

Welcome to the Graduate Program in the Department of Economics at Iowa State University!

We are very pleased that you will join us beginning Fall 2020. By this time you should be receiving information from a variety of University offices. New student information can also be found online on the [Economics Department new student website](#).

Items covered in this letter:

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Math Camp (August 3 – August 14)

While there is no credit offered and no fee charged for this informal math review course, it is extremely important that all students starting the Ph.D. core in the fall attend math camp. Students admitted to the M.S. track of the Ph.D. program (i.e., starting with 500-level courses) are also strongly encouraged to attend.

This year's Math Camp will cover a range of mathematical tools including essential elements of calculus, linear algebra, and static optimization. These are tools you will need to be successful in your first year PhD economics courses. You will use these tools/techniques throughout your program and career as a Ph.D. economist. The camp will be held from 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon and from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. during the first two full weeks of August: Monday – Friday starting August 3 and ending August 14.

On **Monday, August 3rd**, we will hold a welcome meeting for all students attending math camp. At noon, we will have a lunch and distribute information about your office assignments and keys. At 1:00 p.m. you will break into small groups with current graduate students who will help you get your University ID card and fulfill a variety of other tasks.

During the first week of math camp, international students will attend a check-in orientation with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) that will cover getting your IDs, completing I-9 forms, and information about social security numbers. International students cannot sign up for payroll until after this check-in is completed.

For information on housing options during math camp, please see the [housing](#) section on page 2.

Orientation Week (August 17 – August 21)

This is a week of orientation meetings at the department, college, and university level for new students. If you have not yet done so, students will get IDs, e-mail addresses, keys, and students on

assistantship will sign up for payroll. International students will be able to take the Graduate English Placement Exam and the Oral English Certification Test. They will also receive information from the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). A detailed schedule of the week's activities will be sent to you later this summer. However, it is advised that you block off the entire week as there will be activities on most days. This is especially true for international students. The first day of classes for the fall semester is Monday, August 24th. Dates and deadlines for the academic year can be found [here](#).

Housing

On-Campus Housing - The [Department of Residence](#) offers several different types of housing on campus.

Off-Campus Housing – There are many apartments and houses for rent/sale throughout the Ames community. Please see the [Housing](#) section on the new student website. We have also compiled a “Housing Recommendations” handout and have posted it on the website for some tips and thoughts from current graduate students.

Options for housing during Math Camp (August 3 – August 14)

1. For students living in on-campus housing during the school year information about early move-in options is available from the Department of Residence.
2. Off-campus housing options may have leases beginning on August 1st. Check with your landlord or management company to see what day your lease begins.
3. International students who need to move early can find temporary housing information from the [International Students & Scholars Office](#). They can also contact the [International Student Council](#) to see if they can provide any assistance.
4. Hotel/motel. Prices vary depending on where you stay. For information about Ames area hotel/motel options click [here](#).
5. Stay with friends/relatives/other students.

E-mail

You should have received a letter from the university with information about establishing your ISU Net ID and e-mail account. To register for e-mail, go to this [website](#) and follow the instructions. If you do not have a University ID number you can e-mail me and I will send it to you. **When you establish your Iowa State e-mail address, please let me know what it is.**

Students on Assistantship

You will receive information on how to sign up for payroll during one of your orientation sessions. You will need to provide a federal or state photo ID/Driver's License and Social Security card or certified birth certificate or a passport that establishes identity and employment eligibility. You will also want to bring bank deposit information. Paychecks are directly deposited into your bank account on the last business day of each month. You will receive a flat stipend for each semester you are on assistantship. Stipends for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semester are \$9,500/semester (before taxes). Your stipend will be divided evenly for each month you are on appointment. For most of you, that means you will receive a stipend payout at the end of every month, August-May.

Health Insurance

Students on assistantship will be covered by the [Student and Scholar Health Insurance Program \(SSHIP\)](#). You will enroll on Access Plus after you have signed up for payroll. International students

who are **not** on assistantship will need to purchase the health plan or provide proof of health insurance to the SSHIP Office.

Contacting other Economics Students

You can find us on our Facebook page called [Iowa State University Department of Economics](#). I will also be updating the [list of new graduate students](#) as new student information becomes available.

International Students

For information on international groups on campus, travel information, and various other information for international students click [here](#).

All international students need to check in with the International Students and Scholars Office. They should send you more information about signing up for a check-in time. Please make sure the check-in time you choose does not conflict with math camp or orientation activities (there is also a CELT seminar on Tuesday, August 20 from 8am-noon that is mandatory for all students on teaching assistantships).

International students are also required to complete a health screening at the Thielen Student Health Center. You should receive instructions about how to sign up for a health screening appointment. If you have any questions, you can contact ISSO (isso@iastate.edu). Please make sure your health screening does not conflict with math camp or orientation activities.

All international students must meet the Graduate English requirement. For many students, this will require that they take the English Placement Test for Non-Native Speakers of English (EPT). Students who have a degree from a U.S. institution or received a high TOEFL or IELTS score can have the test waived. All international students should consult this [website](#) for information about how to sign up for the EPT online, or to secure an exemption. International students who are on assistantship will need to sign up for the Oral English Certification Test (OECT). Plan on taking the OECT as early as possible after your arrival, prior to the start of your assistantship duties. **Students must preregister in advance online.** More information about the OECT is available [here](#).

Registering for Classes

For fall semester 2020, most students admitted to the Ph.D. program will be required to take Econ 601, 602, and 671. Students admitted to the Ph.D./M.S. track program will register for Econ 500, 501, and 502 (and take the 600-level core classes the following year). You may register for these classes online through Access Plus.

Registration instructions:

1. Go to [Access Plus](#).
2. Follow the login instructions provided by the admissions office. If you have any questions visit [this website](#).
3. Select the **student tab** on the top right of the page.
4. From the menu on the left side of the page select **Class Registration**
5. Click **continue**
6. Select the **Fall 2020** term and click **agree/continue**
7. Under **Add Class** you will want to select the Economics department and register for Econ 601, 602, and 671 (or Econ 500, 501, and 502).

Registering for these courses now will put you “in the system” and speed up processes once you arrive on campus.

For more information about registration policies and the class schedules click [here](#).

Graduate College

The Graduate College provides information about Academics, Campus Services, Finance/Tuition, Community Programs, and information for International students. Overall, the [Graduate College website](#) is full of information and it is recommended you take time to familiarize yourself with it prior to your arrival.

Economics Department

The Economics department is based in Heady Hall with the Graduate Studies office located in Room 260. This office is open from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. during the academic year (currently all faculty and staff are working remotely) and 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. during the summer. Graduate students receive a mailbox in the Economics mailroom in 265 Heady Hall. All department policies and procedures are listed on the [Economics graduate programs current students website](#). This is another site that you will want to be familiar with. We will update it over the summer in preparation for the next academic year. Take time to look it over and always feel free to ask if you have any questions! Asking questions will help us improve the website.

Questions to answer

Please send me your responses to the following questions. If you don't yet know your arrival date, please indicate that in your responses.

1. What e-mail would you like us to use to contact you this summer?
2. Can I release your e-mail address to other new students and put it on our website? If so, what email would you want listed?
3. Will you be attending math camp? If not, please explain.
4. What day will you arrive at Iowa State?

Things to do

1. Sign up for an Iowa State email address and send your new email address to me
2. Register for classes on Access Plus
3. Send me an email to with the answers to the questions in the “Questions to answer” section
4. International Students – Sign up for a check-in and health screening session

We look forward to you arriving at Iowa State University. Look for more information from us later this summer.

Regards,

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