

Guidelines for Distinction in Economics

These guidelines for distinction reflect the department's desire to promote excellent scholarly work. Students who choose the project option are also given the opportunity to explore a topic of particular interest to them. The Economics Department awards distinction only to senior majors.

Students with an overall GPA of 3.3 and a GPA of 3.4 in the major by the end of first semester junior year will be invited by the Chair to try for distinction. In the major, a grade of S will count as a C-. The student must also have finished the core (Macro, Micro and Statistics) by the end of the fall semester junior year, or be registered for the remaining core courses during the spring semester.

There are two ways to achieve distinction: 1) completing an outstanding academic project, or 2) writing three "A" papers related to economics or management studies.

Outstanding Academic Project

1. The primary way to receive distinction is to complete an outstanding academic project related to economics or management studies. The faculty advisor for the project and two other faculty members (chosen by the student prior to starting the project) will decide if the project qualifies for distinction. The vote must be unanimous. A student who is denied distinction may appeal the ruling to the full faculty of the Department. At the start of the semester, the student will present the project idea to this evaluation committee of three faculty.
2. A project may take a number of different forms including testing a hypothesis, answering a question, solving a problem, or proposing and defending a policy. All projects must demonstrate familiarity with important scholarship relating to the topic, apply appropriate concepts and theories from economics or management studies, show evidence of sound analysis, and draw appropriate conclusions.
3. The student should register for Econ/MS 398 (Independent Research) during either semester of his or her senior year and complete the distinction project by the end of the course. This means that the student will receive one course credit for an acceptable project regardless of whether the project is awarded distinction or not. The project may build on work done for another class or a student may explore a new topic.
4. If granted, distinction will be noted on the student's transcript at graduation. If the student wants distinction to be listed in the Commencement Program, the project must be completed by April 15 in order to meet the deadline for printing the program.
5. Up to two students may work together on a distinction project. The project must be significantly larger in scope than a single-person project. Each person must provide a written summary of his or her contribution to the project and the ways that his or her contribution helped to make the project distinct. Each person must also meet the qualifications for GPA.

Three "A" Papers

1. The three papers must be related to economics or management studies and be at least 1,500 words in length. At least two of the papers must be from Level III courses in the department and at least one of these must be an Economic Analysis course.
2. All three papers must have received a grade of A (A- is not acceptable).
3. A panel of three faculty members from the Economics Department will review papers not written for a course within the department.
4. The student must provide two clean copies of each of the three completed papers clearly indicating the course and instructor.
5. If granted, distinction will be noted on the student's transcript at graduation. If the student wants distinction to be listed in the Commencement Program, the three papers must be completed by April 15 in order to meet the deadline for printing the program.

