

## **To new PhD students at Development Economics Group (DEC)**

Welcome at our research group. We are happy to have you here!

To help you make the best of your PhD, this letter intends to set out some DEC-specific expectations regarding introduction, courses, coffee breaks, the PhD Club and presentation, seminars and defending your proposal that are relevant for the first year of your PhD.

### **Introduction to the Section Economics and the DEC group**

We would like to introduce you to the Section of Economics and to get to know you a bit better at the group. We therefore ask you to send a short description of yourself and your research topic (max. 200 words) and a picture of yourself to [Dineke Wemmenhove](#), who will then circulate this in the Section. Together with Dineke, you will subsequently schedule a 10-minute presentation on a Tuesday prior to a regular lunch seminar for you to introduce yourself at the group, where you can tell about who you are, where you come from and what you are going to work on. If you have already some material from your study region, you are invited to use this in your presentation.

### **Expected pre-existing knowledge**

During the selection process we have tested your existing knowledge. Based on your performance, we may have pointed you to one or more online courses (and perhaps also required you to do a qualifying exam). If you feel you are lagging behind at this moment, we advise you to work on this right in the beginning, as this helps a lot to effectively study courses during your PhD.

### **Courses**

To become a strong applied microeconomist, and effectively progress with your research in later years, you are required to complete the following courses during the first year of your PhD:

- [Advanced Microeconomics](#) (6 ECTS)
- [Advanced Econometrics](#) (6 ECTS)
- [Impact Assessment of Policies and Programmes](#) (6 ECTS)

These courses can be included in your WASS Training and Supervision Plan (TSP). If you already completed similar courses at the same level, you can of course discuss exemptions with your supervisor. In some cases, following these courses in the first year may conflict with the planning of your research project. Please also discuss with your supervisor how to handle such conflicts.

Whenever suits your PhD best, it is typically useful to follow these courses/workshops/lectures:

- Searching and Organising Literature
- Data Management (see below)
- Questionnaire Design (one lecture from the course Methodology for Field Research in the Social Sciences; contact Mark Treurniet)
- Scientific Writing
- Presenting with Impact

We like learning at DEC. If you would like to follow additional courses at other universities or visit conferences, there is budget available for this.

### **Proposal**

Before submitting your PhD proposal to WASS and receiving a go/no-go decision, you are required to present your proposal to the group. We ask you to prepare a 15-minute presentation and reserve an addition 15 minutes for questions and feedback. Please discuss with Dineke Wemmenhove when you can present. There are several moments a year, and Dineke will cluster multiple proposal presentations in one meeting.

### **Coffee breaks**

We have a tradition to have a joint coffee/tea break in the morning in the Leeuwenborch canteen. Like in a public goods game, in turn one of us knocks on every door to take orders, and the group provides the drinks. This is not only a nice time to meet each other, but also great fun. We will probably like your jokes, but don't worry if not – maybe we have bad humour.

### **PhD Club and presentations**

The DEC PhD Club is the informal meeting of DEC PhD students, where PhD students can present something in order to get feedback from their peers. This can be anything: from a proposal, a results table or a full paper. PhD Club meetings are regularly organized, but at an ad hoc basic. If you would like to present something, you can email Mandy Malan and she will set up a meeting!

Before you are going to the field, we expect you to present your field work plans in the DEC PhD Club. Within one month after you come back from the field, we expect you to present some preliminary results. Unless you are a magician, your results will not be complete at that stage, but we believe that early presentation and feedback can significantly help your progress. While these are minimum expectations, you are of course encouraged to present also at other moments.

## **Seminars**

EconMonday seminars are the informal internal seminar of the Section Economics. These seminars either take the form of a short presentation of (selected parts of your starting or ongoing) research taking not more than 20 minutes followed by about 20 mins discussion with the audience, or the form of a reading group during which selected aspects of one paper (which has been distributed before) are discussed. EconMonday seminars are a good opportunity to present your work, and are scheduled for Mondays from 12.30-13.15h.

For Section Economics seminars typically external researchers are invited to present their research. Section Economics seminars are usually scheduled on Tuesdays 12.30-13.30h, and lunch is provided. You are encouraged to join!

## **Authorship**

While many PhD students write one or more papers together with their supervisor(s), it is by no means obligatory that (co-)supervisors co-author your papers. Instead, whether someone should be a (co-)author depends on his/her contribution. The university's website provides guidelines on this. We want to encourage you to also write alone or together with others.

## **Data management**

The section of Economics has a Data Management Plan, which you are expected to follow. At the end of your PhD, if you use data, you will be asked to hand in your raw data and Stata do-files. Please do not make manipulations by hand, but instead record all your data manipulations and analysis in do-files that can simply be re-run to translate raw data in results. It is your responsibility as a PhD student to keep your data safe and to find out the full rules, regulations and norms about data storage, management and analysis. Once a year, Maarten Voors organizes a half-day workshop on data management and workflow.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is not tolerated, so please make sure to always use proper referencing. Software exists to check plagiarism, and you can also use these to check your own work. In the end, each thesis will be checked. In case of doubts, please consult your supervisor or promotor. Also feel free to seek advice from peers and colleagues on how to avoid (self-)plagiarism: this is one of those cases where it is better to be safe than sorry.

Alright, we hope that this letter was helpful. If you have any questions, don't forget that you are not alone – just ask one of us. Good luck!

DEC