

Master of Science in Quantitative Economics (MQE)

Student Handbook

Welcome to the University of Pittsburgh and to the Master of Science in Quantitative Economics program! The MQE program will equip students with the quantitative, analytical, and communication skills needed to identify and resolve complex economic issues using a broad spectrum of quantitative techniques that are useful across contexts in the private, public, and non-profit sector. MQE graduates will meet employers' demand for professionals who master analytic methods and techniques of data-driven economics. The MQE Director, Professional Development Faculty Instructor, and Program Manager are the principal advisors for all new MQE students.

The MQE program has three goals:

1. to advance students' professional economic and data science knowledge through an intensive and balanced academic program.
2. to help formulate questions and solutions critical for organizations.
3. to develop the essential communication skills for career success.

This document describes the rules, requirements, and responsibilities of MQE students during their residency in the Department of Economics at the University of Pittsburgh. It is assumed that all students in the MQE program are familiar with the material in this document and agree to abide by these policies. Students also agree to abide by all University of Pittsburgh academic regulations for graduate students as set forth in the University's Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog:

<https://catalog.upp.pitt.edu/index.php>

Detailed information about the program is available on the MQE website: mqe.pitt.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to learn more about the program, please contact MQE leadership:

- Dr. Randall Walsh, MQE Director, walshr@pitt.edu
- Anastasia Lopez, Professional Development Faculty Instructor, lopez.stasia@pitt.edu

Concerns not directly related to the MQE may be brought to the Department Chair.

The University of Pittsburgh and the Department of Economics

The Department of Economics offers one of the largest majors at the University of Pittsburgh and has a vibrant research community with more than 60 graduate students working towards their Ph.D. in economics. Faculty and Ph.D. students explore fields in all areas of economics: applied microeconomics, economic theory, macroeconomics, econometrics, international economics, and experimental economics. Our department is excited to welcome a new group of MQE students into our robust community.

The University of Pittsburgh is ranked among the top research universities in the United States in both domestic and international rankings and it has been listed as a "best value" in higher education by several publications. Pitt faculty and alumni have won the Nobel Prize (in Peace and Medicine), the Pulitzer, the Academy Award, the MacArthur "Genius" Grant, the National Medal of Science, the Super Bowl, and more.

Pittsburgh is an exciting place for economics. Faculty and Ph.D. students collaborate with researchers from other Pitt units as well as from Carnegie Mellon University and RAND. Pittsburgh, also known as the "City of Champions" for its athletic teams, Steel City for its more than 300 steel-related businesses and the City of Bridges for its 446 bridges. New regional investments, including in autonomous vehicles, additive manufacturing, robotics, and the ethane cracker, have the potential to add substantial new job demand, particularly for STEM workers.

MQE Academic Rules and Regulations

The following section details the rules, regulations, and student responsibilities within the MQE program.

1. Credit Requirements and Graduation

The requirement for the MS in Quantitative Economics degree is to earn 30 credits in the academic courses listed below with cumulative GPA of 3.00 or above. Full-time students are enrolled in ten, 3-credit courses over two consecutive Fall and Spring semesters. Courses are graded corresponding the letter grades (LG option) on the standard scale A, B, C, etc. Graded courses in which the student earns a grade of C+ or lower do not count toward the 30-credit requirement.

At the end of the final semester in the program, students who have successfully completed the Capstone Project will receive credit for the Master’s Comprehensive Exam (CEM) and be certified by the Program Manager to graduate. Please note, graduation is contingent on a student’s timely application to graduate and a completion of all required paperwork prior to the deadline imposed by the University Registrar and the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences Graduate Studies Office.

Students are invited to participate in the Dietrich School’s commencement ceremony at the end of the semester. The MQE also has its own ceremony in the MQE space, and students, friends, and families are welcome to attend. More details about each ceremony are available later in the academic year.

2. Course Descriptions

Students begin the MQE program with a mandatory two-week Base Camp that begins two weeks before the start of the Fall semester. This program includes orientation sessions, professional development programs, and intensive courses on mathematics and coding.

The MQE graded coursework requirement is to be completed according to the following schedule over two semesters:

Fall	Session 1	Individuals, Firms, and Markets	Quantitative Methods	Communicating Economic Insights
	Session 2	Incentives and Information	Economic Inference from Data	
Spring	Session 1	Global Economics and Finance	Applications of Economic Analysis Techniques	Data Design for Economic Applications (Capstone)
	Session 2	Evidence-Based Analysis in Labor, Public and Health Economics	Big Data and Forecasting in Economics	

The MQE Program Manager will enroll students in classes before the start of each term.

