

This document includes answers to several frequently-asked questions about the Economics Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Q. Would you send me a hard copy of your application forms and detailed information about the department?

A. Due to the high volume of requests, we no longer send paper applications. Please access our web site (<http://econ.bus.utk.edu>) where you can download the departmental application and recommendation forms. The application form is also an application for financial assistance (be sure to check the appropriate box at the top).

Q. What is the deadline for the submission of applications?

A. For domestic students, there is no deadline for admission. However, you should apply at least nine months prior to the fall term and allow at least three weeks for an application to reach the department. For international students, the University's application and admission deadlines are:

Fall semester - February 1

Spring semester - June 15

Summer semester - October 15

Please note that it is the policy of the Department of Economics to admit students for the fall semester only. Special requests for spring semester entry must be approved by the Graduate Director. The Office of Graduate and International Admissions must receive the application and fee prior to the application deadline. You must be fully admitted, including confirmation of bachelor's degree or equivalent and financial certification, prior to the admission deadline.

Q. What information is required for the application?

A. Please review all application and admissions information posted by the UT Office of Graduate and International Admissions (<http://admissions.utk.edu/graduate/>). Information on their web site supersedes information in this document.

Q. What is the GRE reporting code for the University of Tennessee?

A. The code for UT and for the Economics Department is 1843.

Q. I sent a photocopy of my GRE and TOEFL scores with my application materials. Can I send the official test scores after I am admitted?

A. Official test scores must be received by the Graduate School before review of the application begins. Their office will not evaluate your application without the official scores.

Q. Since ETS has changed the computer-based GRE to a paper-based test, do you accept computer-based GRE scores from China?

A. If the test was given after October 2002, the CBT is accepted.

Q. I cannot afford the application fee, so if I provide you with my GPA and scores for the GRE and TOEFL and copies of my transcripts, could you evaluate the information and tell me about my chances for admission and financial aid before I apply?

A. The application fee is a requirement of the Graduate School, not the Department of Economics. The Department cannot evaluate your application prior to your acceptance into the university by the Graduate School.

Q. I graduated several years ago and have been employed since graduation. Would recommendation letters from my employers be acceptable in lieu of letters from former professors?

A. You may include letters from your employers, but you should also include at least one letter from a former professor who is able to address your academic ability to complete a graduate degree.

Q. Do you review applications on a rolling basis?

A. Applications are reviewed on an annual basis during February and March for fall entry only.

Q. Is any work experience required for admission?

A. Previous work experience is not a requirement for entry or funding.

Q. Do you admit students for spring semester?

A. No, students are generally admitted only for the fall semester. This reflects in part the structure of the first-year curriculum, in particular the offering of micro I and macro I in the fall, and micro II and macro II in the spring; the first courses in micro and macro are not offered in the spring term.

Q. What courses will I be able to transfer from my master's program?

A. In most cases, few courses will transfer to the PhD program. Transfer credit will be determined on an individual basis.

Q. Will you accept GMAT and LSAT scores?

A. We strongly prefer GRE scores. The vast majority of students who apply to the program provide GRE scores and the faculty who review applications for entry and financial aid have greatest familiarity with the GRE.

Q. When will faculty begin to review the applications?

A. Review of applications begins in early February with decisions on awards being made by the first of March. Official award letters are mailed to the recipients as soon as a decision is reached by the Admissions and Awards Committee.

Q. I sent in my application during the months of November or December but haven't heard anything from you. Have you received my application?

A. We receive many applications each year and the majority of these are received between the middle of November through the end of January. It is impossible to acknowledge receipt of all applications. You will be notified by the Graduate School when a decision is made by the department. You will be notified by the department only if you are awarded an assistantship.

QUESTIONS ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION

Q. What qualifications must applicants have in order to be good candidates for admission?

A. The graduate school admits only students with superior academic records. An international student must have an equivalent four-year bachelor's degree with at least a B average on all previous coursework and a B+ on all previous graduate work. On various grading scales, this corresponds to:

- a. 14 on a 20 point scale;
- b. 80.0 from Taiwanese institutions;
- c. First Class or Division from Indian institutions;
- d. Upper Second Class Honours on various British systems

Q. What undergraduate GPA is required for admission and funding?

A. Although there are no specific guidelines for students who join our program with only undergraduate training, most successful applicants have a GPA well above 3.0. The Graduate Council requires a minimum GPA of 2.7 out of a possible 4.0, or a 3.0 during the senior year of undergraduate study. Applicants with previous graduate work must have a grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4-point scale or equivalent on all graduate work.

