Guidelines and Score Sheet for 2nd Year Research Paper
UCSC Economics Department

The 2nd year paper is an important requirement and a starting point of your research career. You should think of this work as a relevant building block for what will be your oral defense in your 3rd year.

Starting in the winter of your 2nd year, you receive 5 units of credit per term for working on this paper. Thus you are expected to start working on this project well before the paper is due. This document contains a few guidelines for the paper and deadlines; it also contains the score sheet your advisor will use to evaluate your work.

The purpose of the score sheet is three-fold: 1. to guide you when you are preparing this paper; 2. to provide you with feedback and to help you work towards your next step (oral exam); and 3. to provide faculty a way to evaluate individual student work and to collect cohort data at the same time for program-level assessment.

Guidelines

1. What is the central question of your project? Motivate the topic: why is this an interesting question that merits more research? The project should include a clear introduction and a thorough literature review.

2. How is this paper different from previous work? You should be very specific as to how your idea relates to other work, and how it fills an important gap in the literature.

3. By the end of the spring quarter, you should have a detailed outline for the paper and discuss it with your adviser. If you are planning to write a theoretical paper it could help if you show your advisor a simple example of the idea you have in mind. If your work is empirical and you are planning to use proprietary or restricted-use data or to collect your own data, it is important that you and your adviser agree on a plan that accounts for potential delays in your access to the data for reasons beyond your control. If you are using readily accessible data, you should show your advisor a set of relevant descriptive statistics and motivating facts.

4. Your second year paper is a starting point of an academic paper. As such, you must follow the formatting standards and structure of academic papers. This includes using uniform and clearly legible font (type and size) throughout all the paper, tables and graphs should be clearly and consistently labeled and include notes, favor the active voice when writing, among others. Consider using Latex. Make sure to edit the paper for grammar. Use spell check.

Important Dates

1. Beginning at least in the winter quarter of your second year, meet with various faculty members to discuss potential research projects and start preparing an outline to show your advisor.

2. You must pick an advisor for the paper by the end of the spring quarter of your 2nd year. Note that picking an advisor implies scheduling a meeting to present your project's outline. Faculty members can request changes to your outline and additional work before committing to being your advisor. You should account for this when scheduling this meeting.

You need to complete the 2nd Year Field Paper Authorization and send to Sandra Reebie (screebie@ucsc.edu) by June 15th.

3. The paper is due on August 31st. Failing to meet this deadline will result in academic probation. You will receive an I on course work for the paper until it is accepted by an advisor.

2nd Year Paper Score Sheet

Student Name: _____

2nd year paper advisor: _____

Criteria	Fail	Pass with Reservations	Pass	High Pass
Intellectual merit of proposed research question	The research question is not clearly formulated to contribute to existing literature; OR it is not complex enough for graduate level.	The research question has potential to make a contribution to the existing literature but needs more specification.	The research question is well-defined AND has potential to contribute to the existing literature.	The research question is well-defined AND has clear potential to make substantial contribution to the existing literature.
Command and connection to the literature	Does not include most of relevant work; OR incorrectly describes the relevant work; OR does not place their question in the literature they cited.	Primarily cites relevant research without discussing its relevance; OR provides very limited references to relevant literature; OR is not clear about how their question adds to the literature.	Includes a sufficient number of relevant works, AND clearly describes relevant existing research and how their question adds to the literature.	Includes a good selection of relevant works, AND clearly describes relevant existing research and how their question adds to the literature.
Feasibility of proposed research	No relevant examples, OR the theoretical model is not appropriate to address the question (e.g. the mechanism that drives variation in the model is not related to the research question,	Includes limited or unclear examples or description of data sources and/or analyses so that it is hard to be sure about their project's feasibility OR unclear description about the underlying mechanisms in a model or how to calibrate it.	Includes sufficient examples or description of data sources and/or analyses to demonstrate their project's feasibility.	Includes a good number of examples or theoretical results or a dataset with some results to demonstrate their project's feasibility.

	the model is not clearly connected to the question at hand), OR no dataset explicitly described, OR not clear if dataset can be obtained, OR no efforts to examine readily accessible data.			
Clarity of writing	Needs extensive revisions.	Needs improvement in the paragraph organization, grammatical structure, or use of academic language/terms.	For the most part, it is logically presented, using appropriate terms. May have occasional errors, typos, or unclear sentences.	Each part is logically presented, using appropriate terms, and is grammatically well written.
Understanding of research methods and limitations	Does not include a description of how the question is answered.	Includes a vague description of how the question is answered, OR a weak understanding of the method's strengths and weaknesses.	Includes a description of how the question is answered, AND some understanding of the method's strengths and weaknesses.	Includes a fully coherent description of how the question is answered, AND a sophisticated understanding of the method's strengths and weaknesses

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The overall grade depends on the first three criteria.

The last two aspects of evaluation (clarity of writing and understanding of research methods and limitations) is for student feedback only.

Overall grade 1. [ ] High Pass 2. [ ] Pass 3. [ ] Pass with Reservations 4. [ ] Fail