



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Free Market Institute™

Graduate Student Handbook
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Introduction

The Free Market Institute is an interdisciplinary research center organized under the Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation at Texas Tech University. The Institute seeks to advance an intellectual culture that supports free and open inquiry, values both internal and external collaboration, and maintains a particular, but not exclusive, focus on research questions that relate to the theory, practice, and history of the free enterprise system and the institutional environments that impact its structure and function.

This handbook provides guidance to both applicants and current students for graduate study under the direction of full-time faculty affiliated with the Free Market Institute and leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in either the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics or the Department of Political Science at Texas Tech University.

The Institute awards fellowships to promising doctoral students, who seek to become researchers and teachers at other domestic and international institutions. Fellowships have three-year terms and provide support for all allowable tuition and fees associated with the Ph.D. courses of study in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and the Department of Political Science at Texas Tech University.

The Ph.D. fellowship also includes a part-time research assistant appointment with the Institute that provides compensation to support living expenses while in residence at Texas Tech University. Fellows support the research and teaching activities of full-time university faculty and seek to develop original research projects that contribute to a dissertation and advance other professional development goals.

More information for applicants interested in the Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship is available at the Institute's web site, www.fmi.ttu.edu. Applicants should review that information in addition to the material in this handbook.

Occasionally, changes may be made in the curriculum, requirements, and policies associated with the academic programs of study in Agricultural and Applied Economics and Political Science. Any such changes, unless specified otherwise when adopted, will apply to both new and continuing students regardless of whether or not the changes are included in this handbook. The Institute reserves the right to correct any errors of omission or commission contained in this handbook.

This handbook is not intended to replace official departmental, Texas Tech University Graduate School, or Texas Tech University policies or requirements as contained in those respective publications.



1. Program Management

Administrative responsibilities for the Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship are vested in the Institute's Director of Graduate Students, Andrew Young (a.t.young@ttu.edu). The Institute's Associate Managing Director, Charles Long (charles.v.long@ttu.edu), provides administrative and operational support to the program. The Director of Graduate Students and Associate Managing Director coordinate with the Graduate Director (and associated support staff) in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and the Department of Political Science, to administer the fellowship program.

The Director of Graduate Students chairs the Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship Committee, which is composed of full-time faculty members affiliated with the Institute. The committee reviews applications and makes recommendations to the Director of Graduate Students for fellowship awards.

The Director of Graduate Students, in consultation with full-time faculty affiliates, assigns research assistant supervisors to fellowship recipients each academic year. The Director of Graduate Students conducts annual reviews of graduate students in consultation with assigned research assistant supervisors. The Director of Graduate Students reports to the Institute's Executive Director, Benjamin Powell.

2. Admissions Requirements and Application Processes

To receive consideration for a Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship, interested applicants must first gain admission to both the Graduate School at Texas Tech University and the Ph.D. program of study in either the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics or the Department of Political Science.

In addition to reviewing the information provided by the Graduate School, interested applicants should refer to the Graduate Student Handbooks published by either or both of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and the Department of Political Science.

2.1. Graduate School (Pre-Admission)

The Graduate School requires several documents to provide consideration for admission:

- Graduate school application.
- Application fee (\$75 initial application fee, \$25 for each subsequent application in the same term).
- Unofficial transcripts from all degree awarding institutions attended (International applicants must provide original language documents and English translations).
- Unofficial Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (optional).
- Unofficial proof of English proficiency (international applicants only).

During the process, the applicant designates the graduate program. After certification of a complete application, the Graduate School forwards the application to the corresponding department's Graduate Director.

Contact: Graduate Admissions (graduate.admissions@ttu.edu)



2.2. Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics uses three general criteria to evaluate applications for admission:

- Past academic performance.
- Test scores.
- Individual profile as reflected in work experience, recommendation letters, and a statement of purpose, which explains your background and motivations for pursuing graduate education in Agricultural and Applied Economics.

To receive consideration for admission to the Ph.D. program, applicants must submit the following documents:

- Graduate application personal data form (including a photograph).
- Statement of purpose outlining research goals and intent to apply for Free Market Institute Ph.D. fellowship funding (no more than two pages).
- Three (3) Reference Letters (submitted directly by the referee on organizational letterhead).

After certification of a complete application, a panel of department faculty members reviews the application and makes an admissions recommendation to the Graduate Director.

