

## Selecting Master's Programs in International Business and Trade

# Key questions to ask to evaluate master's programs in international business and trade



Graduate education is a major investment. There are many factors to consider when evaluating and selecting a master's program in international trade and business that is right for you.

The business and academic experts behind the Hinrich Foundation Guide to Master's in International Business and Trade (Hinrich Foundation Guide) have developed the following questions to ask to help you select a quality master's program.

These questions cover the trade program content that must be taught for you to develop the knowledge and skills you need for a successful career in international business and trade. Further questions will help you to understand important trade program attributes, a program's international focus, program costs and availability of financial aid.

### A. TRADE CONTENT FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. **Core trade program curriculum:** Does the program curriculum specifically address international business and trade topics? Ask questions to ascertain that these core trade program content areas are reflected in the master's program you are considering – before you enrol.
  - a. **Cross-border trade:** Courses relating to the exchange of capital, goods and services across international borders or territories.
  - b. **Cross-border trade policy:** Courses relating to the agreements, regulations and practices by governments and trade bodies that affect cross-border trade.
  - c. **Cross-border logistics & supply chain management:** Courses relating to the management of digital and physical flow of goods and services between companies and economies, including the movement and storage of raw materials, data, work-in-process inventory, and finished goods as well as end-to-end fulfilment from point of origin to point of consumption.
  - d. **Cross-border trade finance & accounting:** Courses relating to the financial instruments and products used by companies to facilitate international trade and commerce, the management of assets, liabilities and protections - including foreign exchange.
  - e. **Cross-border leadership & soft skills:** Courses relating to the key elements that future leaders should acquire to effectively familiarize themselves with the psychological, physiological, geographical, geopolitical, anthropological and sociological factors of international business.
  - f. **Future skills for cross-border trade:** Courses relating to technologies that are changing the way trade is conducted that will be required knowledge for future trade leaders.

For more details on these course content areas, see [the Hinrich Foundation Guide criteria](#).

2. **Specialization:** Does the program offer specialization tracks in international business or related fields that align with your trade career aspirations?
3. **Capstone project / thesis:** Can students focus their capstone project or thesis on international business or trade topics? Are there opportunities to work on developing real-life solutions for companies engaged in cross-border business?

## **B. TRADE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES QUESTIONS**

1. **Industry engagement:** In what ways does the program emphasize industry engagement to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world practice in global trade, such as through industry guest speakers, workforce training, internship pipelines, research projects, corporate sponsorships and work-integrated learning with industry partners?
2. **Practitioner professors:** How many faculty members teaching international trade courses have significant professional experience working in global trade or multinational businesses, allowing them to provide real-world insights and ensure graduates gain practical skills for the workforce?
3. **Leading research:** What is the volume, quality and citation impact of faculty research publications focused on areas relevant to international trade such as trade policy, logistics, finance and technology applications? How does this demonstrate the program's expertise and scholarly impact as it relates to meeting employers' needs?
4. **Career services:** What career services are available to prepare students for the job market, such as career advising, job portals, recruitment fairs, mentorship programs and alumni networking opportunities focused on the international trade and commerce sector?
5. **Employer recruiting:** What companies actively recruit graduates from this program for internships and full-time roles? How does the university facilitate networking, interviews and recruitment activities with employers in the global trade and business sector?
6. **Employer satisfaction:** What companies actively recruit graduates from this program, demonstrating their confidence in the skills and knowledge gained? How does strong employer satisfaction enhance the program's reputation and facilitate industry partnerships for opportunities like internships, guest lectures and research projects?
7. **Graduate outcomes:** What percentage of graduates secure paid employment in roles related to international trade upon graduation within 6 months of completing the program? How do the curriculum, industry engagement, career services, faculty experience and program reputation contribute to strong graduate outcomes?
8. **Success in leadership development:** What percentage of graduates from this program have assumed senior leadership / executive positions within 5 to 10 years of completing the degree? How does the curriculum and teaching approach effectively develop strategic thinking, decision-making and leadership capabilities for future global leaders?

## **C. INTERNATIONAL FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. **Contemporary international context:** Does the program incorporate contemporary case studies, simulations and guest lectures from international trade practitioners?

2. **International partnerships:** Does the university have partnerships with business or multilateral organizations across a variety of global industry sectors that offer internships or research opportunities?
3. **Study abroad:** Are there opportunities to study abroad for a semester? What are the specific areas that the overseas program can contribute to your career aspirations?
4. **Research facilities:** Does the university have research centers or institutes focused on international business or trade? If so, how active are they?
5. **Language skills:** Does the program encourage or require foreign language study?

## D. COST & FINANCIAL AID QUESTIONS





1. **Tuition & fees:** What are the total costs associated with the program, including tuition, fees, subscriptions, field trips, labs, international travel, exchanges and other expenses? What are the costs based on your student status: international, local, resident, national or exchange?
2. **Cost of living:** What is the estimated cost of living in the city where the university is located?
3. **Availability of scholarships or fellowships:** Does the program or institution offer scholarships or fellowships specifically for master's students in international business programs?
4. **Financial aid:** Does the university or program offer financial aid or provide access to scholarships for local and/or international students?
5. **Return on Investment (ROI):** How do graduates perceive the ROI of the program in terms of career advancement and salary increase?

In addition to the key questions presented here, we acknowledge that there are other factors that individuals must take into consideration when evaluating and selecting a master's program for international business and trade.

We believe these questions, the [Hinrich Foundation Guide](#) and the [Hinrich Foundation Guide exemplary programs](#) will assist you to find the quality program to achieve your career objectives.

To view the complete Hinrich Foundation Guide, including 20 exemplar master's programs, scan the QR code or download [HERE](#)



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