

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON

Department of Economics

**WELCOME NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS!**

FROM: The Graduate Student Executive (GSE)  
DATE: July 29, 2009  
RE: General Advice for Incoming Economics Students

The Graduate Student Executive would like to welcome you to the Queen's Economics Department (QED). This note provides some additional information about the department. We hope you have an enjoyable and successful experience at Queen's!

**Please note this is our informal advice to incoming students and does not represent the official policy of the department. For official policies please consult your copy of "QEDetails" (sent to you earlier or available on-line).**

SECTION A: Academic Advice
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1. There are two types of courses: (1) required *core courses*; and (2) elective *field courses*. MA students take a different core sequence than PhD students. MA students must complete the following three courses: ECON 810 (micro) which is only offered in the fall; ECON 815 (macro), offered only in the winter; and ECON 852 (quantitative methods/econometrics) which is offered in both the fall and winter semesters.

Check course offerings for electives and try to balance your workload. Taking four courses in the first term is tough, so most students take three in the fall and four in the winter. There are also a few courses offered in the spring term (May and June). Ultimately, it's your choice.

Choosing your electives strategically can also help your job search. For instance, the Bank of Canada and Finance Canada typically look for students who have some background with applied econometrics, time-series and macro. Taking Industrial Organization courses may help for Industry Canada and the Competition Bureau. Labour Economics courses will be useful for Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada.

Elective courses that require term papers are a good starting point for your MA essay. Also when choosing your course load ensure you have sufficient time to finish your essay before the end of the summer (i.e. before you leave Kingston). Students who leave Kingston and/or start fulltime jobs before their

essays are done often significantly delay their graduate date. This is important because you continue paying tuition until the essay is finished.

PhD students must take six courses in their first year. The majority of students take ECON 811 and 813 for microeconomics; ECON 816 and 817 for macroeconomics; and Econ 850 and 851 for econometrics. Both micro courses must be successfully completed to take the micro comp, and both macro course for the macro comp.

Note that some courses and instructors are not always available for the second year PhD courses, so you should ask which courses will be offered each year. If possible, try to finish your course work by the end of your second year unless there are courses offered later that you want. Alternatively, you can always audit interesting and useful courses in third and fourth year.

2. International students may not be familiar with the system of one-term courses. Courses can be dropped (and added) during the term in which they are being taken. Thus, your initial course decisions need not be binding. The final dates for course changes can be found in QEDetails. Course change forms are available in the Graduate Office.
3. In general, be prepared for the rapid pace at which courses progress. You will probably have assignments to do within a week of the beginning of classes. Midterm exams are generally held around the end of October and final exams in mid December. Copies of previous year's exams are available in the Graduate Office and online.

Specific funding details are provided in QEDetails. PhD students (and some MAs) should apply for SSHRC and OGS awards to remain eligible for some funding opportunities.

4. Occasionally PhD students have been allowed primary credit for courses taken in other departments, e.g., Business, Mathematics, Political Science, and Computer Science. You should consult the department concerned for a course outline. Note, however, that you must obtain the approval of the Coordinator of Graduate Studies.
5. Rachel Ferreira (Dunning 208) is in charge of teaching and/or research assistantships. Once you are given your assignment you should seek out the instructor quickly to arrange the timing of your work. Avoid letting work build up until the end of term when it will clash with your exam preparation.
6. Jill Hodgson (Dunning 208) arranges office allocation for graduate students and requires a \$30.00 key deposit from MA students and \$50.00 for PhD students. This will cover a key to Mackintosh Corry Hall, Dunning Hall and

your office. With limited space and a large influx this allocation will be difficult. Please be patient.

#### SECTION B: QED and GSE Info

The QED is run on a consultative basis. In arriving at decisions, the Department Head consults with faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students. The GSE represents the graduate students in such consultations. Other activities carried out by the GSE include the administration of course evaluations and the organization of social and sporting events. The GSE will have two meetings, the first in late September/early October, and the second in late May/early June, at which any concerns or suggestions can be expressed. Feel free to talk with or e-mail GSE members to express your concerns.

