MRes and PhD Economics at the University of Bristol

Postgraduate research at Bristol

Being a research student at the Department of Economics in Bristol has many advantages, including an enthusiastic research community, a welcoming atmosphere and excellent research facilities. The department is large enough to have expertise in many fields, but small enough to be friendly and to allow regular contact between students and staff members.

The high quality of the school’s research was illustrated in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) where 88 per cent of the Department of Economic's research was classified as either world leading or internationally excellent. Among Departments of Economics, Bristol ranked sixth in the UK in REF 2014. In the previous research assessment, RAE 2008, Economics at Bristol was ranked joint sixth.

Research facilities are very good, with extensive provision of networked software and databases, and online access to all leading journals. Full-time PhD students will typically be allocated desk space and a computer from the first year.

Research students are strongly encouraged to interact with other members of the school, and to attend the term-time seminar series, including external and internal speakers. PhD students also present their work once a year in a dedicated, internal seminar series which is generally well attended by both students and faculty. Students have many opportunities for further advanced training.

MRes Economics

The MRes in Economics is a freestanding, 12-month master’s degree designed for students with a potential interest in future study at PhD level in Bristol or elsewhere. It emphasizes the knowledge and skills needed for PhD research. The programme is also suitable for those planning to work as an economist outside academia, but seeking a good technical training.

The MRes consists of taught units and a master's dissertation written over the summer. See the programme catalogue for more details about the course structure and units available.

Candidates with a good MSc degree (or equivalent qualification) in economics or another quantitative discipline are encouraged to apply. Consideration will also be given to students with exceptional academic performance in undergraduate economics.

While the MRes Economics is a freestanding master’s degree, an increasing proportion of our PhD students are recruited from this programme.
MRes applications need to include undergraduate and postgraduate transcripts (if available) and two letters of reference. Note that if you are applying for entry to the MRes without funding, then a research proposal is not required. However, if you want to be considered for 1+3 funding, then a brief research proposal needs to be included with the online MRes application. For further information about MRes programme, including entry requirements, fees and how to apply, click here.

PhD Economics

The PhD in Economics is a research qualification based on preparation of a dissertation. The doctoral programme is offered on a full or part-time basis.

Master’s-level training in economics is required for admission. The standard entry route into the PhD is the MRes Economics programme, described above. However, entry from the MRes into the PhD is conditional on academic results and the availability of supervision. Candidates with an MRes or MPhil Economics degree from another institution, or a very strong MSc Economics degree, will also be considered for direct entry into the PhD programme.

Candidates entering the PhD programme without an MRes degree are required to take 60 credit points of taught units in their first year. For candidates entering with an MRes, there is no further required coursework, but students are encouraged to undertake further training in agreement with their supervisor.

For a full-time student, the minimum period of study for the PhD degree is three years, and the maximum is four years. Most students take four years.

PhD applications need to include undergraduate and postgraduate transcripts, two letters of reference and a research proposal. For more information about PhD programme, including entry requirements, fees and how to apply, click here.

Funding opportunities and deadlines

For externally or self-financed students there is no particular deadline for PhD Economics applications, while for MRes Economics the usual deadline is 1 July for students wishing to start the following September.

There is no funding available for students pursuing the MRes Economics as a stand-alone degree.

Those interested in pursuing the MRes followed by the PhD can apply for ‘1+3’ ESRC funding (one year of MRes followed by three years of PhD funding, with fees covered plus a living allowance). To be considered for 1+3 funding, an online application for the MRes programme needs to be submitted by 29 January 2019 at midday GMT. You also need to email erlend.berg@bristol.ac.uk, saying that you have submitted an application and would like to be considered for 1+3 funding. Note that even with 1+3 funding, admission from the
MRes to the PhD programme is conditional on academic progress and on finding suitable supervision.

ESRC funding for three years of PhD study (‘+3’ scholarships, covering fees and a living allowance) is also available. To be considered, submit an online application for the PhD programme by **29 January 2019 at midday GMT**, and email erlend.berg@bristol.ac.uk to say you have submitted an application and want to be considered for +3 funding. Applications submitted by this deadline will also be considered for University of Bristol scholarships.

The ESRC scholarships are administered by the South-West Doctoral Training Programme. Please see their website for further information on the scholarships and the associated terms and conditions.

Chinese citizens can apply for four years of PhD funding from the China Scholarship Council. To be considered, the PhD Economics application needs to be submitted online by **18 January 2019**, and you also need to email erlend.berg@bristol.ac.uk to say you have applied and want to be considered for CSC funding.

Funding may also be available through the PhD programme in Advanced Quantitative Methods. While this is distinct from the PhD in Economics, it is an inter-disciplinary programme which may allow students to have one supervisor in economics and another in, for example, geography, health or education.

**The research proposal**

Research proposals are required for all PhD Economics applications. Your proposal does not need to be more than two pages or so in length (but can be longer), but should seek to convey the main themes you would like to investigate in a way that is clear and concise. Ideally, you will provide a motivation for why the topic or question you want to study is important, a brief overview of the existing literature and how you will contribute to it, and give an indication of relevant models or data that your work could draw upon. Normally, the more specific you can be on approach, methodology or identification, the better.

It is essential that your proposal lies within the research and supervision interests of one or more staff members. Where a research proposal does not lie within the supervision interests of one or more staff members, it will typically be rejected.

Developing a research proposal is a necessary part of the application process as it provides a basis for decision-making, and helps to make sure that you get the most appropriate supervisor for your research. However, it is understood that research plans change and the proposal is not necessarily binding on your dissertation work if admitted.

If you are applying for entry to the MRes without funding, then a research proposal is not required. However, if you want to be considered for 1+3 funding, then a brief research proposal (say, half a page) needs to be included with the online MRes application.
Want to know more? Try the following

- The [MRes/PhD page](#) at the Department of Economics.
- [Research](#) at the Department of Economics.
- Potential [supervisors](#).
- MRes Economics [course structure](#).
- The [MRes Economics](#) entry in the university study catalogue, including entry requirements, fees and how to apply.
- The [PhD Economics](#) entry in the university study catalogue, including entry requirements, fees and how to apply.
- General advice on [funding and living expenses in Bristol](#).
- Find out what happens [after you apply](#).
- The University’s [Accommodation Office](#) can often help graduate students to find somewhere to live.
- General advice and support for [international students](#).
- [English language support](#).
- University of Bristol [alumni discount](#).

If you still have questions, feel free to email [erlend.berg@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:erlend.berg@bristol.ac.uk).