisor before completing the SPR.
2. Complete your portion of the SPR form.
3. Your Committee Chairperson enters written comments and evaluates student progress. You will be able to see their section after they submit it.

For more information, please see the Graduate School’s [Student Progress Review](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements-milestones/student-progress-review/) [webpage.](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/requirements/student-progress-review/)

# **Financial Support**

The SC Johnson College of Business offers financial assistance to help ensure adequate time and support for students to complete their degree. Students receive four full years of funding support, which includes tuition, insurance, and a stipend. The fifth year of funding is for an academic year (typically the fifth fall and spring semesters, no summer). Students are expected to dedicate their full time to completing their dissertation and finalizing their degree during this period.

Doctoral students on assistantships divide their time between assigned assistantship responsibilities and making progress toward their degrees. [Graduate assistantships](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/financial-support/assistantships/) may involve work responsibilities such as teaching, research, or administrative tasks. Graduate assistants receive compensation for this work in the form of a stipend so that they can pay their expenses while they pursue their doctorate.

Degree-focused time is dedicated to coursework, independent research, data collection, analysis, and writing. The time a doctoral student spends on their degree progress is not compensated. A doctoral student working toward their degree may dedicate the equivalent of full-time hours or more to their scholarship. This time isn’t compensated because it is spent earning a degree, not in service to the university.

To maintain good academic standing and ensure uninterrupted stipend payments, students must be present on campus during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Additionally, students are expected to adhere to expectations set by their area, program, and the university. The following requirements must be successfully completed within the timeframes specified in this handbook or as directed by the relevant departments of Cornell University.

* Maintaining a Minimum GPA of 3.0
* Required Coursework
* Research Projects
* Qualifying Exams
* Proposal of Defense

Students who are not on track to complete their degree requirements within five years are at serious risk of not being in good academic standing, which may lead to termination in funding or dismissal.

# **Research and Professional Funds (RPF)**

All PhD students in a graduate field affiliated with the SC Johnson College of Business are eligible to receive funds from the College, deposited into a Research and Professional Fund (RPF) account. PhD students may use these funds per the College policy described below to support their research and professional goals.

RPF allocations are made annually. The RPF allowable expenditure policy is founded on the understanding that PhD students need to be in good academic standing, need to be able to create budgets, and should spend the dollars available to them judiciously and in the interest of SC Johnson’s research mission. Typically, research-related expenditures permissible under University guidelines are allowable with RPF funds.

The policy currently applies to all PhD students in good academic standing in Years 2 through 5 of their respective programs.[[1]](#footnote-1) Whether a student is in good academic standing is determined by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in collaboration with the student’s advisor/committee members and/or a representative from the areas in which the student is specializing (e.g., Marketing, Finance, Energy, Environmental and Resource Economics, Real Estate).

PhD students may request a rollover with no cap on unexpended RPFs from previous years’ funding. RPF accounts cannot be overdrawn. PhD students who deplete their RPF in a fiscal year will need to identify other sources to fund their research or travel. Unexpended RPF funds at the end of Year 5 will continue to be available to the student for research or travel in subsequent years while the student is in the PhD program, though no new allocations are made. RPF allocations may be reduced if a Ph.D. student takes a leave of absence, even if they continue with their research and associated travels. PhD students are encouraged to consult with their DGS about their RPF balances before taking a leave.

Any equipment, devices, and software purchased with RPF funds remain the property of Cornell University and not the student. Goods and services, regardless of price and whenever possible, must be purchased through the University. Below is an abridged list of allowable and unallowable expenses.

**RPF funds can be used for the following:**

* Books.
* Academic journal submission fees and professional association membership dues.
* Individual or jointly held databases if not provided by the College or University.
* Licenses for software not provided by the University.
* Compensation or incentives paid to experimental subjects or survey respondents.
* Professional travel and related expenses (or per diem in accordance with University guidelines); consult Cornell University’s Travel Expenses Policy 3.2 for guidelines. Expenses for travel to association meetings for the job market can be included.
* For conference travel, students must apply for a conference grant through the Graduate School first. The Graduate School provides grants to students who are invited to present papers or posters at professional conferences. Students must be enrolled full-time in a graduate degree program with the Graduate School. Only one award will be considered during an academic year; more information can be found here: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/financial-support/travel-funding-opportunities/>
* Postage, including express mailing.
* Copying and printing.
* Other reasonable research-related expenses not explicitly mentioned; consult with the Office of the College Dean of Academic Affairs for guidance.

