

Postgraduate Brochure: MCom and MPhil Programs

Department of Economics

University of Pretoria

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1 University of Pretoria Department of Economics

The department is a leader in Africa and South Africa, because of the conviction of its academic staff to a central tenet of economics: properly developed, understood and applied, economics offers insights into society and policy evidence that would not otherwise be available.

It is because of that belief that we present rigorous postgraduate programmes and place very high expectations on our students. Those standards have yielded results. The Economic Society of South Africa Founders Medal in Economics has been awarded to at least one Honours, Masters or PhD student in the department for each of the last five years. For the past decade or more, the Department of Economics has been ranked as one of the top two departments of economics in the country. More recently, it has been ranked amongst the top 6% in the world. Despite being a relatively small department, we consistently punch above our weight. Our academic staff members represent a wide swathe of the world. Many of them have been trained overseas, or otherwise developed research collaborations in the north and the south.

Academic staff in our department come from a variety of countries around the world, including: Germany, India, Italy, Mauritius, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the United States, Zimbabwe, and, of course, South Africa. Students from nearly every country south of the Sahara have earned degrees in the department, while students from around the world have undertaken exchange programs, and spent time in the department.

Former students have taken up employment in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and many other countries. They have roles in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as well as their country's central bank or ministry of finance, amongst others. Locally, our students enjoy prominent roles in both National Treasury and the South African Reserve Bank. Our students are also employed in all of the top banks and consulting companies in the country; a number of them have begun to take on leading roles in many of those places.

Students also decide to continue their studies, elsewhere. Currently, recent graduates are furthering their studies in New York and Japan, while previous students have completed degrees in Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The department, through its engagement with researchers in Canada, the United Kingdom and the rest of Africa, initiated the African Econometric Society. That society is now fully incorporated into the [Econometric Society](#), which is the premier society for advancing economic and econometric theory.

The department hosts two Web of Science Journals, the *South African Journal of Economics* and the *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*. The managing editor of the former is in the department, while the current managing editor of the latter is at Northwest University. Researchers in the department also sit on editorial boards of journals that lead their respective fields. We have also been widely represented in leadership positions in learned societies, including presidencies and committee memberships in the African Econometric Society and the Economic Society of South Africa. Academic staff in the department have also been tasked to participate in the Econometric Society Africa Region Standing Committee and to direct the African Finance and Economics Association.

The department is widely engaged in the policy environment. The South African Reserve Bank hosts the Chair in Monetary Economics, while supporting a new cadre of research through student fellowships. Researchers in the department have worked with National Treasury, the Competition Commission, the Department of Energy, the Department of Health and many Provincial and African treasuries, central banks and departments.

2 Master's Programs

The department offers three master's qualifications, the [MCom Economics](#), [MCom Econometrics](#) and [MPhil Economics](#) degrees. Each of the degrees has core modules and allows for electives; yes, it is possible to take electives from another department. Each of the degrees serves a slightly different purpose. The philosophy degree is in place primarily to prepare future researchers to pursue a PhD, although individuals employed in research positions, say in National Treasury or the South African Reserve Bank, will also find this degree to be beneficial. The commerce degree has the broader community of economists in mind. Although it remains essential that an economist can speak appropriately about economic issues and economic statistics (being in a position to interpret the academic research, when needed, for example), and, therefore, the commerce degree contains the requisite economic theory and econometrics, the degree is designed for someone less likely to be working in a research environment.

2.1 Masters Administration

The Masters degrees offered by the department must be completed within two years. Each degree requires a series of courses, and these include the mini-dissertation. Each student is responsible for completing the required coursework in a timely fashion, and for interacting regularly with their instructors and supervisor(s). The department agrees to provide instructors for the courses it offers in any year, as well as a supervisor. However, the department does not guarantee that each topic a student might want to investigate will, in the end, be acceptable to supervisors. Topics will be suggested by the faculty in Research Methodology (EKT/EKN 895) and students choose between those topics (maximum of 2 students per supervisor). In other words, the final topic of the mini-dissertation will be from the "Topics list" and any deviation must be agreed between the supervisor and student. If there are disagreements in this regard, the department postgraduate committee should be consulted.

