

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS) FOR NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

What classes will I be taking?

Most graduate students take three four credit courses for a total of 12 credits, but *some* students will take 13 or 14 credits. All first year economics graduate students, both MA and PhD, are required to take ECON 500, Microeconomic Theory, ECON 501, Macroeconomic Theory, and ECON 502, Econometrics during their first semester. International students whose admission is provisional on taking ESL will be required to take the recommended ESL class as a fourth course. Students who want to increase their mathematics skills are encouraged to consider taking ECON 503, Mathematics for Economists, which is offered free of charge prior to the start of the semester. It will continue as a one-credit course during the semester, and students who plan to continue **must register themselves**. More information is available at http://econ.binghamton.edu/grad_newstudents.htm. Student with assistantships are also required to take a one-credit course – ECON 591, Seminar on the Teaching of College Economics, and will need to register for this course on-line.

What books are required for the courses I will be taking?

You should have received a link to the list of the required texts for the first semester courses in an earlier e-mail. They are also available on this site at http://econ.binghamton.edu/GradProgram/BookList_FS08.pdf

How do I register?

All new students will be registered for the three required courses by the Economics Department over the summer. Students who need additional fall courses, such as ECON 503, Mathematics for Economists or ECON 591, Seminar on the Teaching of College Economics, will need to register themselves on-line. The Economics Department computer consultant will be available in the department (LT 906) on **Friday, August 22 from 10:00 -11:00 AM** to assist any students who encounter problems with registration or in claiming their e-mail account.

How and when do I pay my tuition and fees?

The Student Accounts office is responsible for all billing and payments. Information on **FALL 2008** billing procedures can be found at <http://studentaccounts.binghamton.edu/paypro.htm>. PLEASE NOTE that bills for tuition and fees will not be created until AFTER you are registered – the Economics Department will register you for MOST of your courses as described above. These bills will be sent to your BINGHAMTON e-mail address (see below). Students who have been offered assistantships should deduct the tuition amount from the bill if it has not already been deducted. All students are responsible for paying any fees. These are not covered by tuition scholarships.

NOTE: All students **MUST** confirm their enrollment on-line via the registration software known as the BU Brain. The office of Student Accounts will be providing information regarding this procedure at a later date. **YOU MUST DO THIS EVEN THOUGH THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT DID THE INITIAL REGISTRATION FOR YOU.**

What should I do if I have questions regarding my bill that are not addressed above?

You should e-mail the Student Accounts office at stuacct@binghamton.edu

How can I send and receive e-mail when I arrive at Binghamton?

You **MUST** claim and set up your new Binghamton e-mail as soon as possible and before coming here. IT IS IMPORTANT for you to know that the Economics Department will ONLY use your Binghamton address in communicating with you after you arrive on campus, and other university offices are sending important information to that address already. You can learn your account information and new e-mail address at <http://busi.binghamton.edu/welcome.html>. If you prefer another e-mail system you may set up your Binghamton e-mail to forward to that system. Students may access their Binghamton e-mail, as well as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo or other internet accounts from the public computer PODs around the campus.

How do I obtain an Identification (ID) card?

ID photos will be taken in the Registrar's office in the Student Wing (SW) 119 beginning on **August 19** from 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM. It is strongly recommended that you do this prior to the start of classes on August 25. The ID card will be given to you within minutes of having your photo taken. Please note that most of these cards will be printed "Graduate Student" regardless of whether you are admitted to the MA or PhD programs. This is normal and you should not be concerned about it.

IN ADDITION, these ID cards **do not expire** and are good for the entire time that you are enrolled at Binghamton University. Do not discard them at the end of the academic year! There is a \$20 charge to replace lost/stolen/mutilated or damaged cards.

Who will be my advisor?

The advisor for all first year graduate students is the Director of Graduate Studies, Prof. Plassmann; however, since all graduate students will be taking the same courses, it is not generally necessary to meet with him prior to the start of the semester. He will be happy to meet with you during your first year at Binghamton and discuss any issues that you may have. Thereafter you may select your own advisor, generally based on relationships you have established with faculty whose research interests are similar to your own.

Do I have to take the ESL test?

Only those international students whose admission is PROVISIONAL are required to take the test **at this time**. ALL other students whose first language is not English will need to take this exam after their third semester. If you are proficient in English you will pass the test quickly.

What housing is available?

While university housing is not available to graduate students, there are numerous options off campus. Off Campus College (OCC), a division of the university stands ready to assist students in their relocation. The services they offer can be found at their website: <http://occ.binghamton.edu/> . Additional housing choices can be accessed through the local paper at <http://pressconnects.com/> . Additional information for international students can be found at <http://iss.binghamton.edu/admission/f08housingoff.html> . The various student organizations listed at <http://iss.binghamton.edu/admission/virhostnew.htm> may also be of some help to international students, and the Economics Department Graduate Mentors http://econ.binghamton.edu/GradProgram/GradMentors_FS08.pdf can answer many questions about housing.

What computer facilities will I have access to on campus?

There are numerous other PODs on campus, some of which are open 24 hours a day <http://its.binghamton.edu/facilities/pods> . The Economics Department, along with the Political Science Department also will be opening a new POD that will be restricted to graduate students from those two programs, and which will contain the most commonly used statistical packages. Details will be available soon.

What about health insurance?

All international students on F-1 and J-1 visas are mandated to be covered under the SUNY international insurance program. Information about this insurance is available through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and at their website: <http://iss.binghamton.edu/> . Students who have received assistantships and fellowships are eligible for insurance through the Graduate Student Employees Union. Information regarding signing up for this insurance will be available at the mandatory TA/GA Orientation held by the Graduate School. The rates are currently around \$5 per pay period for an individual.

Is there a source for specific information regarding my studies in the Economics Department?

The Economics Department's *Graduate Handbook* is available at http://econ.binghamton.edu/grad_handbook.htm . You should be aware that this is the 2007 edition, and that it is in the process of being updated to include changes. Still, it will give you a good overview of what to expect.

When do classes and exams start and end?

This information is available at <http://www.binghamton.edu/home/about/calendar.html>

What are the best websites for information about my studies at Binghamton?

<http://registrar.binghamton.edu> – Information concerning registration and records
<http://busi.binghamton.edu> – Registering for courses, paying bills, financial aid information, e-mail accounts, etc.
<http://www.binghamton.edu/studentaccounts/index.htm> - Student Accounts
<http://bubrain.binghamton.edu> – online tools and resources for students, faculty and staff, including instructions
<http://iss.binghamton.edu/> – Everything for and about international students
<http://econ.binghamton.edu> – The Economics Department website