**RPF Funds Can NOT be used for:**

* Compensation (students cannot pay themselves).
* Items to equip a home office (equipment, technology purchases, furniture, etc.).
* Cell phones, data plans, home internet.
* Tuition payments to a school in which a student is enrolled as a degree-seeking student.
* Charitable donations.
* Club memberships.

# **Teaching Opportunities**

PhD students interested in teaching opportunities should contact their advisor to inquire about available courses. Teaching opportunities are only allowable for students who are on time for degree completion and in good academic standing. Those who secure a teaching position will be appointed as Teaching Assistants for the given semester.

# **Leave of Absence**

Students may request a leave of absence for health, parental, or personal reasons. A leave pauses your student status, with the opportunity to return to your program at a set time. For more information, visit the Graduate School’s [Leave of Absence](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/leaves-of-absence/) webpage.

* For health reasons, medical or mental health, request a [health leave,](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/health-leave/) available for up to a maximum of four years.
* Leave of absence may be requested for personal reasons other than health and parental accommodations for up to 12 months and renewable for a maximum of four years.
* Students on a leave of absence are not eligible to receive financial aid or funding while away.
* Maternity and paternity accommodations ([parental accommodation](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/policies/maternity-and-paternity-options-parental-accommodation/)), although not technically a leave, offers six weeks of paid accommodation (eight weeks for the birth mother for a cesarean section delivery), or up to two semesters of reduced load status depending on circumstances. To initiate the parental accommodation, complete and return the [Parental Accommodation Request form](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms/).

International students considering a leave of absence should consult with an immigration advisor from International Services before initiating the process. It is essential to fully understand how a leave of absence may impact your student status, visa eligibility, and future enrollment. Advisors can help ensure that you remain in compliance with immigration regulations and provide guidance on any necessary steps to maintain your visa status.

# **Academic Probation and Withdrawal**

Assistantships are contingent upon maintaining good academic standing and may be withdrawn if expectations are not met. Students who do not make satisfactory progress may receive a warning or be placed on probation. If there is no improvement within the timeframe outlined by their advisor or the DGS, students on warning or probation may be withdrawn from the program.

# **Career Support**

The Graduate School offers a wealth of information and programming to assist students in preparing for their futures in academia.

* [Pathways to Success](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/)**:** The Graduate School’s holistic professional development framework, with [programming](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/events/) organized into the following thematic focus areas: [Navigate Academia](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/navigate-academia/), [Build Your Skills,](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/build-your-skills/) [Create Your Plan,](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/create-your-plan/) and [Prepare for Your Career](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/prepare-for-your-career/).
* [Career Guide](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/prepare-for-your-career/)**:**These web pages provide a step-by-step guide with detailed information about how to prepare for your future career.
* [Careers Beyond Academia](https://gradcareers.cornell.edu/): Careers Beyond Academia gives Ph.D. students and postdocs the chance to test-drive specific aspects of various careers through flexible, experiential, and empowering opportunities.
* [Cornell Career Services for Graduate Students](https://scl.cornell.edu/get-involved/career-services/audiences/students/graduate-student-support): Career services for graduate and professional students are provided by a network of offices and resources across campus and online. Cornell Career Services, located in Barnes Hall, serves students from across the university.
* [Future Faculty and Academic Careers](https://futurefaculty.cornell.edu/)**:**Future Faculty and Academic Careers provides in-person and online professional development and networking opportunities for graduate students and postdocs aspiring to careers in higher education.

# **Desk Space**

Students are provided access to office spaces in the SC Johnson College of Business buildings.

Assignments are conducted each year at each field's discretion.