The department, through the supervisor, offers timeous interaction and feedback, as the student progresses on the mini-dissertation. Unless otherwise agreed between the supervisor and student, feedback from the supervisor should be received within two weeks, while students should also agree to provide proper updates related to progress on a fortnightly basis. Any student in need of help locating a supervisor should contact the PG committee, through the PG administrator. In emergencies, the student may contact the Head of Department, directly.

Each of these degrees requires a mini-dissertation. Each mini-dissertation mark is subject to inspection by an external examiner. Therefore, the internal marks might be adjusted by the external examiner. If the external examiner suggests an adjustment, and the suggestion is minor (no more than 10 marks, either way), the internal and external marks will be averaged. If, however, the external examiner suggests a larger change, that will need to be more carefully deliberated between the internal examiner, external examiner and department PG committee.

The University of Pretoria and its Economics Department takes plagiarism very seriously. With this in mind, we submit each thesis to Turnitin and use the report to assess the originality of the work. Reports that appear to be problematic will be submitted to the HOD for further review and possible disciplinary action.

Please note the following points, and help us help you through your degree.

1. Communicating with the PG committee should go through the department PG administrator. That is Ms Sindi Magwaza, and she can be reached via sindi.magwaza@up.ac.za.
2. Each student must complete the modules required for the degree.
 - a. The information is provided below for each degree.
 - b. In the event of questions, the student can contact the PG administrator.
3. Each Masters student needs to be assigned a supervisor.
 - a. UP regulations require that to be done by the HOD.
 - b. Academic researchers will provide the department with research topics that will be discussed in EKT/EKN 895.
 - i. We would like students to have a supervisor by the end of their first semester, if not sooner.
 - ii. Students often wonder about topics, or how to approach a potential supervisor.

- We recommend that the student take a look at what our academic staff do, in terms of research.
 - It can be found on the department website's [academic staff page](#); the address is <https://www.up.ac.za/economics/article/39728/staff>.
 - Undertaking a google scholar search of the different academic staff members might also be helpful in understanding their body of research.
- iii. Students should try to approach researchers, who have some experience with the topic that interests them.
 - iv. If no one is working on what you want to research, we might not be in a position to supervise you.
 - It is possible to appoint outside researchers, but not recommended in most cases.
 - It is also possible that your interests are close enough to be supervised internally, and, therefore, it is best to discuss your interests with members of the academic staff.
 - c. Each student is asked to submit a one-page proposal and research ethics clearance form to the department PG Committee. We will use the same one as the PhD students, please see the [UP website](#). The actual page is <http://www.up.ac.za/ems-docs>.
 - d. *Note:* If you plan to use human subjects, and your research protocol has not received ethics approval, your research cannot be used for the mini-dissertation. In other words, you will be required to destroy any data and start over.
4. Research Methods (EKN/EKT 895) is an integral part of the research process and is mandatory for all 1st year Master's students otherwise you can not advance to 2nd year or graduate.
 - a. Thus, when a student registers for EKN 895 or EKT 895, they will be part of a click-up module that is managed within the department and provides valuable information for our students.
 - b. All topics will be distributed in the first semester of the course.
 5. Each mini-dissertation must be examined, and that examination is subject to external validation.
 - a. The department will manage these steps.
 - b. However, the student is to submit their thesis at the proper time listed on EKT/EKN 895 ClickUp page. The submission will also be through the ClickUp page.
 - c. Timing
 - i. Given that a student can be enrolled for two years, at most, the student has three opportunities to graduate (April following year 1, September of year 2 and April following year 2). The administrative activities around graduation, however, require submission well before that.
 - ii. To graduate in April of 2024, marks must be submitted to the faculty by the middle of February. Thus, we require the final (supervisor approved) mini-dissertation to be submitted to the PG committee no later than **January 14, 2024**. Keep in mind that Christmas and New Year holidays do eat into the available time for examination, which is why the date is so far in advance.
 - iii. To graduate in September of 2024, marks must be submitted to the faculty by the middle of July. Therefore, we require the final (supervisor approved) mini-dissertation to be submitted to the PG committee no later than **June 12, 2024**.
 - iv. To graduate in April of 2025, marks must be submitted to the faculty by the middle of February. Thus, we require the final (supervisor approved) mini-dissertation to be submitted to the PG committee no later than **January 14, 2025**. Keep in mind that Christmas and New Year holidays do eat into the available time for examination, which is why the date is so far in advance.
 - v. In the event that the supervisor does not approve of the thesis, the candidate has the right to appeal that decision to the PG committee of the department. The committee will endeavour to have committee meetings on the day of submission or just before, to deal with such cases.
 - vi. If one of the above deadlines is missed, a student will not be able graduate when they would like to.