Contact: Dr. Chenggang Wang, Graduate Director (aaec.grad.admin@ttu.edu)

2.3. Department of Political Science

The Department of Political Science uses a holistic evaluation process, examining an applicant's:

- Past academic performance.
- Test scores.
- Individual profile as reflected in reference letters, areas of research interest, and personal statements.

The Department of Political Science requires the following documents for consideration of admissions to the Ph.D. program:

- Application Form.
- Three (3) Reference Letters and Evaluation Forms (submitted directly by the referee on organizational letterhead, preferably from faculty at the applicant's prior institution(s)).

After certification of a complete application, the Graduate Director submits it to the department's Graduate Affairs Committee for review and an admissions recommendation.

Contact: Dr. Daehee Bak, Graduate Director (daehee.bak@ttu.edu)



2.4. Free Market Institute

After confirmation of admission to either graduate program, the Free Market Institute fellowship committee initiates its review of applications for fellowship funding. In addition to the admissions criteria for the departmental graduate program, the committee assesses the applicant's expressed research interests and their fit with the Institute's research mission.

To receive consideration for a Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship, applicants must submit to free.market@ttu.edu the following documents:

- Current Resume/CV.
- A statement of interest that outlines research goals and interest in the Institute's mission (1,500 word maximum).
- A writing sample, preferably a term paper that addresses an issue related to the Institute's mission.
- Unofficial transcripts from all degree awarding institutions attended.
- Unofficial GRE scores.
- Three (3) letters of reference from individuals who can evaluate academic preparation and potential for success in a Ph.D. program.

The priority deadline to apply for consideration of a Ph.D. Fellowship is **February 1** of each calendar year. The Institute seeks to provide notifications of all priority fellowship offers by **March 15** of each calendar year. The deadline to accept a fellowship offer is **April 15** of each year. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis after the initial deadline with fellowship offers contingent on availability of funding.

2.5. Graduate School (Post-Enrollment)

If an applicant is admitted and enrolls in a graduate program of study, the Graduate School requires the submission of the following materials before the twelfth (12th) class day of the term to which the applicant is admitted:

- Official copies of all academic transcripts.
- Official diplomas/degree certificates.
- Official GRE scores.

The administrative staff of the Free Market Institute will coordinate with admitted and enrolled students, who have accepted the Ph.D. Fellowship, to complete new hire paperwork and other employee onboarding procedures.



3. Coursework

Coursework will vary depending on availability of courses per semester, preference on electives, and majors and minor (in the case of the Ph.D. in Political Science). The following table shows a standardized first-year core curriculum for each program:

Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics			Ph.D. in Political Science		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
AAEC 5307	Applied Econometrics I	3	POLS 5381	Research Design	3
ECO 5312	Microeconomic Theory	3	POLS 5382	Data Analysis	3
ECO 5313	Mathematical Economics	3	POLS 5383	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods in Political Science	3
AAEC 5303	Advanced Production Economics	3	POLS 5322	Pro-Seminar in American Politics	3
AAEC 6301	Microeconomic Theory II	3	POLS 5360	Pro-Seminar in International Relations	3
AAEC 6311	Applied Econometrics II	3	POLS 5370	Pro-Seminar in Comparative Politics	3

For additional details about the coursework, requirements, comprehensive and qualifying exams for each program, please consult the [Agricultural and Applied Economics](#) or [Political Science](#) Handbook.

3.1. Free Market Institute Electives

Affiliated faculty members teach graduate courses for academic credit as part of the degree programs in Agricultural and Applied Economics and Political Science. All FMI Ph.D. Fellows may choose to take any of the following courses taught by Institute faculty as part of their coursework electives:

Agricultural & Applied Economics Courses

- AAEC 5309 – Natural Resources and International Economic Development (3)
- AAEC 6301 – Advanced Special Problems in Agricultural and Applied Economics: Applied Macroeconomic Analysis (3)

Business Economics Courses

- BECO 5345 – Economics of Regulation (3)
- BECO 5376 – Austrian Economics (3)

Political Science Courses

- POLS 5365 – Special Topics in International Relations: Political Economy of Institutions (3)
- POLS 5376 – Selected Topics in Comparative Government: Public Choice (3)
- POLS 5385 – Casual Inference and Quasi-Experimental Methods (3)



4. Campus Visit

The Free Market Institute has a limited number of travel awards available for applicants to visit Texas Tech University. To gain consideration for a travel award, an applicant must make a formal request to the Institute after submission of a complete application for the Free Market Institute Ph.D. Fellowship.

