



RICE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

MASTER of COMPUTATIONAL ECONOMICS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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Name

Signature

Date

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Introduction

The following departmental rules and regulations govern the Master of Computational Economics (MCEcon) program. In addition to being in agreement with the regulations stated in this departmental handbook, students must also be in agreement with the [General Announcements](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#).

In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over regulations specific to MCEcon.

When in doubt, students should seek help first at the departmental level (Program Administrator, Director of MCEcon, or Department Chair) and then at the central administration level (Dean of Social Sciences, Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

The MCEcon program is designed to enable students to complete all requirements within two years.

Attendance

Students are required to attend all scheduled activities for all of the classes for which they are registered during the entire course of the academic semester for which they are enrolled. Students with a legitimate reason to be absent from a class must specifically request permission from the professor in charge or explain at the next available opportunity why an unforeseen event prevented them from attending. The academic calendar indicates normal class days, recesses, and holidays. Instructors, however, may schedule required activities on other days, including recesses, holidays, and weekends, if required by programmatic needs, such as guest lectures or field trips. Such requirements must be clearly stated in the online course description available at registration and on the syllabus, and instructors should try to provide compensatory time off for students.

Appropriate Use of Technology

Rice University provides a variety of computing and network resources to the Rice community. These resources are to be used in a manner consistent with federal, state and local laws and regulations including U. S. copyright law, and, if travel is involved, the laws of the relevant nation or state (including U.S. export control requirements).

Use of computing, network and digital resources also shall not violate Rice University policies and specialized policies and guidelines created by the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and any legal or contractual requirements of the University (including license agreements and terms of service). Use of all University information technology must be consistent with the University's research, educational and outreach mission. Rice values freedom of expression, the diversity of values and perspectives and the protection of sensitive University and personal data for all members of the Rice University community. Use of University networks and systems unrelated to the University's mission must be limited in time and scope and must not interfere with University functions or operations.

In addition, Rice users are responsible for using Rice-managed technology and Rice data in a responsible manner. Any communication, which is defamatory, harassing, interferes with other uses of University resources or constitutes an improper disclosure of protected University or sensitive personal data is prohibited. Individuals should not use University technological resources for partisan political purposes.

Further details are available in Rice University Policy No. 832.

The Honor System

The Honor System is one of the oldest traditions at Rice. Adopted by a vote of the student body in 1916, the system requires each Rice student to help ensure the validity of all examinations and assignments by adhering to a strict code of academic integrity. The Honor System reflects one of our strongest shared community values. It provides benefits such as take-home and unproctored exams. The Honor System also elevates our common experience by placing academic honesty at the center of our curriculum and by asking each of us to live by our honor code on a daily and continuing basis. The Honor System expresses our belief that the integrity of each individual is vital to the integrity of our entire community. In the conclusion to his book “The Honor Code,” Professor Anthony Appiah states, “It takes a sense of honor to feel implicated by the acts of others.” It is that sense of honor which is deeply embedded in the Rice community, which is expressed by our Honor Code, and which is lived by every individual Rice student, staff and faculty member.

The Honor System is administered by the student Honor Council, whose members are elected annually by the student body. Students agree to report any suspected violations of the Honor Code to the Honor Council, which is responsible for investigating reported violations and recommending penalties where warranted. As a reminder of their commitment, students write and sign the following pledge on all work covered by the Honor Code: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received any aid on this (exam, paper, project, assignment).”

Program Requirements

Summary

Candidates for the Master of Computational Economics degree must:

1. Complete the approved program of at least 12 courses (40 credit hours minimum, with at least 32 credit hours completed at Rice). The program consists of 8 core courses and 4 electives. Courses outside the approved list will not count toward the degree without prior approval of the Director.
2. Complete the pre-matriculation Computational Camp, Math Camp, and Stat Camp prior to the start of the first fall semester.
3. Perform satisfactorily in all classes. Maintain a cumulative GPA of no less than 2.67 (that is, an average grade of B-).

Timetable

Sample progression – Timeline to degree

Check the academic calendar for deadlines

Semester	Coursework	Suggested Student Focus
Summer (Pre-Year 1)	Computational Camp Math Camp Stat Camp	- Complete required pre-matriculation camps prior to Fall start
Year 1 Fall 15 Weeks	ECON 510 – Econometrics I (3) ECON 631 – Mathematical Foundations for Computational Economics (4) ECON 632 – Data Tools for Computational Economics (4)	- Complete required coursework - Meet with the Director for a progress update halfway through the semester - Register for Spring classes
Year 1 Spring 15 Weeks	ECON 511 – Econometrics II (3) ECON 633 – Dynamic Models for Computational Economics (4) ECON 634 – Machine Learning and Algorithms for Computational Economics (4)	- Complete required coursework - Meet with the Director to plan for specialization track, choose 2 nd year coursework, and discuss summer internships/activities - Register for Fall classes
Year 2 Fall 15 Weeks	ECON 501 – Microeconomics I (3) ECON 502 – Macroeconomics (3) Elective One (3)	- Complete required coursework - Meet with the Director for a progress update halfway through the semester - Begin job search and/or PhD applications - Register for Spring classes
Year 2 Spring 15 Weeks	Elective Two (3) Elective Three (3) Elective Four (3)	- Apply for degree - Complete remaining electives

International students should consult the Office of International Students and Scholars regarding work authorization for any optional summer experiential activities.

Academic Requirements for MCEcon

Core Courses

All MCEcon students must complete the following 8 core courses (listed in order of course number). Together these courses provide the foundation in micro and macroeconomic theory, econometrics, and computational methods that define the degree.