2.2 Sick Tests, Exams and Chancellor's Exams

The Masters Economics and Econometrics course does not offer sick tests, supplementary exams or chancellor's exams.

1. Should a student miss a test for a legitimate reason (as defined in the faculty guidelines), the exam for the relevant module will be reweighted to account for this.
2. Should a student miss an exam for a legitimate reason, a sick exam will be scheduled exactly three days after the original exam, and the form of that exam, e.g., oral exam, is up to the discretion of the lecturer. No other sick exam times will be scheduled.
3. A student cannot complete the module without an exam mark.
4. Notifications, regarding illness or missing tests.¹
 - a. Notification must be at least three days before the test/exam, in the case of work related absences, in order for us to assess whether or not alternative arrangements can be made.
 - b. For an illness or other reason (again, see faculty guidelines), notice must be submitted the day of the test/exam. However, documentation must be submitted according to the faculty guidelines, which is within three days of the test/exam. Failure to do so, will result in a zero for the missed test/exam.

For a full-time student, each of the M degrees can be completed in one year. However, we have only had a few students, less than 3%, actually do this. A more realistic expectation is that the degree be completed in 18 months or two years, regardless of whether or not the student is full-time. According to university and faculty policy, and, therefore, department policy, an M degree must be completed in no more than two years. Furthermore, a student is not allowed to register for the same module more than twice! **M Students who fail a core module twice, as well as students who do not complete their degrees within two years, will be deregistered from the program. They will then need to appeal to the department and to the faculty to be allowed back onto the program. Such a student may be required to start their entire degree program from the beginning.**

Given the realities of the program, we would like to make two suggestions to the students.

1. Keep up with the material and continually do the work that is asked of you.
2. If you find yourself not being able to manage, be honest. **Seek help, immediately.**

2.3 MCom Economics

For more detail on the program, please, see the [UP website](https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07250055); the 2023 web address is <https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07250055>.

The MCom Economics degree incorporates three core modules, microeconomics and macroeconomics, as well as the economics research mini-dissertation. Please, see table 1 for all of the modules that exist on the books, as well as our plans for 2023 for delivering those modules.²

¹The department has the right to verify all documentation.

²Note that although we guarantee that core modules will be presented, we cannot guarantee that elective modules will be presented, even if they are listed. Note also that we may, yet, offer some of the other modules listed in the not offered rows. However, at this point, we are not able to commit to them.

Table 1: MCom Economics Module Outline
Core Modules

Code	Module Name	Credits	Semester
EKN 812	Microeconomics I	10	1
EKN 813	Macroeconomics I	10	1
EKN 895	Economics Mini-Dissertation	120	All semesters

Elective Modules

Code	Module Name	Credits	Semester
EKN 819	Computable General Equilibrium Modelling	10	1
EKN 825	Environmental Economics	10	2
EKN 865	Financial Economics	10	2
EKT 813	Quantitative Methods	10	2
EKT 814	Panel Data Econometrics	10	1
EKT 815	Cross Section Econometrics	10	2
EKT 816	Econometrics	10	2
EOG 880	Economic Development	10	2
OWE 880	Public Economics/Political Economy	10	2

Modules Not Offered

EKN 804	International Trade	10	
EKN 805	International Finance	10	
EKN 816	Monetary Economics	10	
EKN 821	Capita Selecta Economics	10	
EKN 864	Health Economics	10	

2.4 MCom Econometrics

For more detail on the program, please, see the [UP website](https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07250013); the 2023 web address is <https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07250013>.