A schedule of orientation activities being conducted by the University wide Graduate Student Society (SGPS) has also been posted and is in your registration kit.

#### SECTION C: Queen's University and Kingston

The following information may be useful:

##### *Library:*

- Many working papers and articles are freely available on-line. However, many published books or journals require subscriptions, or you may want a textbook as reference material. Stauffer Library, located directly across Union Street from Dunning Hall, is the main library for economic students. It is modern, comfortable and generous in its open hours. It tends to get very crowded during the undergraduate teaching term. You may benefit from accessing the library catalogue and downloading articles from remote terminals.
- Books borrowed by graduate studies are charged out for the entire term, subject to recall. The important thing to remember is that you have the right to recall books that are out on circulation.
- Students should find the Government Documents Unit on the lower floor of the Stauffer Library particularly helpful. It is an excellent collection (Queen's is a depository for both the Government of Canada and the United Nations and its agencies), there are data files available directly on computer, and the staff in Documents are especially helpful.
- Queen's has a relatively decentralized library although most of what is of interest to economics students will be found in Stauffer. Other specialized locations that may be of interest include the Engineering and Science Library, and the Law Library (which has duplicate copies of some works in economics). An extensive collection of prepublication discussion papers in economics is available in the Malcolm Urquhart Reading Room on the third floor of Dunning Hall.

- In recent years library acquisitions have been cut back severely and we have dropped subscriptions to many journals. Nevertheless, if you notice gaps and if there are items you think we should add to the library collection feel free to bring them to the attention of Professor Frank Lewis who is chair of the department's library committee. It is also possible to borrow journals and books from other libraries using the interlibrary loans service located on the main floor in Stauffer Library.

*Malcolm Urquhart Reading Room:*

- Located on the third floor of Dunning Hall, the Malcolm Urquhart Reading Room contains all Queen's Economics Discussion Papers, old MA and PhD theses and many other economic resources. It is open from 8:30 to 4:30 on weekdays. Working papers and theses can be signed out. Ask one of the graduate students to show you the Reading Room. Elvira Posthumus (Dunning 321) looks after the Reading Room.

*Food Outlets:*

- In the John Deutsch University Centre (JDUC) there is a Tim Horton's, a Pizza Pizza and a Grill. There is also the Queen's Pub located on the second floor of the JDUC, as well as a coffee shop. On the main concourse (second floor) of Mackintosh Corry Hall there is a Pita Pit, grill, and Pizza Pizza. There are also on Campus meal plans available. Off campus, Kingston offers a large variety in restaurants. Continuing students will be able to tell you their favourites. The Grad Club also offers reasonably priced lunch during the term.

*Stores:*

- The A&P store at Barrie and Brock is the nearest supermarket. It is open 24 hours. The Food Basics store at Barrack and King is not too far either, and offers a more interesting quality/price ratio. The Kingston Centre at Bath and Princess contains a Loblaws. John's Deli at the corner of Princess and University is a favourite for cheeses and BBQ items. There are a variety of other stores in the downtown section of Princess. Shopping bargains can be found in the Wednesday and Saturday editions of the "Whig Standard".

*Book Shop:*

- Texts can be purchased at the Campus Bookstore in Clark Hall. Keep any receipts since if you drop a course you may be able to return no longer required books for a refund. Used bookstores don't usually have a very good selection of economics texts. However, for general reading you can find a few good used bookstores in the downtown section of Princess Street.

### *Movies:*

- Downtown on Princess there is the Capitol theatre that shows Famous Players first run films. There is also the Screening Room on Princess that shows a broader spectrum of films from foreign films and smaller films to second runs of general release films (see <http://www.moviesinkingston.com/sr/>).

