

Directed Research Projects on Canadian Economic Policy for 4th Year Students in Economics: Guidelines of the Program

Highlights of the Program

- Fourth-year students in economics with a B average or better will be eligible for participating in a research project on Canadian economic policy directed by an economist in a government department or agency or in the (not-for-profit) private sector. The qualified student will be twinned with an experienced economist in Canadian economic policy who will meet the student regularly to supervise the project during the term. A course credit will be given to students that are successful in meeting the expected objectives of the project.
- The main goal of the pilot program is to provide high-performing fourth-year students with a concrete work experience as an economist functioning in domains most relevant to current Canadian economic policy.
- The number of students participating will depend on the availability of research opportunities offered by host organizations. Typically the work on the project will be done off-site and will not be remunerated.
- Host organizations will meet students on a regular basis to provide direction and supervision. To obtain the course credit, students will need to meet the stated objectives of the placement. A performance appraisal prepared by the host organization will be the main input into the final assessment of performance and for grading the course.

Eligible Students and Commitments

- Only fourth-year students in economics with a B average or better that have completed the introductory statistics course (ECO-3150) will be eligible for this pilot program. Students qualifying are strongly encouraged to complete the compulsory econometrics course (ECO-3151) before engaging in the program.
- Students must commit to put around 75 hours of work on the project and agree to meet on a regular basis with the professional economist from the host organization.
- At the end of the project, participating students must prepare a short report card for the Director of the program. This deliverable will be part of the evaluation to grade the course. The grade for the course will be assessed by the Director with inputs from the host organization (see Host Organizations section below). The report card, which will be shared with the host organizations, must include:

- a one page description of the work actually performed during the stage;
 - a copy of any reports produced by the student;
 - a one page assessment of the quality of the interactions with the economist supervising the placement, and a narrative of the skills that have been learned;
 - a two-page essay of how the research work during the placement is relevant to Canadian economic policy making.
- Applying and qualifying for the program does not guarantee participation. The number of research projects available will affect the number of students effectively participating in a stage. The allocation and matching mechanism used in this pilot program is explained in the process section below.

Eligible Host Organizations and Commitments

- Host organizations eligible for this program provide *applied economic research* functions in areas related to *Canadian Economic Policy*. Policy-research groups in government departments and agencies and the not-for-profit economic consulting sector are eligible for the program.
- Host organizations must provide a short document of information for each research project considered. Multiple offers are accepted from a given host organization. For each project the information provided must include:
 - name and address of organization;
 - name and title of the manager and the economist that will supervise the student;
 - a short description of the project or functions and how it fits in Canadian economic policy;
 - a narrative about how the participating student will benefit from doing the project;
 - a list of clear and assessable commitments, tasks and deliverables the student is expected to meet during the term;
 - the identification of any specific qualification required from the student to be able to perform the research project.
- The host organization must commit to meet the participating student at regular intervals (preferably weekly or bi-weekly) to assess progress and provide direction.
- At the end of the stage, prepare a performance appraisal of the student stating how the student...
 - **exceeded** on all expectations (A/A+),
 - **succeeded** on all expectations and in some areas **exceeded** expectations (A-),
 - **succeeded** on all expectations (B+),

- **succeeded** on the most important expectations but **failed** to achieve some secondary expectations (C+/ B),
 - **succeeded** on some expectations but **failed** to achieve one or more of the most important expectations (D+/C/C+),
 - **succeeded** on some secondary expectations but **did not meet any** of the most important expectations (E/D), or
 - **did not meet any** of the expectations (F).
- The Director will determine the final grade for each student in the course.

Allocation Process

- In late spring (Fall-Term) and fall (Winter-Term) of each year, the Director will make a call to potential host organizations for developing research projects for 4th-year students. A bank of projects will be put together and be posted for student access at least two weeks before the start of the forthcoming term.
- Students interested and qualifying will have their latest course transcripts sent to the Director with a short letter expressing their intention to participate. They will also state their preferences, if any, about which broad areas of economics they would be most interested in (e.g., environmental, industrial, labor, public finance, trade, macro). If the bank of projects is already available, students may also identify which ones they would be most interested in doing. A bank of qualified students will be prepared.
- The Director will do a first round of matching between research projects and students and will then meet students individually to discuss possible assignments. Students will be invited to meet quickly with their pre-assigned host organization so as to confirm interest and qualification. Some iteration might be needed so that students' interests and host organizations' needs are best matched.
- The number of placements offered for a given term might fall short of the number of students qualifying and interested. In such a case, the Director will privilege best- grade students that have also completed the econometrics course (ECO-3151). Qualified students denied a work placement in one term can apply for another term. Students qualifying will be allowed a single stage during their fourth year. *International students are eligible to participate.*
- Some project offers might not be undertaken and the Director will inform the affected organizations. The goal here will be to have key core organizations participating on a regular basis and ensure that, through time, most of these organizations actually are allocated students.

Management

- The Directed Research Project is a program offered by the Department of Economics, University of Ottawa.
- Students who are accepted into the program must register for the course SCS 4150 A / 4550 A.
- The Director of the program for the 2010-11 academic year is Professor Leslie Shiell.
- For more information, please contact Professor Shiell, by e-mail at lshiell@uottawa.ca, or by telephone at 613-562-5800 ext. 1693