The MCom Econometrics degree incorporates four core modules, microeconomics, macroeconomics, time series econometrics and the econometrics research mini-dissertation.³ Please, see table 2 for all of the modules that exist on the books, as well as our plans for 2023 for delivering those modules.⁴

³There appears to be a miscommunication on the UP website noted above. Below is correct, as it incorporates the requirement that at least two econometrics modules are completed, although we encourage three or more.

⁴Note that although we guarantee that core modules will be presented, we cannot guarantee that elective modules will be presented, even if they are listed. Note also that we may, yet, offer some of the other modules listed in the not offered rows. However, at this point, we are not able to commit to them.

Table 2: MCom Econometrics Module Outline
Core Modules

Code	Module Name	Credits	Semester
EKN 812	Microeconomics I	10	1
EKN 813	Macroeconomics I	10	1
EKT 813	Quantitative Methods ^a	10	1
EKT 816	Cross-Section Econometrics ^a	10	2
EKT 895	Economics Mini-Dissertation	120	All semesters

Additional Metrics Offerings

EKT 814	Panel Data Econometrics ^a	10	2
EKT 815	Time Series Econometrics ^a	10	2

Elective Modules

Code	Module Name	Credits	Semester
EKN 819	Computable General Equilibrium Modelling	10	1
EKN 825	Environmental Economics	10	2
EKN 865	Financial Economics	10	2
EOG 880	Economic Development	10	2
OWE 880	Public Economics/Political Economy	10	2

Modules Not Offered

EKN 804	International Trade	10	
EKN 805	International Finance	10	
EKN 816	Monetary Economics	10	
EKN 821	Capita Selecta Economics	10	
EKN 864	Health Economics	10	

^a Because of the quants module (EKT 813), there has been a slight change in offerings, compared to before 2020.

2.5 MPhil Economics

The MPhil is designed for students who plan to pursue a PhD. For more detail on the program, please, see the [UP website](https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07255171); the 2023 web address is <https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2023/EMS-faculty/MA-programmes/view/07255171>.

Given its focus, the MPhil Economics degree incorporates two modules each in microeconomics and macroeconomics, as well as the core areas of econometrics: time series econometrics, cross-section econometrics and panel data econometrics. Furthermore, all students are required to complete the research mini-dissertation (for MPhil, it would be best if this was a PhD proposal). Furthermore, MPhil students are required to complete two of four more advanced modules in microeconomics, macroeconomics, political economy or econometrics.⁵ Please, see table 3 for all of the modules that exist on the books, as well as our plans for 2023 for delivering those modules.⁶

⁵There appears to be a miscommunication on the UP website noted above. Below is correct, as it incorporates the additional elective modules.

⁶Note that although we guarantee that core modules will be presented, we cannot guarantee that all elective modules will be presented, even if they are listed.

Table 3: MPhil Economics Module Outline
Core Modules

Code	Module Name	Credits	Semester
EKN 812	Microeconomics I	10	1
EKN 822	Microeconomics II	10	2
EKN 813	Macroeconomics I	10	1
EKN 823	Macroeconomics II	10	2
EKN 895	Economics Mini-Dissertation	120	All semesters
EKT 813	Quantitative Methods ^b	10	1
EKT 814	Panel Data Econometrics ^b	10	1
EKT 815	Time Series Econometrics ^b	10	1
EKT 816	Cross-Section Econometrics ^b	10	1
Elective Modules			
EKN 882	Microeconomics III ^c	10	1
EKN 883	Macroeconomics III ^d	10	1
EKN 884	Public Economics/Political Economy	10	2
EOG 880	Economic Development	10	2
EKT 885	Econometrics ^e	10	2
EKN 819	Computable General Equilibrium Modelling	10	1
EKN 825	Environmental Economics	10	2
EKN 865	Financial Economics	10	2

^b Because of the quants module (EKT 813), there has been a slight change in offerings, compared to before 2020. ^c This module is cross-listed with EKN 865. ^d This module is cross-listed with EKN 805. ^e This module is cross-listed with EKT 815.