### *Sports Centre:*

- Located on Union alongside the JDUC, the sports centre contains a variety of facilities including nautilus machines, a weights gym, squash, tennis and basketball courts, swimming pool, and an ice skating rink. Use of the facilities is free, as it is included as part of your student activity fee. Tennis, badminton and squash racquets can be rented for a nominal fee at the centre. An additional fixed payment entitles you to a locker and laundry/equipment pack on each visit. Brochures detailing recreational clubs, instructional sports skills, and intramural sports are available from the centre.

### *Team Sports:*

- The Economics summer soccer teams have a long history of success and are always looking for new players. In the winter students organize to play indoor soccer. Students have also organized volleyball, basketball, and ultimate frisbee games.
- The Phys.Ed Centre (PEC) organizes Intramural Sport for the fall and winter terms. Intramural sports include basketball, innertube waterpolo, volleyball, soccer, hockey, badminton etc. Students can put in teams or individually sign up on other teams. The sports are played at many different levels and are a great way to meet other students. There is an Athletic Information Night and Sign-Up on in the first two weeks of September in the Ross and Bartlett Gyms. See the PEC for details.

### *Immigration:*

- Canadian Immigration is located in the Government Building (322 Brock Street). Visas cannot be renewed at the Kingston office. To renew your visa you must mail your application (available from the Kingston office) to the central immigration office. This process takes about 4-6 weeks. If you have any concerns regarding immigration, see the staff at the International Centre in JDUC.

### *Post:*

- Kingston's main post office is located in the Government Building, located at the corner of Bagot and Clarence. On Campus there is a post office inside the JDUC. Graduate Student mailboxes are located in the Graduate Studies Office.

*Telephone:*

- There is a Bell Canada Phone centre at the Kingston Centre. You can arrange for connection and pick up your phone there. Bell also maintains an outlet in Mackintosh-Corry at the beginning of term.

*Health Insurance:*

- All students must take out Health Insurance. This year, the SGPS Health Plan covers 80% of the costs of drugs and services. You may opt-out if you have another health plan. International students are no longer covered by the Province of Ontario and must purchase UHIP, an equivalent plan organized by Ontario universities. UHIP is compulsory for all international students. Students should contact the International Students Centre in the JDUC for further information.

*Bank:*

- There is no bank on the university grounds. Toronto Dominion Bank maintains bank machines in Mackintosh Corry Hall and in the JDUC and the Bank of Montreal has a cash machine on Clergy St. W., just behind the sports centre. Full service banks are located at the corner of Barrie and Princess and King and Clarence (Bank of Montreal), King and Brock (TD) and Bagot and Brock (CIBC). There is also a Canada Trust at the corner of Princess and Bagot.

*Health Services:*

- Located on Queen's Crescent. Fill out the questionnaire that you receive with your registration package. You are under no obligation to restrict yourself to the Queen's Health Services. Many students attend physicians off-campus. The Health plan covers this as well.

*Accommodation:*

- This is probably your primary concern at the moment. At this stage most of the Queen's units will be filled. However, one-bedroom apartments in An Clachan sometimes become available. Register with Queen's Housing (169 University Ave.) and watch notice boards for sublets. There is a listing office for private units at 169 University Avenue. Some agencies offer what appear to be attractive apartments at reasonable prices. They require you to pay a fee before viewing their lists, however. In the past, people have found that the lists don't match the advertisements. Therefore, be careful when dealing with these agencies.

*Clothing:*

- To those of you that have not experienced a Canadian winter, we suggest that you ask for clothing tips and shop early. A well insulated coat, gloves, and a pair of boots are the basic necessities.

*Entertainment:*

- The Grad Club on Barrie at Union offers two bars, a TV room and a games room. They usually have entertainment on weekends. There is another pub in the JDUC. Alfies, the undergraduate pub, often has live bands during term. Several pubs can be found Downtown. The Toucan/Kirkpatricks on Princess is a department favourite. There is also the Brew Pub on Clarence and the Pilot House on Wellington, and Elixir off Division. For the more active there are dance bars located on Ontario St. (Cocamo), and on Princess St., (Stages and A.J.'s Hangar and the Grizzly Grill).