

# Some Suggestions for First-Year Doctoral Students in Economics

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Below you find some suggestions / readings for first-year doctoral students. They reflect my opinion and tastes, which might differ from those of your supervisor(s). Comments are highly welcome at [andreas.roider@ur.de](mailto:andreas.roider@ur.de). See also [www-roider.ur.de](http://www-roider.ur.de) (where some of the below material is available for download).

**Books and papers that dispense advice.** Below you find a list of books, articles, and presentations that provide general advice for graduate students in economics. There are also some more specific suggestions that reflect my background in microeconomics.

Cochrane, J. (2005). *Writing Tips for Ph. D. Students*. mimeo, University of Chicago

Gabaix, X., and D. Laibson (2008). The Seven Properties of Good Models. *The Foundations of Positive and Normative Economics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 292-299.

Hamermesh, D. (1992). The Young Economist's Guide to Professional Etiquette. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 169-179.

Houser, D., Chen, Y., Cason, T., and M. C. Villeval (2015). *Publishing Experimental Economics Papers*. Presentation Slides.

McCloskey, D. (1985). Economical Writing. *Economic Inquiry*, 23(2), 187-222.

Rabin, M. (2013). An Approach to Incorporating Psychology into Economics. *American Economic Review*, 103(3), 617-622.

Shapiro, J. (2013). *How to Give an Applied Micro Talk*. Presentation Slides.

Thomson, W. (2011). *A Guide for the Young Economist*. MIT Press.

**Course work.** In your first-year, take advantage of the Ph.D courses offered at your local institution or by programs, such as the Bavarian Doctoral Program in Economics (BGPE) or the program on Evidence-Based Economics (EBE).

**Summer schools.** Starting in your first or second year, attending summer schools is a good idea. Talk to your supervisor or fellow students about which summer schools might be useful for you.

**Seminars.** Attend weekly research seminars! Even if the topic is not in your field of interest! Seminars are a great opportunity to get ideas, to see how people present, and to see how people ask questions and respond to them.

Also, take the opportunity to meet with the speaker for coffee or at the post-talk dinner. It is completely ok to do that even if you don't have a polished paper yet or if your ideas are still evolving. Speakers are used to this kind of interaction (and in fact expect it). Again, this is a great opportunity to get input on your ideas and to network.

**Conferences.** You should strive to present your papers at conferences as soon as possible. This is of utmost importance in order to get feedback and to benchmark relative to other presenters. Conferences are also a good place to get new ideas (there are always interesting invited lectures and sessions by the big names in the field).

You should be ready to present a paper in the third year of your Ph.D. (or earlier, if possible). In fact, there are many Ph.D students of that level who present at general-interest conferences (i.e., conferences where all fields of economics are represented), like the European Economic Association Meetings, Econometric Society Meetings (both in Europe and the US), or Verein für Socialpolitik Annual Meetings. There is also the Spring Meeting of Young Economists.

Note that most conferences take place in August and September; most deadlines by which you must submit your paper are in January or February.

To pay for conference attendance, you need to ask your supervisor for funds. In addition, your department might have separate funds to pay for conference visits of juniors. In addition, the Verein für Socialpolitik may sponsor your trip with up to 500 Euros (see: <https://www.socialpolitik.de/De/vortragspraemienprogramm>).

To find out about upcoming conferences, visit the homepages of the relevant associations (European Economic Association, Econometric Society, Verein für Socialpolitik). Importantly, talk to your supervisor which conferences she/he deems relevant. It is also a good idea to subscribe to the Inomics newsletter about upcoming conferences and workshops (see: <https://inomics.com/top/conferences>; they also have a newsletter for current academic job offers, similar to academics.de)

**Research visit abroad.** An (extended) research visit abroad, usually during the second or third year is highly advisable. It is useful for getting comments on your projects (or to get ideas for projects), to get to know people, and to make yourself known.

**Content alerts.** To get informed about current research in your area, you need to subscribe to content alerts. These come in two varieties.

First, content alerts for new working papers. The most comprehensive repository is Repec (<http://nep.repec.org/>): on their website you can subscribe to any number of area-specific newsletters that you like. It is also a good idea to subscribe the content alerts of the most important discussion paper series, like NBER, CEPR, IZA, or Ceslfo (which, again, you can do on their respective websites).

Second, you should subscribe to the contents alerts of the top economics journals (just go on the respective websites): American Economic Review, Econometrica, Review of Economic Studies, Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics. The same holds for the top journals in your field. Also, you should regularly check out, which papers are forthcoming in these journals (which you also find on the respective journal's website).