

Department of International Economics
**FAQs on the PhD in International
Economics**

Who can apply?

Admissions are decided on the basis of individual files. Most candidates hold a Master's degree in economics with high marks. We consider both candidates from our own MIS programme in economics, as well as candidates from outside universities with a top reputation. If you are interested in the PhD programme but do not yet hold a Masters degree, an option is to enter the Master in International Economics, and apply for the PhD in your second Master year using our "fast track" option.

What does it prepare you for?

The PhD programme trains you to undertake innovative research in international economics. Our graduates have secured positions in prominent policy institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the research departments of central banks. While our training is focused on policy application, many graduates have secured positions in academia.

How is the programme structured?

The programme consists of classes (in English) and the research dissertation.

- Classes cover a sequence of two courses in the first two semesters, either in international macroeconomics or international trade. In addition, students follow a class in advanced econometrics in the second semester.
- While there is no requirement to take elective classes, you have the option of following classes in economics or other departments of the Institute as an auditor, subject to approval of the Professor.
- The dissertation is the central element of the programme. You will choose a Professor to be your academic supervisor in the first year. You will submit and defend a dissertation proposal, known by its French acronym MPT (**M**émoire **p**réliminaire de **t**hèse) by the end of the third semester. That proposal describes your research plan and you will be expected to have clearly identified your research question, show a good grasp of the related literature, as well as have a clear plan for the methods and data you intend to use. The dissertation usually takes the form of three chapters written under the direction of your supervisor, each of which is suitable as an independent paper. We allow for co-authorship of chapters, but expect you to demonstrate the ability to undertake research on your own. Students usually have one chapter ready by the beginning of their fourth year, which they use as their job market paper to secure employment.
- The credit requirements are for 18 credits (ECTS) from the three core classes.

Can I follow classes outside the Institute?

Yes. You can take classes in other institutions as auditors, subject to approval by your supervisor.

You can also apply for the Gerzensee doctoral programme in economics administered by the [Gerzensee training center](#) of the Swiss National Bank.

Is financial support available?

Yes. Financial support takes the form of teaching assistantships, scholarships (both administered by the Institute) and research assistantships (usually administered by Professors using external funding). You can apply for support for your first year when applying to the Institute. Applications to obtain support for subsequent years are submitted during the spring semester for funding that will start in the next fall semester.

While we cannot commit to funding all of our PhD students, all PhD students have been able to secure some source of funding.

What is the work atmosphere like?

Very collegial and stimulating. Each year we admit a small number of PhD students (typically between 3 and 6). This allows for close contact between students and faculty members. The economics section fully recognises that PhD students will become colleagues in a short time and we value the contribution of the students in the life of the economics section.

There is also a cooperative atmosphere among students. PhD students elect a representative who is in regular contact with the faculty and the administration and attends most departmental meetings.

What are the opportunities to learn about and present research?

Several. We hold a research seminar where outside speakers come about every two weeks to present papers that are either recently completed or in progress. This seminar series attracts prominent researchers and gives students an exposure to the current research topics in international economics. The economics departments of the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne are also a short distance away and offer seminar series.

In addition to the seminar series, the section hosts a weekly workshop known as the BBL (Brown Bag Lunch) where PhD students present work in progress. This is a very useful opportunity to learn what your fellow students are doing and receive feedback on your own research.

We also hold a "PhD day" once a semester. Each PhD student gives a 10-minute overview of her/his current research and obtains feedback from other students and faculty members.

The economics section also encourages students to present their work at economics conferences and submit it to journals, and offers a contribution towards the expenses this involves.

What do our PhDs go on to do?

The Institute is well known for preparing students to work in international organisations, central banks and national administrations, and some graduates choose to pursue academic careers. The combination of advanced knowledge of up-to-date theories and methodologies and our emphasis on real-life uses of economics is highly appreciated by employers like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the OECD and many other policy-oriented institutions where alumni develop highly successful careers.

How to apply?

Admission is organised at the Institute level. Interested students are kindly asked to follow the General Admission Procedure to the Institute's programmes. In addition to the general admission conditions, the Economics department requires applicants to the PhD programmes to take the GRE test (school code: 2258; department code: 1901).

What else do I need to know?

- Get acquainted with two core competencies required for your PhD-experience: [Doing research](#) and [presenting your research](#).
- Check the [student toolbox](#) for further information, helpful forms and guidelines.
- If you have any additional questions about being a student in Economics at IHEID, please email studentrepphdeco@graduateinstitute.ch