Course	Title	Credit Hours
ECON 501	Microeconomics I	3
ECON 502	Macroeconomics	3
ECON 510	Econometrics I	3
ECON 511	Econometrics II	3
ECON 631	Mathematical Foundations for Computational Economics	4
ECON 632	Data Tools for Computational Economics	4
ECON 633	Dynamic Models for Computational Economics	4
ECON 634	Machine Learning and Algorithms for Computational Economics	4

Additional academic rules:

4. To continue in the MCEcon program, a student needs a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.67 (that is, an average grade of B-) by the end of the first semester.
5. Students are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester to maintain full-time status; the typical MCEcon semester load is 9–11 credit hours.
6. Courses taken outside the approved program of study (including courses in other departments not listed in the elective menu below) will not count toward the degree without prior written approval of the Director.

Pre-Matriculation Camps

All incoming MCEcon students are required to complete three pre-matriculation camps in the summer prior to the first fall semester:

- Computational Camp — covers Python programming, software engineering practices, and version control with Git. This camp ensures all students enter ECON 631/632 with the computational fluency required for the core sequence.
- Math Camp — reviews calculus, linear algebra, and real analysis at the level needed for graduate microeconomics, macroeconomics, and dynamic modeling.
- Stat Camp — reviews probability and mathematical statistics at the level needed for the econometrics sequence.

Camp dates and logistics are circulated by the Program Administrator each summer. Students who do not satisfactorily complete the camps may be required to take remedial coursework or, in exceptional cases, to defer matriculation.

Electives and Specialization Tracks

Students complete 4 elective courses (12 credit hours) chosen from the approved list below. The Department offers four recommended specialization tracks — Industrial Organization, Applied Microeconomics, Macroeconomics & Finance, and Academic (preparation for PhD study) — that bundle

electives around a coherent research or career focus. Students are encouraged to discuss track selection with the Director during their first year. Students are not required to follow a track; any 4 electives from the approved list satisfy the elective requirement. Up-to-date track recommendations are maintained on the program website.

Approved electives:

Course	Title
ECON 504	Computational Economics
ECON 505	Financial Economics I
ECON 514	Empirical Industrial Organization
ECON 515	Labor Economics
ECON 516	Empirical Microeconomics
ECON 517	Empirical Industrial Organization II
ECON 519	Economic Growth and Development
ECON 521	Matching and Market Design
ECON 523	Dynamic Optimization
ECON 547	Advanced Topics in Energy Economics
ECON 565	Health Economics
ECON 575	Topics in Macroeconomics I
ECON 576	Topics in Macroeconomics II
ECON 579	Topics in Econometrics II
ECON 601	Energy Economics
ECON 602	Microeconomics – Energy Sector
ECON 603	Applied Econometrics Energy Markets
ECON 604	Energy Economics II
ECON 605	Taxation in the Energy Sector
ECON 606	Corporate Finance – Energy Sector
ECON 607	Economics of Energy and Environment
ECON 608	Risk Management/Energy Industry
ECON 609	Advanced Energy Econometrics
ECON 610	Energy and the Macroeconomy
ECON 611	Geopolitics of Energy
ECON 612	Energy Project Development
ECON 613	International Trade in Energy
ECON 614	Political Economy of Oil
ECON 615	Social Studies of Energy
ECON 616	Data Analysis for Market Design
ECON 620	Industrial Organization & Energy Sector
ECON 621	Electricity Industry Economics
ECON 622	Transportation Economics
ECON 623	Advanced Economics for Energy Markets
ECON 624	Advanced Quantitative Methods

Course offerings vary by year. Students should confirm course availability with the Program Administrator each semester. Additional graduate-level courses outside this list may, in rare cases, be approved by the Director.

Seminars/Events

Many different special lectures, conferences and workshops are offered through the Economics Department. Although these are not mandatory, we highly encourage you to attend. These events are an important way to broaden your exposure to applied computational economics research, meet faculty, and build your professional network.

Advising

The Director of the Master of Computational Economics program serves as the official academic advisor to all MCEcon students and is available to consult with students about academic progress, elective selection, specialization tracks, and post-graduate plans.

The Program Administrator is the first point of contact for program logistics, including registration questions, course scheduling, camp logistics, degree audit, and general administrative matters.

Please consult the MCEcon website for contact information

Probationary Status

7. A student is considered to be on probationary status whenever the GPA for a semester falls below 2.67. Students are permitted only one semester of probationary status. Automatic dismissal by the Graduate Office occurs whenever a student is put on probation a second time.
8. Students with exceptional circumstances may petition the Dean of Social Sciences for a waiver of probationary status.

Petitions, Appeals, Grievances and Problem Resolutions

Students are encouraged to download and read the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies' guidelines for dismissal, petitions, appeals, grievances and problem resolution, available at: <https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/>

In accordance with these guidelines, it is appropriate for petitions, appeals, grievances and problems to be handled in the first instance by the Director of the MCEcon program. The Director will conduct an investigation of the circumstances and reach a decision regarding the case. Any decision the Director makes can be appealed to the Dean of Social Sciences. The Dean will look at every case after viewing a written report from the Director of the MCEcon program and any written report the student wants to provide. The written report from the Director will describe the circumstances, the decision, and the rationale for the decision. The written report will be made available to the student, except for redactions to protect the privacy of other students.

Personal Wellbeing and Title IX

If you are in need of assistance or simply would like to talk to someone, please contact the Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center (wellbeing.rice.edu), which includes Title IX Support.

The Barbara and David Gibbs Wellness Center, 1st floor

Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM, Monday through Friday

Telephone: (713) 348-3311 (24 hours)

Fax: (713) 348-5953

Services Provided: Initial consultations, brief same-day in-person consultations, and urgent care services.