

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT GRADUATE APPLICATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Questions About the Application Process

Can the application fee be waived or deferred?

No, unfortunately, the Graduate School will not allow us to waive or defer application fees, and we cannot review applications received without the application fee. Please note that the fee for applying on-line is \$60, while the fee for submitting a paper application is \$75. To apply on-line go to <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/graduate/Gradapp.htm>

What tests are required?

GRE (and TOEFL scores for international students) are essential to us in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for admission. GMAT scores may be substituted for GRE scores, but the GRE is greatly preferred. The IELTS may be used in place of the TOEFL, although TOEFL is preferred. The GRE subject test in economics is no longer offered and we do not require the TSE for international students at this time.

Can I send copies of my GRE and/or TOEFL scores?

Yes, photocopies of test scores may be used until official copies can be provided. However, you **MUST** provide the original scores before enrolling at Binghamton University.

How are applications processed?

Applications are received first by the Graduate School – all application materials should be sent there directly, **NOT** to the Department of Economics. When an application is complete it is sent to the Economics Department. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and admission decisions are made at that time. At certain times of year this process may take longer than at other times due to large numbers of applications received.

Who should I contact to check on the status of my application and the supporting materials (test scores, transcripts, letters of recommendation)?

The Graduate School maintains a website at <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/check.asp> where applicants can access all current information on their application, as well as decisions regarding admission and funding. This site is updated daily by the Graduate School. It is not necessary to contact the Economics Department or the Graduate School unless you believe an error has been made.

What are the average scores of applicants recommended for admission?

The following are averages for Fall 2006. Note that these scores include applicants to both the MA and PhD programs.

International Students

Average GPA:	3.53
Average Verbal GRE:	487
Average Quantitative GRE:	766
Average Analytical GRE:	724 (based on 800)
	3.9 (based on 6)
Average TOEFL:	611

Domestic Students

Average GPA:	3.34
Average Verbal GRE:	505
Average Quantitative GRE:	714
Average Analytical GRE:	4.35 (based on 6)

How many students apply every year, how many get admission and how many get financial aid?

This year (2006) we had 130 applicants to the program, of which 114 were international students. Of these, 61 were offered admission by the Graduate School. The entering class of 2006 consisted of 19 students, including 5 MA students. Seven of these students were offered full or partial funding, and several students are sponsored by their home countries or other organizations.

Can MA credits or other graduate courses taken at another school be counted toward an economics degree at Binghamton?

Maybe. At the student's request the Economics Department can review credits received at another institution *on a course by course basis* and sometimes accept these courses and waive credits if the courses are deemed equivalent. PhD students should be aware that it is generally advisable to take core courses in micro and macroeconomic theory at Binghamton (even if they have previously been taken elsewhere) to prepare for comprehensive exams.

Can a student apply directly to the PhD program even if the student does not have an MA degree?

Yes. It is not necessary to have an MA degree before applying to the economics PhD program. Students may apply directly to the PhD program.

What are the application deadlines for the Economics Department?

The Economics Department deadlines, which are different from those of the Graduate School, are:

FALL ADMISSION ONLY

- March 1 for **PhD students seeking assistantships**
- August 1 for fall semester admission

Is spring admission allowed?

No. Students must enter in the fall semester, as it is impossible to build a schedule for this degree when starting in the spring.

My background in mathematics is somewhat weak. May I still apply?

Yes. Although a strong background in mathematics is preferred, the Economics Department offers courses in mathematics for economists to assist new students in acquiring the requisite math skills when necessary. Students whose credentials are otherwise strong will still be considered for funding.

Binghamton offers three MA tracks (traditional, applied, economics and finance) and two PhD tracks (economics, economics and finance). Are the application procedures different for each track?

No. Students apply to the Economics Department and, if accepted, may select the track AFTER they begin taking classes. The department does not evaluate applications differently based upon the desired track of study and there is no difference in the admissions requirements.

Where do graduates of the Binghamton University Economics Department find jobs?

This information is available at <http://econ.binghamton.edu/GradProgram/Careers.pdf>

Questions Regarding Costs and Financial Aid

How much does it cost to attend Binghamton University?

