Meghana Gaur

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Graduate Administrator	Laura Hedden	lhedden@princeton.edu	609-258-4006

Office Contact Information

Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building
Department of Economics
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544

Graduate Studies

Princeton University *2021–present*

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics
Expected Completion Date: 2027

References

Professor John Grigsby	**Professor Richard Rogerson**	**Professor Ayşegül Şahin**
Department of Economics	Department of Economics	Department of Economics
Princeton University	Princeton University	Princeton University
john.grigsby@princeton.edu	rdr@princeton.edu	aysegul.sahin@princeton.edu

Prior Education

Rice University *2015–2019*

B.A. in Mathematics and Mathematical Economic Analysis (Honors), *magna cum laude*

Fields

Primary Macroeconomics, Labor Economics, Technological Change

Secondary International Trade

Job Market Paper

"On-the-job Learning and Automation in Career Paths"

Young workers quickly transition to higher-paying and less routine occupations within the first decade of their careers. This paper studies how on-the-job learning shapes the impacts of automation shocks within and across career paths. I develop a dynamic general equilibrium model of the labor market in which young workers sort into occupations that differ in their learning opportunities. Combining the structure of the occupational choice model with large-scale résumé data, I recover a flexible on-the-job learning technology that rationalizes observed patterns of early-career occupational mobility. The calibrated model shows how an automation shock to one occupation can induce greater automation further up the occupational career ladder. For a broad-based automation shock, adjustments in workers' skill accumulation decisions provide an important margin of long-run labor-supply flexibility, substantially lowering the pass-through of automation exposure to relative wages.

Working Papers

1. "Bonus Question: How Does Flexible Incentive Pay Affect Unemployment Dynamics?" With John Grigsby, Jonathon Hazell, and Abdoulaye Ndiaye. 2026. *Forthcoming at American Economic Review: Insights.*

   We introduce dynamic incentive contracts into a model of unemployment fluctuations. Our main result is that wage cyclicality from incentives does not affect the response of unemployment to productivity shocks. The response of unemployment is the same, to a first-order, in two economies: one with flexible incentive pay, and another with exogenously fixed wages. This equivalence is due to movements in effort. Under the optimal incentive contract, firms' profits do not change when wages fall, because the effort of the worker falls too.

2. "Lifecycle Dynamics in Technology Adoption." With Alicia Zhang. 2026.

   Who drives the diffusion of new technologies? We provide novel evidence that more experienced software developers use newer programming languages than their less experienced counterparts. Leveraging panel data on individual-level programming activity, we find that developers continue to adopt newer languages as they gain more coding experience. The fact that less experienced developers use older languages is surprising, as we also show that newer languages offer a salary premium. We interpret these facts through the lens of a directed job search model featuring an individual technology adoption decision. In the model, workers must pay costs to switch technology vintages. Newer technologies offer higher wages and a lower cost of switching to the technological frontier, which incentivizes continuous upgrading. Shocks that reduce aggregate productivity, increase worker turnover, and reduce labor market matching efficiency slow the diffusion of new technologies.

Work in Progress

1. "Occupational Heterogeneity in Trends in the Earnings Cost of Job Loss"
2. "Labor Market Dynamics of US Inventors." With Xiang Zhang.
3. "Too Costly to Fire: Automation and Re-training with Labor Adjustment Costs." With Agustín Barboza.

Research Experience

2024	Research Assistant to Prof. Ezra Oberfield
2022	Research Assistant to Prof. John Grigsby
2019–2021	Senior Research Analyst, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Teaching

Princeton	SPI 512C: Macroeconomic Analysis for Policymakers—Advanced Track (TA, 2025)
Rice	MATH 354: Honors Linear Algebra (Grader, 2018)
	ECON 200: Microeconomics (TA, 2017–2019)

Professional Activities

Invited Presentations

2026	PhD Workshop in Labor and Behavioral Economics, CEBI
2025	Society for Economic Dynamics Annual Meeting

Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants

Princeton Data Driven Social Sciences Grant	*2026*
Princeton Program for Research on Inequality Research Grant	*2026*
Stripe Economics of AI Fellowship	*2025*
Princeton International Economics Section Summer Fellowship	*2024*
Princeton University Graduate Fellowship	*2021–2027*
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	*2021–2026*
Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, Rice University	*2019*
Gaston Rimlinger Prize in Economics (Best Senior Thesis), Rice University	*2019*

Additional Information

Skills	Bash/Shell, MATLAB, LaTeX, Julia, Python, SQL, Stata
Citizenship	USA

Last updated: October 2026