3. Satisfactory Progress, Probation, and Dismissal

MQE program faculty, staff, and leadership are committed to student success in the program and beyond. Students are encouraged to take advantage of career counseling, faculty office hours, and professional development opportunities to help ensure academic

and professional success. During the program, students are expected to maintain high academic and professional standards to remain in the program. Failure to make sufficient progress may jeopardize graduation, and failure to meet these standards will lead to warnings, probation, and dismissal.

Students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher to remain in good academic and must complete all classes with a B- grade or higher. If a student earns less than a B- in a class, they will not receive credit for the course and will not be permitted to graduate until they successfully re-take the course and earn a B- grade or higher. If a student has a GPA of under 3.0, they will be ineligible to complete the program and will not be certified to graduate.

Students are also expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Code, <https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>, which governs all manners of cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty.

The MQE is committed to promoting an inclusive space appropriate for academic training and professional development for students of all backgrounds. Students are expected to maintain high standards of professionalism and respect toward classmates, faculty, staff, and all other personnel brought in by the MQE for professional development opportunities. Students are also expected to maintain prompt, professional communication with all MQE affiliates during the academic year when school is in session.

Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress, or who are not meeting MQE standards of professionalism, will first receive a warning letter from the MQE Director outlining the steps needed to improve standing. Failure to follow this guidance will result in dismissal from the program.

4. Ombudsperson

Students should bring any concerns relating to the program to the attention of MQE leadership. If a student wishes to raise concerns about the program that cannot be addressed within the department they may contact the Dietrich School's Ombudsperson for graduate students, Philippa Carter: pkc3@pitt.edu, 412-624-6096.

The Ombudsperson assists graduate students with resolving conflicts and issues that arise during their education and training that they believe have not or cannot be addressed within their academic department. The Ombudsperson can help mediate conflicts and provides information about institutional policies related to the student's issues, including

the University's grievance procedures. The Ombudsperson directs students to further resources on campus as appropriate.

More information about the Ombudsperson's role is available online:

<https://www.asgraduate.pitt.edu/student-life/ombudsperson>

Student Resources

There is a wealth of information online detailing resources available to support student success inside and outside of the classroom. Please take time to review these online materials, and please approach any member of MQE leaderships with questions or requests for guidance.

[Office of the Provost, Graduate Studies](#). Contains information on Academic, Professional, and Social resources available to graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. These include but are not limited to:

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Graduation](#)
- [Information Technology](#) – provides 24/7 software, support, and troubleshooting
- [Professional Development Workshops & Events](#)
- [Student Life](#)

[Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences, Graduate Studies](#). Contains information specific to the Dietrich School on areas including, but not limited to:

- [Academic Resources](#) – Academic Integrity, Request for Parental Accommodation, Sexual Harassment Policy, and more.
- [Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion](#)
- [Financial Support](#)

[Office for Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion](#). Provides vision, leadership, and counsel on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and partners with units and campuses to create welcoming and respectful environments that enable everyone to perform to their full potential. Specific pages include:

- [Diversity Resources and Services](#)
- [Affinity groups for Diverse Populations](#)

[Student Health Services](#). The wellness fee MQE students pay each term gives you unlimited visits to the Student Health Services Clinic, which provides primary care, immunizations, gynecologic care, allergy injections, and more.

[Counseling Center](#). The mission of the University Counseling Center is to create an inclusive space and provide high quality services that support the emotional well-being of Pitt's diverse student body. Services include drop-in services, wellness workshops, group counseling, and more.

[Embedded Clinician](#). The Dietrich Graduate School has an embedded clinician for graduate students.

[Financial Wellness](#). The Center for Financial Education & Wellness has a mission to equip students with the personal finance skills to take control of their finances now and in the future.

[Office of International Services](#). The OIS is a resource for international students on immigration matters, employment questions, culture events, and more.

Career Services

The MQE Program offers each enrolled student individualized career services through professional:

- networking events with industry leaders.
- mentoring inside and outside of the classroom.
- development of communication and project management skills.
- workshops on writing effective cover letters and resume.
- support in the job search, application, and interview process.

Detailed information about our services is available online:

<https://www.mqe.pitt.edu/careers>

The MQE Program is a STEM-designated degree program (CIP Code 45.0603: Econometrics and Quantitative Economics) whose students can apply for a 24-month STEM extension of F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT),

<https://www.ois.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/docs/OPT-Information.pdf>.

Along with the MQE Career Services, Pitt's Career Center, <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/career-center>, can help you to develop the skills and experiences needed to achieve your career goals.