External reviewer's report on new programme proposals

Programme title:	PhD in Economics
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Aims and intended learning outcomes for the proposed programme reflect appropriate academic and professional expectations within the sector, subject benchmark statements and other relevant external reference points.

The PhD in Economics will be delivered to students who will have followed a curriculum in Business / Economics, organized by experts in this field. A Master's degree or an equivalent academic degree is a condition for the admission to the program. An interview with the field commission will be organized. However, it would be useful to specify the modalities of this interview. The faculty will be able to stress for students current problems and/or new insights.

Economics is regarded as one of the most important disciplinary development in the academic system for the past 50 years. Following this approach, economic concepts are used to explain socio-economic phenomena, to assess the efficiency of normative policies and recommend the promulgation of specific norms.

The objectives of the PhD program are clearly established.

- The first one is to prepare highly qualified personnel with a doctorate degree in economics who have in-depth theoretical knowledge, skills necessary to conduct original research focused on creating new knowledge and to implement the obtained results.
- The second objective of the program is that the doctoral student have opportunity to master the modern methods of teaching in higher education institutions and the skills of transferring new knowledge, to use teaching and research skills for the development of the economy and society on a local as well as international level.

The dissertation assessment should be enable students to show originality in the application of knowledge. The admission preconditions for the PhD student to the defense of the doctoral thesis are well defined according to international standards :

- Fully mastering of learning components credits (50 credits).
- Two scientific research projects positively evaluated by the scientific supervisor and the relevant commission. I would suggest to consider "two scientific research projects *at least"* and the composition of the commission should be specified.
- Publishing two scientific publications related to the dissertation topic in such highly ranked international journals or conference materials that possess an ISSN code and have an international editorial committee. At least one of the publications should be included into the indexed database of Scopus or the Web of Science.

PhD students will have reinforced ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements on the basis of available or findable information, and communicate their conclusions clearly. They will also benefit from transferable skills that are particularly useful when initiative and personal responsibility are required (the group assessments will help them develop these skills), decisions making in complex situations (Economics as a discipline requires to practice this type of judgment).

Appropriateness and coherence of the curriculum and learning opportunities.

The curriculum is appropriate and coherent.

The curriculum is thorough regarding Economics as a research program. It however does not cover with the same depth the different aspects of economics such as "unconventional economics" or "research methodology in economics", though in a less specialised manner. Module Learning/Teaching Methods could be expanded as it covers a large span of methodological content as well as important applications.

Appropriateness of the proposed teaching & learning and assessment strategies for the delivery of the curriculum, facilitating learning, and enabling students to demonstrate the achievement of the stated intended learning outcomes.

Teaching & learning and assessment strategies are adequate.

A more important stress on methods of economics might be considered.

Is there any consideration for experimental/behavioral methods in the program? Same question for Big Data and digital methods.

Students with a graduate background in Business/Management would benefit from catch up lessons in Economics (micro & macro). Students who have different graduate background than Economics would benefit from an early and systematic introduction to the aim, concepts, terminology, methodology of the discipline.

The dissertation assessment should enable students to show originality in the application of knowledge. For that purpose, regular meeting with the dissertation supervisor should be required (including a set number of meetings between supervisor and supervisee). The dissertation should require students to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline. Feedback from the supervisor should ensure this. The way dissertation topics are defined (by supervisors or by students along with a conversation with the supervisor) should play a role on this matter.

The supervision of the dissertation will include feedback concerning the definition of the topics as well as the framework and the content of the dissertation.

The University should encourage the design of curricula that:
- are underpinned by a clear idea of what is meant by research-led teaching;
- incorporate a research element, appropriate to the nature of the programme;
- enable critical enquiry and promote increasing independence in students as learners;
- are sensitive to differences within an increasingly diverse student body;
- expose students to a range of relevant learning and teaching styles;
- assess a range of skills and types of knowledge using a variety of appropriate assessment methods;
- provide for personal development planning at the PhD level;
- develop self-directed learning;
- enhance students' employability and enable the professional development of the student;
- take account of programmes on offer in comparator institutions;
- use innovative material offered within a research-led academic environment;

- have a specified aim of developing either research skills or high professional competence in the field of study;

How to consider that the curriculum of the programme under review fulfils the relevant design criteria above?

Learning goals are clearly defined. There is evidence that teaching is research led, offers a range of teaching styles and provides opportunities for self directed learning. The use of e-learning is however not precisely explained.

Also assessment could include a stronger component of simulation, moot exercises that would enable students to hone transferable skills. Finally, research seminars might be an interesting project to consider (though not necessarily at the outset of the programme).

Key professional competence (e.g., argumentative abilities, economic analysis, etc) are developed through the curriculum. Interestingly "Pedagogy of Higher Education Institution" skills are also included. In addition to the career opportunities flagged, additional ones could include: firms, regulation, as well as academic careers.

Assessment methods appear adequate, provided the requirements related to the dissertation are clarified. In particular, as stressed above, regular meeting with the dissertation supervisor should be required (including a set number of meetings between supervisor and supervisee). The dissertation should require students to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline. Feedback from the supervisor should ensure this. The way dissertation topics are defined (by supervisors or by students along with a conversation with the supervisor) will play a role on this matter.

A research method seminar might be an addition to consider.