# **Resources**

* [Cornell SC Johnson College of Business PhD LaunchPad](https://phdlaunchpad.business.cornell.edu/)
* [Academic Calendar/ Course Roster](https://registrar.cornell.edu/academic-calendar)
* [Bursar](https://bursar.cornell.edu/)
* [Canvas](https://login.canvas.cornell.edu/)
* [Center for Teaching Innovation](https://teaching.cornell.edu/)
* [Global Learning/International Services](https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/)
* [University Library](https://www.library.cornell.edu/)
* [Workday](https://hr.cornell.edu/)
* [Cornell Center for Social Sciences (CCSS)](https://socialsciences.cornell.edu/)

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# **Graduate Field of Applied Economics and Management**

Director of Graduate Studies – Ivan Rudik

Graduate Field Administrator – Yiyi Grazul

Graduate Field Funding Coordinator – Jen Williams

**Areas of Specialization**

**Environmental, Energy and Resource Economics (EERE)**

Discover how the economy and the environment interconnect. This concentration covers a wide range of existing and emerging environmental issues. EERE students gain environmental economics experience through our partnerships with the [Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future](https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/) and the [Cornell Institute for China Economic Research](http://china.dyson.cornell.edu/). Faculty expertise in the environmental, energy, and resource economics PhD concentration area include:

* Climate change
* Air and water quality
* Policy evaluation
* Transportation
* Renewable and nonrenewable energy

**Food and Agricultural Economics (FAE)**

Explore every aspect of the food chain, from farm to market to consumer. Not only will you get to work with experts at the Dyson School, but with our connection to [Cornell’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS)](https://cals.cornell.edu/), [Cornell Cooperative Extension](https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension), and the [Food Industry Management Program (FIMP)](https://dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/fimp/), you have unparalleled access to a broad range of experts, including natural scientists, farmers, and food retailers. Faculty expertise in the food and agricultural economics PhD concentration area include:

* Agricultural finance
* Behavioral economics
* Food retailing and marketing
* Farm management

**International and Development Economics (IDE)**

Find solutions to market challenges around the world. This concentration will expand your knowledge of pressing societal issues, including poverty, public health, and agriculture. Teaching and research opportunities for IDE students include the [Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition](https://tci.cornell.edu/), the [Emerging Markets Institute](https://www.johnson.cornell.edu/emerging-markets-institute/), and the [Einaudi Center for International Studies](https://einaudi.cornell.edu/). Faculty expertise in the international and development economics PhD concentration area include:

* Poverty and inequity
* Nutrition and urbanization
* Public works programs
* Resilience measurement
* Labor market

**Management**

Dive into the science of management in industries of all kinds. Concentrating in management gives you flexibility in building your academic plan, including hundreds of electives and endless possibilities for dissertation research topics. Our faculty members have an incredible range of scholarly and professional experience, and our management concentration highlights three core areas:

* Real Estate Economics (REE)
* Strategy and Business Economics (SBE)
* Finance

**Degree Requirements**

To earn the AEM Ph.D. degree, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

* Complete all core classes (AEM 7020, AEM 7021, and AEM 7100) with a grade of A- or better, or pass an equivalent qualifying examination
* Successfully complete the coursework required by the area of concentration in their program of study
* Pass the Applied Economics and Management Qualifying Exam (Q Exam)
* Pass the Comprehensive Admission of Candidacy Examination (A Exam)
* Pass the final examination (B Exam) defending the dissertation with the Special Committee

**Course Enrollment**

The goals of the coursework are to provide students with both breadth across a wide range of AEM and depth in a particular specialization within AEM.

**First-Year Required Courses**

* Fall Semester
  + ECON 6090 Microeconomics Theory
  + ECON 6170 Intermediate Mathematical Economics I
  + ECON 6190 Econometrics I
  + ECON 6130 Macroeconomics I
* Spring Semester
  + AEM 7020 Applied Microeconomics I: Game Theory
  + AEM 7021 Applied Microeconomics II: General Equilibrium
  + AEM 7100 Econometrics I
  + AEM 7010 Research Skills

In addition to the first-year PhD required courses, students need to take courses required by their area of concentration as outlined below:

**Area Required Courses**

* Food and Agriculture Economics (FAE)
  + AEM 6515 Food and Agricultural Economics I
  + AEM 7515 Food and Agriculture Economics II
* Environmental, Energy, and Resource Economics (EERE)
  + AEM 7500 Resource Economics
  + AEM 7510 Environmental Economics
* International and Development Economics (IDE)
  + AEM 7620 Microeconomics of International Development
  + AEM 7621 Microeconomics of International Development II
* Management (MGMT)
  + Students would follow the requirements of their specific sub-concentration in conjunction with our agreement with the field of management.