5. Policies and Procedures

5.1. Employment Authorization

Research assistants employed at Texas Tech University must meet all requirements for employment authorization in the United States. Employment at Texas Tech University is at-will employment. International applicants must coordinate their initial onboarding through the Office of International Affairs to gain the necessary authorization to enter the United States, enroll, and accept employment at Texas Tech University.

5.2. Tuition and Fees

The research assistant appointment with the Institute qualifies students for in-state tuition at Texas Tech University. The appointment also qualifies students for additional tuition waivers and exemptions. Institute fellows receive an academic scholarship each term of their enrollment that defrays the costs associated with the remaining mandatory tuition and fees. Students may elect to pay particular waived fees (medical services fee, student athletics fee, student recreation center fee) at their own expense.

5.3. Research and Teaching Assistant Duties and Expectations

Research assistant (RA) and teaching assistant (TA) assignments are obligations attached to all Ph.D. fellowships. These assignments both provide services to Institute faculty and are 'learning-by-doing' opportunities for graduate fellows towards developing research and teaching skills.

RA/TA appointments carry a 12-month term that coincides with the university's fiscal year, beginning on September 1 of each calendar year. RA/TA appointments are part-time (20 hours per week), exempt positions that are paid monthly. Compensation is competitive, up to \$27,500 per year.

The Director of Graduate Students makes assignments of RA/TA supervisors in early August of each calendar year with the assignments corresponding to the start of the next fiscal year on September 1. RA/TA assignments have 12-month terms. Fellows are expected to contact their supervisor promptly after assignment (within one week) to discuss duties and expectations for the upcoming year. Fellows are expected to uphold the Institute's standards for professional communication and execution of their assigned RA/TA duties.

The Graduate School requires continuous enrollment during summer terms for all full-time graduate students. Prior to the end of the spring term each calendar year, the RA/TA and supervisor will agree to either the delivery of a working academic paper by August 1 or a continuation of RA availability to the supervisor. See more details about this policy in the following section.



5.4. Annual Renewal

Fellowships have three-year terms that are subject to renewal by the Director of Graduate Students each academic year, effective September 1. The primary criteria employed in the renewal decision process are:

- Progress toward completion of the academic degree program.
- Performance evaluation of RA/TA duties and expectations.

Progress toward completion of the academic degree, at minimum, requires maintaining good academic standing in the Graduate School and the student's program of study, as defined by the department's policies and procedures. It also requires communication to the Institute's Director of Graduate Students of any course withdrawals, applications for incomplete grades in academic coursework, and remedial plans for incomplete coursework.

Performance evaluation of RA/TA duties will occur at the conclusion of the spring term of each academic year by the Director of Graduate Students in consultation with RA/TA supervisors. Unsatisfactory performance will constitute non-fulfillment of fellowship duties and expectations and can result in non-renewal of an RA/TA appointment for the following year.

At that time, the RA/TA and the supervisor will also confer on RA duties and expectations for the summer term, agreeing to one of the following alternatives:

- An academic working paper draft to be complete and delivered on or before August 1.
- A continuation of RA availability to the supervisor during the summer terms.

Unsatisfactory performance will constitute non-fulfillment of fellowship duties and expectations and can result in non-renewal of an RA/TA appointment for the following year.

The Director of Graduate Students maintains discretion over the terms of the RA/TA appointment, including supervisor assignment and annual compensation.

5.5. Dissertation Fellowships

Fellowships have three-year terms that are subject to renewal according to the above outlined terms. At the conclusion of the three-year term, the Director of Graduate Students will consider the award of a fellowship to support dissertation research. To be eligible for a dissertation fellowship, a fellow must meet the following requirements:

- Completion of all required and elective coursework in the academic program of study (excluding dissertation research hours).
- Formation of a dissertation committee that includes an eligible full-time faculty member serving as dissertation chair and at least one Institute affiliated faculty member serving on the committee.
- Successful defense of a dissertation proposal, as determined by the academic department's policies and procedures.