3 Department Computer Lab

There is a computer lab in Tukkieurf, and if it is not being used for a module, it can and should be used by our students. PhD students have fairly unfettered access, while M students have access from 8-8 during the week, and honours students can use the lab during normal working hours. Note that weekend access, especially for non-PhD students is not easy to arrange, and, therefore, we encourage you to make use of the university's open labs, which should have most of the same software.

The software that is generally used in our modules is meant to be available in our lab. If one of your instructors is using something that is not available or that we cannot make available, please, let us know, as we will need to address it. Also, you should be aware that software in the lab can be purchased by the students; in the case of copy-left and open source software, e.g., R and L^AT_EX, students can download it from the relevant website (and there is no cost, other than data). The department does not disseminate copyrighted software to students, and students should not ask for such software to be given to them.

4 Postgraduate Economics Modules

4.1 Master's Modules

EKN 804 Evidence over the last fifty years has shown that trade remains the engine for growth and development across the world and for almost each individual country. This module comprises a thorough analysis of international trade with an emphasis on trade theory, growth and development. It exposes students to the critical issues that policymakers grapple with on a day-to-day basis (WTO issues) and extends the international trade theory to policy making. Furthermore, an understanding of the circumstances within which international trade policy is made in developing countries with particular reference to South Africa.

EKN 805 International finance focuses on a wide array of issues of concern, especially in relatively small open economies, where foreign trading has the potential to affect volatility in the local market, and that volatility can spill over into the home country economy. Many topics are related to monetary economics, e.g. the ability of a central bank to address the volatility, while others are related to financing trade in support of home country economic growth.

EKN 812 This is a course in (mostly classical) microeconomic theory. We will cover several of the tools economists use to model decisions by consumers and firms, as well as equilibrium in product and factor markets. Empirical applications will be emphasized.

EKN 813 The basic framework for this module will be infinitely-lived dynamic stochastic and non-stochastic macro models in both discrete and continuous time frames. Overlapping generation models will also be used to deal with certain topics. Topics include: The Lucas Critique, Growth models, Expectations, Business cycles, Basics of a new Keynesian business cycle model, Overlapping generations models.

EKN 816 This is a graduate course in econometrics. Students will learn some basic techniques that economists use to (try to) establish causal claims, including regression, matching, instrumental variables, and the use of natural experiments. We will emphasize how the credibility of causal claims depends both on the assumptions one is willing to make, and on the variation and quality of the data at hand.

EKN 821 EKN 821 is a capita selecta module in Economics. The content is dependent upon academic staff make-up, capacity and offerings.

EKN 822 The module is devoted to microeconomics theory, and the relevant econometric theory needed to apply that theory to data that is readily available. Students will be expected to read a broad selection of published papers, learn about recent advances in both theory and econometrics, and start writing their own microeconomics research. Students will be graded through coursework and tests, as well as on their research.

EKN 823 The module is devoted to macroeconomic theory, and the relevant econometric theory needed to apply that theory to data that is readily available. Students will be expected to read a broad selection of published papers, learn about recent advances in both theory and econometrics, and start writing their own macroeconomic research. Students will be graded through coursework and tests, as well as on their research.

EKN 819 Computable general equilibrium (CGE) models are primarily designed for practical policy analysis, that is, shedding light on real-world policy issues. A key feature of CGE models is its ability to accommodate a high level of detail within a rigorous theoretical framework. Consumers of CGE analysis often include governments and large institutions who wish to understand the economy-wide effects of proposed policies (e.g. carbon tax), unanticipated economic shocks (e.g. droughts) or other what-if scenarios (e.g. improved productivity). CGE models help policymakers and stakeholders to identify the potential winners and losers of such events in order to strengthen their policy formulation and response framework.