**Exams**

**Qualifying Exam (Q Exam)**

In addition to the A Exam and B Exam, students are required to take a Qualifying Exam (Q Exam) during the summer of their first year. This exam assesses their foundational knowledge and readiness to advance in the program. It is a written exam where you are expected to answer a question(s) of the professor's choosing for each component. Students are given two hours to complete each subject of the test.

* AEM 7020 - Applied Microeconomics II: Game Theory
* AEM 7021 - Applied Microeconomics II: Applied General Equilibrium Analysis
* AEM 7100 – Econometrics I

PhD students receiving an A- or better in each of the required AEM Core classes (AEM 7020, AEM 7021, and AEM 7100) will not be required to take the Q exam.

Those who do not obtain an A- or better in one or more of the courses in this sequence can qualify by taking a Q Exam designed to test only those failed courses in June of their first year. This exam will be considered a second attempt and no further exams will be offered.

The course instructor determines the exam outcome, which will be communicated to students through Cornell Secure File Transfer within one week of the exam. Each subject will be graded as either Pass or Fail, with no option for a conditional pass. Students must pass all three subjects to successfully complete the exam.

* PASS – the student will have demonstrated the necessary ability and aptitude to continue in the AEM Ph.D. Program.
* FAIL - the student has not demonstrated the necessary ability to continue in the AEM Ph.D. program effectively. The student will be instructed to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and their Committee Chair to discuss the proper course of action. The student will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program; however, the student may earn a master’s degree if the Director of Graduate Studies and their Committee Chair approve the request. The student still needs to complete their Master’s thesis and M Exam.

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# **Graduate Field of Hotel Administration**

Director of Graduate Studies – Robert Kwortnik

Graduate Field Administrator – Calyn Fisher

Graduate Field Funding Coordinator – Jen Williams

**Areas of Specialization**

* Financial Management
* Food and Beverage Management
* Hospitality Management
* Hotel Accounting
* Hotel Administration
* Human Resource Management
* Marketing
* Properties Asset Management (minor)
* Real Estate Management (minor)

**Courses**

In addition to the GRAD research course, students should enroll in field-specific research course offerings with their faculty during the Add period. PhD students are also encouraged to enroll in the HADM 9981 Seminar in Service Management Research Seminar, a 1.5 credit course where Services Management faculty teach one or more sessions that will feature their hospitality research.

The Nolan School requires that PhD students complete a minimum of 16 total classes, including any course requirements that their committee has determined appropriate; four classes per semester for two years, five of which must be research-based.

* Four (one per semester) HADM 6699 Graduate Independent Research classes may be taken if a suitable content course is not offered at the university in any given semester. To do so, the student and chair must submit a one-page proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies outlining the course content and deliverables for the independent study in advance of enrolling for the course.
* HADM 9900 PhD Thesis Research courses can be taken following successful completion of A Exams.

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# **Graduate Field of Management**

Director of Graduate Studies – Kaitlin Woolley

Graduate Field Administrator – Calyn Fisher

Graduate Field Funding Coordinator – Jen Williams

**Areas of Specialization**

**Accounting** research examines the role of accounting information in firms and financial markets. The majority of accounting research at Cornell and peer institutions focuses on how firms report information to investors; how investors process that information; how information affects stock prices and trading volume; the uses of accounting information in managing firms and compensating employees; and the nature of the auditing process. Accounting faculty and doctoral students at Johnson are actively involved in both the Parker Center and the Business Simulation Laboratory.

[Refer to the Accounting Area PhD Program Guidelines](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1539404332331)

**Finance** focuses on the financial structure and problems of corporations, on the manner in which financial securities are priced, and on the organization and operation of markets and financial institutions. As a scholar in finance, you might examine how conflict of interest affects corporate financial policies; how competitive the NASDAQ trading system is; how to detect price bubbles; or how investor psychology affects asset prices in a systematic way. Our finance faculty offers strong support for such explorations of market microstructure, corporate finance, asset pricing, and international finance. The finance faculty has broad interests, and students can develop analytic or empirical interests under their guidance.