After certification of eligibility, the Director of Graduate Students will consult with the fellow's dissertation chair and committee members (as appropriate) to determine the terms of the dissertation fellowship award, including the duties and expectations for dissertation research.



5.6. Graduate Part-Time Instructor Appointments

Upon successful completion of the equivalent of a Master's degree, a fellow becomes eligible for a graduate part-time instructor (GPTI) appointment. GPTI appointments are assigned based on availability of positions and the terms of appointment enforced by the corresponding area or department. The Director of Graduate Students maintains discretion over the recommendation of Institute fellows for GPTI appointments to areas or departments, for which the fellow is eligible to hold the appointment.

5.7. Institute Programming

In addition to the obligations associated with academic coursework and RA/TA/GPTI appointments, **fellows are also required to attend and participate in all Institute research, teaching, and outreach programming.**

This programming includes:

- **Brown Bag Seminar/Professional Development Workshop** – Weekly working research meeting that features academic presentations or professional development seminars from faculty, research staff, and graduate students employed at Texas Tech University.
- **Research Workshop** – Weekly working research meeting that features academic presentations from scholars employed by other academic institutions and research organizations.
- **Visiting Scholar Seminars and Workshops** – Periodic meetings with Visiting Scholars that feature discussion and presentations of academic research on various topics.
- **Public Speaker Series** – Periodic public presentations from academic researchers and practitioners and public intellectuals on various topics.

5.8. Professional Travel and Requests for Funding

The FMI encourages graduate students to travel to present their high-quality research at scholarly conferences and seminars. However, funding is limited and must be allocated in a manner consistent with this goal. Also, because graduate students are representing the Institute, we require some quality control. The following guidelines are in place to ensure the above.

- All travel for which graduate students will represent the FMI and present research must be approved, regardless of whether or not FMI funding is being requested. Initial travel applications must be made prior to submitting a paper and at least two weeks prior to the submission deadline.
- Applications must include a budget detailing all expenses (excluding meals and incidentals).
- Applications must include an abstract of the paper to be presented at the conference/seminar.
- The initial application must be sponsored by an Institute affiliated faculty member. A signature by the sponsor (or the sponsor directly forwarding the application to the Director of Graduate Students) will indicate approval of the proposed submission.
- Initial applications should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Students by email.
- For students in their first, second, or third years of study, before registering for a conference/seminar and incurring other expenses, you must present the associated research at the Brown Bag Seminar. A complete paper draft must be circulated to FMI faculty at least one week prior to the presentation.
 - If a student is applying to present multiple papers at a given conference, only one of those papers needs to be presented at the Brown Bag Seminar.
 - If a student has presented the paper previously at a conference, no additional Brown Bag Seminar presentation is required.



- Students in their fourth or fifth year of study can consider their (sponsored) initial application to be completed. No Brown Bag Seminar presentation is required.
- Following the Brown Bag Seminar presentation, the application will be considered in light of the quality of both the presentation and the circulated paper draft. If it is deemed acceptable, the faculty sponsor and Director of Graduate Students will authorize travel.
- If an application is approved, a graduate student can expect an allocation equal to the conference/seminar registration fee plus \$750. The Director of Graduate Students maintains discretion to either increase or decrease that amount.
- To be reimbursed after travel, a student must provide (a) documentation of participation in the conference/seminar (e.g., a conference program) and (b) original receipts for airfare, mileage, registration, and/or accommodations that total or exceed the funding allocation. All receipts must indicate both a paid in full balance and the method of payment.

NOTE ON SEEKING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING

All else equal, conservation of FMI funds is a good thing and tapping into alternative sources of funding can be an excellent way to do so. Alternative funding sources can also help to cover travel expenses above and beyond what the FMI can cover. However, sources internal to TTU (e.g., the Graduate School; the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics) are not independent from FMI in the way that an outside organization is. We have to ensure that relationships between the FMI and other TTU colleges, departments, and institutes are mutually beneficial. Graduate students, then, are (1) free and encouraged to seek out alternative external funding but (2) should first seek permission from the Director of Graduate Students before seeking out alternative TTU funding.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTE,
PLEASE VISIT THE FREE MARKET INSTITUTE HOMEPAGE
AT WWW.FMI.TTU.EDU OR EMAIL US AT FREE.MARKET@TTU.EDU