Admission FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the application deadline?
The deadline is December 15, 2017, for enrollment starting in September 2018. We admit only once per year, with the program starting in Autumn quarter. You should aim to have all materials submitted by the application deadline, including test scores and recommendations, although a short grace period may be allowed for these items only.

Do you offer a master's degree?
We do not admit students to a terminal master's degree. Admission is only to the PhD program.

Should I contact a faculty member I'm interested to work with before applying?
This is not necessary, because our admission process is centralized, with decisions made by a committee, not by individual faculty members. Students do not choose a faculty adviser until the 3rd year of the program, after the completion of coursework.

If I send in my CV/transcript/paper, can you tell me my chances of admission?
Admission decisions are made based on a comprehensive evaluation of applications, in comparison with other applicants. We receive applications from far more qualified applicants than we can admit, so it is a competitive process. Given this, we cannot pre-review applications or indicate a chance of admission.

How long does the program take?
The program consists of two years of coursework followed by completion of a dissertation. This can occasionally be completed in 4 years, although 5 years is more common. Median time-to-degree in recent years has been 5.5 years.

Do I need to take the GRE/GMAT?
We do NOT accept the GMAT. All applicants must submit a valid GRE score, regardless of your prior level of education. Instructions for submitting your score are found here.

Do I need to take the TOEFL?
Applicants who are not native English speakers, regardless of citizenship, must submit a valid, official TOEFL score, unless they have completed a bachelor's degree at an accredited US university or a university in certain specific countries. More information can be found here. Priority for departmental funding is given to applicants who score at least 26 on the TOEFLiBT speaking section, although students scoring slightly lower may also be considered for funding.

Is there a separate application for financial support?
All applicants will be considered for funding unless they have specifically indicated that they have alternate funding. There is no separate application.

My semester/quarter ends after the application deadline. Should I wait to submit my transcript?
You must upload an unofficial transcript as part of your online application by the December 15 deadline. However, if you receive new grades after the deadline that are relevant to your application, please upload a revised unofficial transcript to replace the older one. Please do not mail official transcripts to the Economics Department. These are not required as part of the application, and will not be opened. If, and only if, you are offered admission, you will be provided with instructions for submitting an official transcript to the Graduate School.

Whom should I ask to write letters of recommendation for me?
A strong letter of recommendation requires the writer to both know you, your work, and your abilities well and know what it takes to succeed in a PhD program in economics. For this reason, most applicants will choose economics faculty members, particularly research advisers or faculty from whom they have taken several courses. In some cases, it may be appropriate to ask faculty in other academic areas, and for applicants who have been in the workforce for some time, a reference from a supervisor may also be appropriate. However, in all cases, remember that these are academic references, not personal ones. It can be especially beneficial for the writer to provide some context or comparisons for his/her evaluation, such as a comparison with other students from the applicant's program who went on to economics PhD programs.

When will I be notified of a decision?
Decisions and notifications are made on a rolling basis from February through to mid-April. You will be notified by email.
when a decision has been finalized.