[Refer to the Finance Area PhD Program Guidelines](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1129856933785)

**Management and Organizations (M&O)** offers a broad-based program of study for students interested in research careers. Faculty research interests are wide and varied and include topics such as diversity in organizations, creativity in teams, organizational leadership, status and power in teams and organizations, individual and collective decision making, negotiation and conflict management, industry evolution, organizational culture, entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and corporate environmental policy. Doctoral training involves close collaboration with faculty members on shared research interests, coursework in Johnson and across Cornell’s campus, and independent research activities.

[Refer to the Management and Organizations Area Qualifying Exam Guidelines](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1129847583110)

**Marketing** adapts the analytical and behavioral theories commonly used in economics, psychology, sociology, and operations research and applies them to marketing problems. Potential areas of study range from analysis and modeling of consumer behavior to research in the decision-making processes of marketing organizations.

Refer to the Marketing Area’s [Required Courses](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1439396728434),[Qualifying Exam](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1129856373658) and [Student Paper and Presentation](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1433514320647) Guidelines.

**Operations, Technology, and Information Management (OTIM)** emphasizes data-driven, behavioral, and mathematical methods of analysis to address high-impact managerial decision problems. Johnson OTIM faculty have deep expertise in a wide range of application areas, such as global supply chains, retail networks, online marketplaces, healthcare providers, e-commerce operations, sustainability, hospitality operations, and information systems, as well as in conducting practice-based and inter-disciplinary research that is published in top-tier journals.

[Refer to the Operation, Technology, and Information Management Area’s Guidelines](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1129859177194)

**Strategy and Business Economics** **(SBE)** at Johnson seeks to better understand the real world by using modern tools and methodologies. Research encompasses industrial organization, behavioral, labor, and organizational economics. Within these fields, there is a particular—although by no means exclusive—emphasis on applied theory. PhD students in economics at Johnson are fully part of the broader economics community at Cornell. For example, students take the majority of their coursework in Cornell’s Arts and Sciences economics department and also receive the complete support and benefits of that department when seeking employment upon graduation. At the same time, by being part of a business school, students are exposed to research and teaching that is motivated by applied issues that are relevant to business schools as well as economics departments and industry.

[Refer to the Field of Economics Student Handbook](https://cornell.app.box.com/folder/185395265474)

**Committee Selection**

Management PhD students are required to have a minimum of three graduate field faculty members on their committee. This can be structured as either a chair, representing the area of concentration, and two minor members, or a chair, a co-chair, and one minor member. At least one minor member must be from outside the student’s area of concentration. This member can be from another area within the Management field or from a completely different field but cannot be a faculty member cross-appointed to the student’s area (e.g., faculty affiliated with both Management and Economics or Applied Economics and Policy). Students may also choose to nominate more than three members to serve on their committee.

**Conference Coverage**

The Management PhD program will cover half the cost of one conference per year if the student is presenting at a conference listed on the[approved list](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/702547161714?s=y6rygh67tn7dtm2gxd5s6grz7xohbznu). Students must apply for the [Graduate School's Conference Grant](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/financial-support/travel-funding-opportunities/)before requesting funding from the department.

**Software**

The field offers financial support of up to $200 per year for each student to cover the cost of SAS and STATA software. All funding requests must be approved by the Graduate Field Funding Coordinator and the SC Johnson IT Purchases team at itpurchases@business.cornell.edu.

**Course Assistant Credit Requirement**

All Management PhD students are required to complete three credits of course assistant (CA) work before graduating. The CA work is for supporting tenure-track faculty teaching Johnson Graduate School of Management courses.

Refer to the [Management PhD Required Course Assistant Credits Guidelines](https://cornell.app.box.com/file/1446522470004).

1. Hotel Administration PhD Students admitted before Fall 2024 are allocated $4,000 to use over the duration of the program. All expenses must be approved by the student's advisor before making purchases. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)