



The Paul H. Nitze
School of Advanced
International Studies

JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY

International Economics | M.A. Academic Requirements

All candidates for the M.A. degree must complete a concentration in the field of international economics. The concentration consists of a series of course requirements and economics electives.

Course requirements for the concentration in International Economics consist of three levels: (1) [fundamental economic theory courses](#) in microeconomics and macroeconomics, (2) [core courses in international trade and monetary economics theory](#) and (3) [two additional elective economics courses](#) offered through the International Economics Program.

To complete the first level, students must demonstrate knowledge of microeconomics and macroeconomics at the intermediate level. These are typically second-level courses. This can be done either by taking and passing the SAIS Microeconomics and Macroeconomics courses—during [Pre-Term](#) or during a regular academic term—or, if qualified, by passing [waiver exams](#). We strongly recommend students attempt the waiver exams for Microeconomics and Macroeconomics prior to matriculation at SAIS. For students with a stronger mathematics background and a deeper interest in economic theory, SAIS also offers accelerated versions of the Microeconomics and Macroeconomics courses (Microeconomics in Pre-Term; both courses in a regular academic term). These accelerated courses cover the same material taught in the regular courses but in more depth and at a quicker pace by greater emphasis on mathematical methods.

For the second level, students must demonstrate knowledge of international trade and monetary theory. This can be done either by taking and passing the International Trade Theory and International Monetary Theory courses during a regular academic term or, if qualified, by passing [waiver exams](#). We strongly recommend students attempt the waiver exam in Trade and Monetary Theory before the end of their first semester at SAIS. SAIS offers accelerated versions of the International Trade Theory and International Monetary Theory courses for students who have strong quantitative skills. These accelerated courses cover the same material taught in the regular courses during a regular academic term but are designed for highly motivated economics students and those with career interests in economics.

The third level requires students to choose from among the many [elective courses](#) offered in the International Economics Program. Students must pass at least two additional elective courses from the International Economics Program offerings. Many students choose to take more than the minimum, and the program offers an array of lecture and seminar classes in the areas of advanced theory, quantitative methods, international finance and development economics.

Students who pass the waiver exams for International Trade Theory and/or International Monetary Theory must take additional elective courses in their place. The minimum course requirement for the concentration, beyond Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, is four courses offered through the International Economics Program.

IMPORTANT:

Substitution Policy in the event of a waiver of International Trade or Monetary Theory

Students that successfully pass the trade or monetary waiver exam will be given credit for having completed that course. However, students will then be required to substitute an additional economics elective course (any) for the trade and/or monetary waiver. This is in addition to the two economics electives already required to fulfill the economic concentration and earn the M.A. degree.

Thus students may be waived out of--by passing the waiver exam--a maximum of four courses (Micro, Macro, Trade and Monetary). However, since a Trade or Monetary waiver must be substituted with an economics elective, all students in the M.A. program must take at least 4 courses through the International Economics Program at SAIS.

MA Oral Exam to compete for Honors

The M.A. oral exam tests students' knowledge of international economics and their chosen functional or regional concentration. Exams are held in August, December and May and are scheduled by the SAIS Registrar's Office. Only the top 30 percent of the student body are eligible to compete for honors. The 30 percent cutoff is determined by students' GPAs after their third semester (after the second semester for students who have advanced standing of one semester). Students with conferral dates of August or December will be selected to compete for honors based on the previous May's GPA cutoff.

Two examiners administer the oral exam: a full- or part-time professor from the student's functional or regional program, and an international economist from the SAIS faculty or from the local academic, government or policy community. If a student is pursuing a third concentration, three examiners will administer the oral exam.

Specialization

Students with a strong interest in a particular area of economics may choose to pursue a specialization within that area. Specializations are offered in three areas: Development Economics, Economic Theory and Quantitative Methods, and International Finance. The specializations require a minimum of four courses beyond International Trade Theory and International Monetary Theory and are intended primarily for those with a strong background in economics. Completing the requirements for a specialization results in a notation of the specialization on the student's transcript. Specific course requirements for these specializations are available on the International Economics Program Web page and should be consulted in designing the student's program of study over the two years.

- [Specialization in Quantitative Methods and Economic Theory](#)
- [Specialization in International Finance](#)
- [Specialization in Development Economics](#)

Pre-Term

The International Economics Program offers a [Pre-Term Program](#) during August prior to the regular fall academic term. Pre-Term gives students an opportunity to satisfy the microeconomics and/or macroeconomic requirement in an intensive format before matriculating into the degree program. Participation in Pre-Term gives incoming students an enormous advantage, providing a head start on meeting the requirements of the economics concentration and allowing flexibility in planning the course of study. For more information, see the [Pre-Term Web page](#).