Questions About the Application Process

Can the application fee be waived or deferred?

The application fee cannot be deferred. It may, however, be waived under certain conditions. See criteria below. The fee for applying online is $75. To begin your application, go to: http://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/apply

Per the Graduate School: We are able to grant application fee waivers only to McNair, EOP, HEOP, SEEK, Project 1000 and LSAMP undergraduate students and to GEM fellowship applicants. If you are eligible, complete the form at: https://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/docs-forms/Application_Fee_Waiver_Form.pdf. If you are a McNair, EOP, HEOP, SEEK, Project 1000 or LSAMP undergraduate student, submit a certified form or official letter from your undergraduate institution verifying your status. If you are a GEM fellowship applicant, submit a copy of your GEM interface homepage, indicating that your overall application status is complete.

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 are not accepted. 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?

No. Paper copy is not necessary or accepted. Submit official test scores electronically. Binghamton University's code is 2535. Be sure to select "Graduate School." (Test scores are received electronically weekly from the testing agency; Allow at least 1 week for application updating.)

How are applications processed?

Applications are received first by the Graduate School via the online application. Do NOT send application materials to the Department of Economics. When an application is complete it is made available electronically 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 https://gograd.binghamton.edu/account/login 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 minimum GRE scores of applicants recommended for admission?

We do not have an official minimum GRE score for admission. Offers are made on a competitive basis. However, the following data may help you assess the relative competitiveness of your scores:

According to recent research on successful applications to economics PhD programs in the U.S., the average GRE quantitative score was 772 (out of a possible 800, which translates to 161 on the most recent GRE quantitative scale), and the average GRE verbal score was 562 (which translates to 157 on the most recent GRE verbal scale). For a department comparable to us, the averages were 765 (160) and 573 (158), respectively.
In recent years, the GRE scores of successful applicants for our department are generally consistent with the above research result. Note, however, these are average scores. Students with lower GRE scores but outstanding performances in other areas can still be admitted to this department.

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

In recent years we typically have 60-80 applicants for the PhD program a year, of which about 20% are domestic applicants, and 80% are international. Typically about 30% of the applicants are offered admissions. 6-8 admitted students are offered financial aid. In the past few years, the entering class size has been between 8 and 14. The MA program typically has 70-80 applicants per year, of which 15% are domestic and 85% are international applicants. We offer admissions to about 15% of applicants. A typical entering class has 4-8 students. There is no financial aid for MA students.

**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**
  - PhD program: Deadline for review for fall admissions is February 1.
  - MA program: Rolling admissions. Review begins on February 1 and ends May 15.

  *International students should be aware of the time it may take to receive a visa when applying late.*

**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 two MA tracks (traditional, 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 [https://www.binghamton.edu/economics/placement.html](https://www.binghamton.edu/economics/placement.html)

**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://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/cost-aid-funding/](http://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/cost-aid-funding/)
If I want to apply for the departmental TA/RA/GA positions and funding are there additional forms that I need to complete?

No. There are no additional forms.

How much will an assistantship pay?

For Fall 2016, stipend amounts start at $17,000 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. The cost of living is quite low in Binghamton; therefore graduate stipends go further than at many other universities. For information regarding Student Life: http://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/student-life/; Housing and Transportation: http://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/student-life/housing-transportation.html; and for information on living in Binghamton: http://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/student-life/about-the-area.html.

When are financial aid decisions made?

Initial financial aid decisions are made in February, but the decision process typically extends to 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” https://gograd.binghamton.edu/account/login

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?

We typically make 6-8 assistantship/fellowship offers to our entering students every year.

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 recommends 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.
What is the minimum TOEFL scores required for admission?

We do not have an official minimum TOEFL requirement. However, we only admit students who have a good command of English that enables the students to write papers and teach economics without any difficulties. We prefer to admit students with good listening and speaking abilities. Most of our funded students, for example, scored more than 100 in TOEFL, and more than 20 in the speaking and listening sections. We also conduct telephone interviews before we make monetary offers.

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

If you are offered a full assistantship it will cover all of the mandatory 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 $N\text{NNN}$ (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 $N\text{NNN}$ 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.