Current information regarding tuition, fees and other expenses can be found at http://bulletin.binghamton.edu/program.asp?program_id=815

If I want to apply for the departmental TA/RA/GA are there additional forms that I need to complete?

No. You only need to indicate in the appropriate box on the application that you would like to be considered for financial aid.

How much will an assistantship pay?

For Fall 2006, stipend amounts start at \$13,000 for the academic year, with negotiated annual raises. Additional enhancements are available in some cases. All assistantships include full tuition waivers and offer full health insurance at an extremely modest rate (currently around \$4 per pay period for a single person). The cost of living is quite low in Binghamton; therefore graduate stipends go further than at many other universities. For more information refer to <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/ps/livingcost.asp> and <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/ps/gradexp.asp>

When are financial aid decisions made?

Initial financial aid decisions are made in late March or early April. Students who will be offered aid are contacted as soon as these decisions are made. Information regarding the status of your request for aid may be found at the Graduate School's "Application Status Online Check" <http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/check.asp>

How is it determined who will receive financial aid?

In determining whom to consider for financial aid the following factors are reviewed:

- Standardized test scores (quantitative and verbal scores)
- Undergraduate courses and grades – mathematics courses are given an especially high priority
- Ability to communicate easily in English
- Fields of interest – it is important that your preferred field of study is an area that is offered by our department
- Letters of recommendation

Assistantship offers are made strictly on academic merit – not on financial need.

Will I increase my chances of receiving funding if I contact faculty directly?

No, individual faculty do not participate in the decision to offer funding to students. Those decisions are made by the Graduate Committee using their own criteria. It will NOT enhance your chances for funding if you contact individual faculty members, regardless of how well their research interests match your own.

How many students pursuing a PhD in Economics received assistantship/fellowship offers (tuition+stipend) in your department in Fall, 2006?

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total assistantships/fellowships available:	21	22	26	28
Total assistantships/fellowships offered to new students:	5	6	8	7
Assistantships/fellowships offered to new int'l students:	3	5	3	1
Total assistantships/fellowships offered to continuing students:	16	16	18	21

What are the average GRE scores and GPA for entering students who were offered funding?

For Fall 2006:	Average GPA	3.53
	Average Verbal GRE	530
	Average Quantitative GRE	751
	Average Analytical GRE	4.5 (based on 6)
	Average TOEFL (int'l students)	634

Do MA applicants have the same funding opportunities as PhD applicants?

The Economics Department is not generally able to offer assistantships or other funding to students who apply for the MA degree only.

If I am offered an assistantship how many semesters will I have support?

In general, PhD students with no previous graduate work may be supported for a maximum of four academic years (eight semesters). Those PhD students who enter the program self-funded and thereafter receive departmental support generally will be funded through their fourth year (eighth semester) of study. In some cases resources may become available to support all or part of a fifth year of study.

Questions for International Students

If I received a degree from an American institution do I have to take the TOEFL exam?

No; however, the Economics Department requires that all students who enroll in our program and who do not have English as a first language be evaluated through a free ESL exam given on campus.

If I receive an assistantship, will it cover all of my expenses?

Yes. If you are offered a full assistantship it will cover all of the mandated expenses. However, there may be some instances where only partial assistance is available. Therefore it is essential that you document **any** financial resources available to you when you apply, since you actually increase your chances for an assistantship if your financial documents are already on file.

How do I document personal or sponsor funds available for my study in the United States?

You should complete and return the International Student Financial Statement (ISFS) and return it, along with the required bank documents. If you do not have this form you may send a letter either from yourself or a sponsor stating that it is your (or their) intent to support your study up to \$NNNN (you or the sponsor would specify this amount) for at least ## years (you or the sponsor would specify the number of years). The letter must be signed and an original bank document must accompany the letter showing that at least the specified amount of money is on deposit.

Can I send my ISFS statement after I gain admission?

Yes, but that is not generally recommended. As stated in the previous response, you would enhance your opportunity to be considered for partial support if the documentation of SOME money is already on file with the Graduate School. At the very least, it would be helpful to have a statement from you that you **could** document up to \$NNNN for at least ## years if you are required to do so. Therefore, if you are not able to submit the ISFS, we recommend including a separate statement detailing how much money you COULD document if required.