

# School of Economics

## Admissions Strategy

### General Aims

The School considers applicants for all its programmes solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, ethnic or national origin, age (subject to the normal University regulations on admission), disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other distinction. We aim to attract high calibre students across all programmes. Academic ability and potential is judged in terms of previous academic training and qualifications, and in other skills (such as experience) both in the UK and abroad. The School also supports the University's 'flexible admissions' strategy of encouraging applications and entry from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

### Undergraduate Programme

#### *Aims*

The Undergraduate Programme aims to recruit high quality students from the UK and overseas. The overriding principle governing undergraduate admissions is that every student admitted is expected to thrive in the School's challenging academic environment and to progress satisfactorily to graduation.

#### *Policies*

Normally, entrants should have achieved strong A level results. Previous study of Economics is not a necessary condition for entry, though the study of mathematics at A level is viewed as strengthening an applicant's case. There are also general requirements relating to competence in English Language and Mathematics (normally grade A GCSE) and specific requirements relating to particular degrees (A level Mathematics is required for the BSc Economics and Econometrics and an A level in any modern language is required for BA Economics with a language). For those students who have taken A levels, the entry standard required may vary somewhat from year to year. Currently they are typically required to gain passes in at least three subjects, with grades at the AAA (or AABB if taking four A levels). The School also welcomes applicants with equivalent qualifications and has students who were accepted with a variety of qualifications, including European, French and International Baccalaureates, UK foundation courses, the Indian School Certificate, Malaysian STPMs, the Apolyterion and Chinese Senior High

School Certificate. For overseas students an approved English language qualification is essential with IELTS (band 7.0 overall including 7 in Reading and Writing and no less than 6 in Listening and Speaking) as the preferred test, though other qualifications may be accepted.

In addition to the criteria above, the School also considers applicant's performance at the AS and GCSE level, and the candidate's personal statement and the Head's reference on the UCAS form.

The School welcomes applications to the programme from well motivated and able mature students over the age of 21 and Access students. Many of these applicants have qualifications and experience that differ from the mainstream student. Given their diversity of background and special circumstances, the School may interview such students. In line with University policy, the School is also willing in appropriate circumstances to give credit for previous learning of mature students and exempt such students from parts or the whole of Year 1 of the Undergraduate programme.

The School welcomes students with disabilities and considers their applications on the same academic grounds as those of the other candidates. The special needs of such students are fully considered by the School, in the light of discussions with the student and the University Disability Officer.

The School will, in special cases, consider transfers from other Universities in the UK and overseas into year 2 of the Undergraduate Programme, where A level performance (or the equivalent) and undergraduate experience permit.

### *Procedures*

The School provides information about its Undergraduate Programme via various course guides and its own website. These, the School undergraduate prospectus and the University prospectus provide contact and further information for potential applicants. The School's undergraduate prospectus is sent to applicants on request, and distributed at education fairs and open days.

The admissions officers can be contacted by 'phone and email for information inter alia about qualifications, course structures, attitudes to 'gap' years, and study abroad opportunities.

Once applications have been made via UCAS and received by the School, the process of selection and offers is generally based on the information provided on education performance and experience on the UCAS application form. The standard A level entry applicant is not normally interviewed. Interviews are used for mature candidates and candidates with a less standard educational background or with special needs. All applicants that are made an offer are invited to the University on a School Visit Day. Candidates are introduced to the campus, non-academic activities in the University and to the School and its Undergraduate Programme at these events.

The University provides a flag to the School on UCAS applicant forms for candidates from low-participation neighbourhoods and backgrounds in support of its Widening Participation strategy. The School may vary the criteria for making an offer where there is evidence of strong potential.

## **Postgraduate Taught Programme**

### *Aims*

The Graduate Taught Programme aims to recruit high-calibre graduate level students from the UK and overseas. Normally, entrants should have taken an undergraduate degree in Economics (or the equivalent) at the benchmark level at least, such that the applicant has an understanding of the core theoretical analysis and quantitative techniques of economics. Where students have not taken an economics degree or a degree with a significant economics component, the School would look for students with compensating strengths in mathematical and statistical skills. Where applicants do not satisfy these requirements but do show the potential for graduate level work, the School may recruit them to the Postgraduate Diploma (with the opportunity for subsequent progression to a Master's course).

### *Policies*

The School's requirements for entry into the Masters programmes consist of:

- (i) a good Honours degree in economics or related discipline (normally a First or an Upper Second Class or equivalent), preferably with solid theoretical and quantitative elements. Applicants will be required to present documentary evidence to enable evaluation of their degree status. In exceptional circumstances, the University may admit students with alternative qualifications provided these are deemed to be of an equivalent standard.
- (ii) two supporting references, normally from the applicant's previous academic institution.