Q. What are the average GRE scores for admitted students?

A. The average percentile scores for admitted students are as follows:
Verbal = 81.9 Quantitative = 85.3 Analytical = 86.4

Q. Do I need an undergraduate degree in economics to be admitted?

A. Neither entry to the program nor funding is contingent on having an undergraduate degree in economics. However, some background in economics will be necessary to ensure a strong performance in the program.

Q. I already have a master's degree in economics, so can I enter the Ph.D. program?

A. Students with a master's degree in economics must pass the department's qualifying examinations in micro and macro theory. The best preparation for these examinations is completion of the core coursework in micro and macro. Most students who enter the program with a master's degree start their coursework over from the beginning. Students with a master's degree need only 24 hours of graduate credit to receive the Ph.D.

Q. What are the English language requirements for admission?

A. The language of instruction at The University of Tennessee is English, except in cases of advanced foreign language classes. Each applicant whose native language is not English must submit the results of the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL). A minimum score of 550 for a paper-based test or 231 for a computer-based test is required for admission consideration. The score must be no more than two years old from the requested date of entry. Applicants who have received a degree from an accredited U.S. institution in the past two years are exempt from the TOEFL requirement.

In addition, all students on financial aid whose native language is not English are expected to pass the SPEAK Test of spoken English. Students must pass this test in order to be permitted to teach. The Economics Department requires that students pass the speak test (unconditionally) by the beginning of the second year of study or funding may be jeopardized.

Q. How many students apply to the Ph.D. program each year, how many are admitted, and how many can get financial aid?

A. On average, we receive approximately 100 applications per academic year. We normally admit less than half of this total. Of those accepted, only the top 10-12 students are awarded financial aid in the form of an assistantship.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID DECISIONS

Q. What are the main requirements to receive an assistantship? What is the decision based on?

A. Assistantships are awarded to students with exceptional academic promise. Heavy weight is given to GRE scores, academic records at other universities, and letters of recommendation. Student interest and program need are important in assigning students to teaching versus research appointments.

Q. Is financial aid available for first-year international students?

A. Awards of financial assistance are based entirely on academic qualifications.

Q. Do you provide summer funding support?

A. Most students funded in the fall of their first year receive summer funding, although this cannot be guaranteed. The department typically has teaching positions, research centers often have summer opportunities, and there are research grant programs in the College of Business and in the broader university. Summer funding is contingent on funding availability and a student's standing in the program.

Q. Do you provide funding for students who seek only the master's degree?

A. Funding is generally targeted to Ph.D. students.

QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE IN THE PROGRAM AND/OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Q. What is the typical time required for the completion of an Economics Ph.D.?

A. Time to completion varies between 4 and 5 years for students who stay actively involved in their program of study. Funding for students in good standing generally does not extend beyond 5 years.

Q. Can I participate in the Ph.D. program on a part-time basis?

A. Students may participate on a part-time basis. However, this can lead to significant delays in completing the degree requirements. Core courses like micro, macro, mathematical economics and econometrics are not offered every semester, graduate field courses are offered every other year, and few if any courses are offered during evening hours. This creates problems in moving smoothly through the curriculum.

Q. Is a foreign language required?

A. The department has no foreign language requirement.

Q. Is insurance provided for graduate students?

A. Graduate student employees will be provided with University-paid health insurance. Eligible participants are graduate students employed at least 25% time as a Graduate Assistant, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Teaching Associate, or Graduate Research Assistant. The health insurance benefit applies to 9 month and 12 month appointments. If students already have insurance coverage through another insurance carrier, this would function as additional coverage. Graduate student employees may not elect to receive other compensation or benefits in lieu of the insurance benefit. The students may elect to add spouse or dependent coverage at their own expense. The Student Health Clinic administers the graduate student employee health insurance program. The health plan requires a referral by the Student Health Clinic. Graduate students enrolled in less than 9 hours and who have not paid the \$70 student health fee must pay the \$70 per semester in order to utilize the Student Health Service (prior to using the health plan).