

Study economics in the UK

Where can I study economics in the UK?

The UK has three of the ten best universities for economics in the world – London School of Economics and Political Science (eighth), the University of Oxford (ninth) and the University of Cambridge (tenth).¹

In total, 102 universities offer degrees in economics, with more than 1500 courses to choose from.²

What's the difference between finance and economics?

Finance and economics do overlap, but they involve different skills and appeal to different students. Finance is quite specialised. It focuses on the direct use and management of money through the study of specific topics such as markets, prices and interest rates. Economics on the other hand is a lot broader, exploring how money and resources influence society through social, political, and behavioural lenses.

What is the application process?

Most economics courses in the UK will expect three A-levels of AAA, one of which is mathematics. Typical requirements for International Baccalaureate will be around 36 points, with an IELTS of 6.5 overall, and no lower than 6.0 in any one component.

How long does it take to graduate?

Economics undergraduate degrees typically take around three years to complete in the UK.

Postgraduate degrees are usually between one and two years. Many universities also offer an integrated master's degree, which allows you to complete both the undergraduate and postgraduate components in four years of full-time study.

You will also find a wide range of joint-honours degrees to choose from, where economics is combined with related subjects such as law, history, and politics.

What is the course structure?

¹ [QS Top Universities, 2025](#)

² [UCAS, 2025](#)

Most undergraduate economics degrees in the UK take three years, with the option of a placement or study abroad year. Postgraduate degrees typically last one year full time. Early in the course, you'll cover core economic theory and quantitative methods, then choose from optional modules as your interests develop. Many universities also offer foundation years for international students, as well as integrated master's options. Courses often include real-world case studies, data analysis, research projects, and econometrics training – giving you the tools to apply economic thinking in practice.

What will I study?

Economics degrees in the UK offer a broad foundation in core areas like microeconomics, macroeconomics, mathematics, and statistics. You'll also explore how economic thinking applies to real-world issues such as trade, inequality, development, and the environment. As you progress, you can tailor your studies to your interests – with options in behavioural economics, international finance, political economy, and more. Many programmes are available as joint honours with subjects like politics, finance, or data science. At both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, you'll develop strong analytical, quantitative, and critical thinking skills that are valued worldwide.

Why is the UK a good choice to study economics?

The UK has a long and respected tradition in economics, producing world-renowned thinkers like Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes. With globally ranked universities, an advanced curriculum, and strong industry links, the UK is a leading destination for economics students. Fifteen Nobel Laureates in economics have studied or taught at the London School of Economics alone.

Are there any scholarships for studying economics?

There are often funding options available for international students who want to study economics in the UK. These range from part-funding, for example paying part of your fees, to full-funding which covers programme fees, living expenses, and return flights to the UK.

You can search our database of scholarships at study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships-funding and check with individual university websites for institution-specific opportunities.

What are my work options after I graduate?

A UK economics degree can lead to careers in finance, policy, consulting, and beyond. Graduates often become economists, analysts, accountants, or advisers in the public and private sectors. The average starting salary is £34,135.³

The UK's Graduate route allows international students to apply to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, upon graduation. International students who have successfully completed an undergraduate, master's degree or PhD have the option to apply to stay in the UK for an agreed period, following their studies. The Graduate route does not require you to secure sponsorship.

³ [Institute of Student Employers, 2024](#)

Study UK

To find out more about studying economics in the UK and to find a course, visit study-uk.britishcouncil.org