(iii) for applicants whose first language is not English and for whom language of instruction was not English, we require that they demonstrate that their English meets the minimum level of proficiency demanded by the School, namely British Council IELTS Band 7.0 or IELTS IBT 100 or a TOEFL (paper-based) grade of 600, or a TOEFL (computer-based) grade of 250<sup>1</sup>. Notwithstanding this, students may be required to take a pre-sessional Study Preparation Course offered by the Centre for English Language Education (CELE) in the University, covering language, study skills, social English and orientation to living in Britain. Candidates who do not meet the required level of proficiency in English will be required to take extensive courses at CELE, which offers a range of courses of one to nine months duration. In addition, applicants educated outside the UK are required to submit a transcript of their studies with their application.

For the Diploma in Economics the requirements are the same as (ii) and (iii) above but applicants are expected to have, or be about to secure, a first degree in an area that includes some undergraduate training in economics or an equivalent qualification (with a preference for quantitative subjects).

### *Procedures*

Information on the programme is available on the School's website and in the University and School Postgraduate Prospectus. Further advice and information is available from the Admissions Officer for the programme.

Completed applications, including application form, references and other relevant documents, are normally received by the Admissions Office which then forwards them to the Postgraduate Administrator in the School for consideration. We do not normally interview candidates, but rather base the decision on whether or not to offer them a place on their qualifications and references (and on language proficiency for candidates whose first language is not English).

## **Postgraduate Research Programme**

### *Aims*

The Graduate Research Programme aims to recruit high-calibre Masters level students from the UK and overseas. Preferably, applicants should have undertaken a Masters

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of IELTS no component of the overall grade should be below 6, and in the case of TOEFL a score of 5 on the test of written English is required.

degree in Economics (or the equivalent) which contained substantive theoretical, quantitative and IT-based components of the kind that provide a firm basis for subsequent research training. Good merit level performance or equivalent (i.e. minimum of 62% in a Masters equivalent to ESRC-RT standard) is normally required. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a degree of specialist knowledge of the proposed specific research field, as well as a wider understanding of other areas of economics. The ability to work in an independent, yet flexible, manner is very important.

### *Policies*

Applicants for research degrees are not normally considered for immediate entry to the PhD programme, but typically apply first for registration to the MPhil programme. Those applying to the MPhil programme would normally be expected to have, or expect to obtain, an MA or MSc in Economics or a closely related discipline from a recognised University. Those without such a qualification will normally be expected to register for, and successfully complete, a taught Masters degree in the School in the first year. The School will also consider applicants with alternative qualifications provided these are deemed to be of an appropriate standard. This requirement may be waived for candidates suitably qualified for well-focused MPhil research topics.

All applicants are expected to be fluent in written and spoken English. Those whose first language is not English must demonstrate that their proficiency in English meets the minimum level required by the School – British Council IELTS Band 7.0 or a TOEFL grade of 600. Students who do not meet the required level of proficiency will be required to take an intensive pre-sessional study preparation course offered by the University's Centre for English Language Education (CELE).

### *Procedures*

Information on the programme is available on the School's website and in the University and School Postgraduate Prospectus. Further advice and information is also available from the Admissions Officer for the programme. Students are encouraged to carefully investigate the current research activities and listed areas of staff research interests on the School's website before making a formal application.

Applicants for research degrees are required to complete a standard University form *Application for Admission to a Postgraduate Programme*. This form asks for information on higher education institutions attended and qualifications (either obtained or entered for) and on proposed research topics or interests.

Two signed and sealed academic references need to be submitted with each application. In addition, students educated overseas are required to submit a transcript of their marks and evidence of any formal English language qualifications.

Completed applications are first sent to the Admissions Office and subsequently forwarded to the Postgraduate Administrator in the School of Economics. After an initial screening to verify that candidates have the minimum necessary qualifications for entry into the Programme, applications are then disseminated for further consideration to a specific researcher or research group within the School whose research interests most closely identify with those of the candidate.

A decision on whether to admit a candidate to the Programme is then made on the basis of the overall strength of the application. Applicants still reading for a Masters will be given a conditional offer, stipulating the degree standard required for admission. Interviews are not necessarily held, and invariably not possible for overseas candidates. This is assessed via consultation between the Postgraduate Research Admissions Officer and potential supervisor(s)/members of the relevant research group. The core criteria examined include:

- The quality of qualifications previously obtained
- The strength of the academic references
- The originality and tractability of the proposed research topic
- The candidates potential to produce publishable research in the proposed area within 3-4 years.

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