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Note: The modules offered and their timing are conditional upon the availability of faculty and may be subject to change.

Business Economics PhD pathway: Course outline

The Business Economics PhD pathway at Cambridge Judge Business School is designed to prepare you for a research career at the interface between economics, business and policy. The programme's primary aim is to develop your capabilities and support you in making original contributions of lasting academic value.

The Business Economics PhD pathway runs over a period of 4 to 5 years and includes a **foundation year when you will be registered as an MRes student, followed by 4 years as a PhD student.**

In rare cases, you may be registered directly for the PhD if you have taken the MPhil in Economic Research at Cambridge and your research interests are exceptionally suitable.

The primary component of the PhD will be the successful completion and presentation of your dissertation. This entails a significant and substantial original research programme. Students generally approach this through a number of supervised research projects that are connected by a common theme.

Students admitted to the MRes foundation year will have received substantial economics training through a strong research masters degree with significant economics content. During the PhD, we expect you to expand your field knowledge and methods skills by taking relevant courses offered by the school and by cognate departments of the University.

Prerequisite: a masters degree in economics

A good example for a masters programme we expect you to have completed before you enter our MRes foundation year, is the MPhil in Economic Research offered by the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Economics. Some details of this programme can be found on [the University's Postgraduate Admissions website](#). We expect your references to indicate that you will achieve $\geq 70\%$ in the MPhil Economics Research.

We expect your completed masters programme to have included a thorough study of core areas of economics, including econometric methods, microeconomics and macroeconomics. We generally expect such a programme to have a dissertation component. A conditional offer will request marks equivalent to an average of at least 70% in the MPhil in Economic Research offered by the University of Cambridge.

Should you be in any doubt about your eligibility to apply to the Business Economics PhD pathway and need advice, you could contact the MRes administrator via email at research-programmes@jbs.cam.ac.uk.

Foundation year: research masters degree

During your foundation year you will be registered for an MRes (Master of Research) degree. (in exceptional cases, students are admitted directly to the PhD from the MPhil in Economic Research).

Coursework

In your foundation year you will complete your individually tailored coursework requirements (5 modules), which will be communicated to you in your PhD continuation acceptance letter.

The design of this programme will consider any gaps in your training from the point of view of preparing for an academic career at the interface between economics, business and policy. Your courses will consist of electives relevant to your research as well as further methods training.

You will also write a dissertation under the close supervision of a faculty member. The dissertation has a maximum length of 16,000 words and counts for 50% of the overall assessment for the year. A good MRes dissertation will demonstrate a developing aptitude for the formulation of sharp research questions, the critical assessment of relevant academic literature and the appropriate choice and application of research methods. We will expect you to expand on and refine your MRes dissertation as part of your first-year report during the first year of your PhD programme.

We will agree on the broad theme of your dissertation as well as your dissertation supervisor before you start your MRes year. You will be required to submit a dissertation proposal before the final admission decision is taken. You will then work with your supervisor to fine-tune your proposal further after you are admitted to the programme. This means that you can start working on your dissertation from the very beginning of your MRes year.

PhD continuation requirements

You will proceed to PhD registration without any further application processes, if you achieve a mark of 70% in your dissertation and 70% overall average in your MRes year.

First year of the PhD

During the first year of your PhD you will complete any additional coursework requirements that are stipulated and develop a convincing research proposal and execution plan for the PhD. A senior faculty member (your principal supervisor) will work with you on the development of your PhD research programme throughout the year.

First year report

You will work with your faculty supervisor to produce a research report. This report can take one of 2 forms:

- a working paper on a specific research question; this working paper will normally be expanded to become your first PhD paper
- an extended research proposal on the broader theme that you wish to address in your PhD research, including a thorough literature review and a clear plan for the execution of a first research paper during the second PhD year

Your first year report should provide evidence of your potential to complete the PhD programme successfully. It must demonstrate that you are able to formulate sharp research questions, summarise relevant academic debates, critically assess the extant literature and apply appropriate research methodology.

Second year continuation requirements

To proceed to the second year of your PhD you must gain a mark of 70% or over in your first year report and pass all required courses (achieving at least 60%).

While we will continue to monitor your progress closely after the first year of the PhD, there will be no further formal continuation assessment until the final PhD thesis examination. The following are indicative work programmes for the subsequent years in the PhD programme.

Second year of the PhD

In the second year, the focus will be on producing your first research paper. Many students generally 'learn on the job' by working in close collaboration with faculty members, resulting in a co-authored paper. You will get useful feedback by presenting your work in progress to the subject group, at a research lunch, and at the Cambridge Judge Business School doctoral conference.

Third year of the PhD

The focus in your third year will be on completing your first paper and beginning work on your second paper. You may continue to work with your faculty co-author or another co-author or choose to work on your second paper independently. You can expect your advisors to play a significant role in helping shape the idea for this paper, but you will be expected to take the lead in producing it. As you will enter the job market in the following year, this could potentially be your job market paper. You will be encouraged to submit this paper for presentation at a top academic conference. In parallel with the development of this second paper, you will be busy with the revision of your first paper and with presenting it at seminars and conferences.

We will encourage you to spend part of your third or fourth year as a visitor in a suitable academic department of another top university. This will help you build closer ties with potential collaborators and the global research community in your area.

Fourth year of the PhD

The fourth year is your job market year. You will be expected to present your papers at top international job market conferences and continue to revise and polish them with a view to submitting it for publication in a high-quality journal. You will submit your PhD thesis during your fourth year.

Optional further year of study (postdoc)

Research with high potential carries risks in that it is necessary to explore issues that are original. In general, research does not unfold exactly as planned, and your work may require substantial revision. We encourage students to be aspirational and we will work with you to manage these risks.

Many influential research projects take longer than anticipated. To strengthen the portfolio of research papers before applying for junior faculty positions we sometimes recommend that a student spends an additional year at Cambridge Judge Business School (and possibly another university) to work on paper revisions with faculty before entering the job market formally.

An optional further year at Cambridge Judge Business School would be typically funded by:

- a Cambridge Judge Business School post-doctoral grant (2 grants available by competition each year)
- paid teaching opportunities, which further strengthen a student's job market prospects