EKN 825 Energy and environmental economics are concerned with the basic economic issues of scarcity and optimal allocation, given the limited resources in the economy. Microeconomics and macroeconomic topics related to energy supply and demand, as well as investment financing and linkages with the rest of the economic system form an essential part of the broader picture. Topics to be examined include the impact of energy market linearization and restructuring, high-energy (particularly oil) prices, energy scarcity, alternative forms of energy generation and energy poverty.

EKN 864 EKN 864 is dedicated to health economics. The course will examine Grossman's model of health capital, markets for health insurance, physician-patient agency problems. We will also examine a number of issues related to access to care, quality of care, financing and health inequality.

EKN 865 EKN 865 is dedicated to financial economics, which includes models of pricing in markets for financial instruments, as well as imperfect information in financial markets, financial contracts, and the relationship between preferences and financial decisions.

EKN 882 EKN 882 is a research topics course focusing on microeconomics issues. The content will change from year to year, as the research frontier in microeconomics is extended.

EKN 883 EKN 883 is a research topics course focusing on macroeconomic issues. The content will change from year to year, as the research frontier in macroeconomics is extended.

EKN 884 EKN 884 is a capita selecta research topics course. The content changes from year to year, depending upon staff capacity and the research frontier. This year the module will be a combination of Public Economics and Political Economy, done in conjunction OWE 880. It will focus on the ability of a government to deliver public goods and services, while addressing external societal costs affecting its citizens. In the second part we focus on the political economy of state capacity and state efficiency, with particular reference to the role of the state in economic (under)development. MPhil students will be required to do a research report on African state function and functionality.

EKN 895 The research mini-dissertation is a research project completed under the supervision of a researcher in the department, and is designed to teach the student how to conduct economically focused research, which could be applied, theoretical and, under the right circumstances, practical.

EKT 813 This is a quantitative methods module that focuses on important statistical issues that permeate all of econometrics, while also given students a solid grounding in R, which is an open source software for data analysis, including text, big data and the usual suspects: econometrics and statistics.

EKT 814 This module focuses on statistical theory and empirical estimation, interpretation and evaluation of economic relationships, within a panel data context. The module covers linear and non-linear techniques controlling for intercept and slope heterogeneity. We also address issues of persistence in economic relationships (dynamic specification) as well endogeneity and cross-sectional dependence, while limited dependant variable models are also covered. For panels with a longer time dimension, implications and techniques relevant to non-stationarity panels are considered.

EKT 815 The focus of this model is time series econometrics, which includes cointegration, VARs and nonlinear models.

EKT 816 Within applied econometrics, there are six major topics; these are: (1) Data and its quality, (2) Measurement, (3) Determinants, (4) Causes, (5) Testing and (6) Presentation. Most of you would likely, also, think ‘techniques’ are a major topic (and the syllabus suggests as much). Although there are plenty of ‘techniques’ out there, I think it is too easy to focus on technique, rather than the question of interest. For that reason, I want us to think of technique or techniques as being an underlying set of skills. One cannot know them all, or teach them all, and, as stated above, we will look at some techniques. However, in providing empirical support or using empirical evidence to refute a theory, technique for the sake of technique is fairly empty of meaning. . . . However, with the proper presentation of information and work to break the results that you have, the ‘artistic’ endeavors in econometrics, empirical evidence can be used to answer (or not) a question of interest.

EKT 885 EKT 885 is a research topics course focusing on econometric issues. The content will change from year to year, as the research frontier in econometrics is extended

EKT 895 The research mini-dissertation is a research project completed under the supervision of a researcher in the department, and is designed to teach the student how to conduct econometrically focused research, which is more likely to be applied than theoretical.

EOG 880 This module focuses on economic development, and can be expected to incorporate both microeconomic and macroeconomic issues related to development.

OWE 880 This module focuses on the ability of a government to deliver public goods and services, while addressing external societal costs affecting its citizens. We examine economic models related to these issues to ascertain whether governments might be able to assist in development, collect taxes efficiently and fairly, ensure the security of its citizens and undertake many other stewardship roles. In the second part we focus on the political economy of state capacity and state efficiency, with particular reference to the role of the state in economic (under)development.