

# **International Business (Master) – Important Information for Applicants**

## **Admission Requirements and Application** (as of 20 March 2024)

### ***APPLICATION DEADLINES / APPLICATION AND ADMISSION PROCESS***

Applications in German or English (preferably in English) may be submitted in two ways:

- Holders of an undergraduate degree from a German university and all German applicants  must apply online through [Campus Management System \(CaMS\)](#) **by 1 June of each year**. TH KÖLN Campus Management System (CaMS) usually starts accepting applications in early May of each year.
- International graduates from a non-German university  must send all application documents to [Uni-Assist](#) and register online with [Uni-Assist](#) **by 15 May of each year**. Applications can usually be submitted through Uni-Assist starting from January/February of each year. For more information on the application procedure for international graduates from a non-German university see [TH KÖLN's Department of International Affairs](#). (Please note that Uni-Assist charges a fee for reviewing your academic documents. This fee is to be paid by the applicant.)

Should you believe that your undergraduate degree is compatible with our admission requirements, we encourage you to apply.

### **ALL APPLICANTS must submit the following documents:**

- **IBMA Application Form** (including check list). Please download the IBMA application form from our [IBMA Program website](#) (->How to apply).
- **Certified copy** (*beglaubigte Kopie*) **of undergraduate degree certificate** [diploma].
- **Certified copy of the official transcript of records** (certified overview of grades / *beglaubigter Notenspiegel*).
- *Applicants with incomplete degrees*: certified copy of certifying current GPA (*vorläufige Bescheinigung über die Durchschnittsnote*) issued by their university (in addition to the certified copy of the official transcript).

- **Proof of language skills** in a foreign language other than English and mother tongue (e.g. certificate from *Alliance Française*, *Goethe Institut*, language course at university or in high school, etc.).
- **Resumé** (including academic, professional and volunteer experience).
- **GMAT- or GRE-result** (GMAT-result can be submitted through GMAC; code is 3KV-F2-02). Results below 500 points in the GMAT EXAM or the equivalent in the GRE cannot be accepted. Please note that the GMAT/GRE is a mandatory admission requirement. (It is NOT possible to be accepted into the IBMA Program without a GMAT or GRE result. Other tests will not be accepted. Please note further that results submitted after the application deadline will be considered toward our application ONLY, when an official confirmation that the applicant has successfully registered for a test is enclosed with the application. That is, you must at least provide evidence to be registered for the test when applying for the program.) **Online tests (taken at home) of the above listed tests will be accepted. 500 points of the "old" GMAT Exam are equivalent to 495 points in the "new" GMAT Focus Edition.**
- **Proof of an excellent command of the English language** (B2 level, as established in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)). The according documents include (**other documents cannot be considered**):
  - TOEFL internet-based (79 points)
  - TOEFL computer-based (213 points)
  - TOEFL paper-based (550 points)
  - IELTS (Band 6)
  - Cambridge ESOL: First Certificate in English (FCE)/Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)/Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)/Business English Certificate Vantage (BEC)
  - TOEIC: (670 points; with the requirement that both tests "Speaking and Writing" and "Listening and Reading" were taken)
  - **Online tests (taken at home) of the above listed tests will be accepted.**
  - Applicants (including native speakers) with an obtained university degree **in English** are also admitted (the according documents have to be submitted with the application).

(Please note further that evidence on English language skills submitted after the application deadline will be considered toward our application ONLY, when an official confirmation that the applicant has successfully registered for the test is enclosed with the application. That is, you must at least provide evidence to be registered for the test when applying for the program.)

- **Letter of Motivation** (one-page essay detailing why you are applying to TH KÖLN and IBMA in particular, depiction of professional and personal long-term goals to be achieved by completing the program, why candidate is suited for IBMA in particular and how candidate can contribute to TH KÖLN academic community, etc.).
- **List of courses related to International Business** attended during the undergraduate degree (not necessary for applicants holding a degree in International Business).
- **Please note that applicants that have to apply through Uni-Assist may have to submit additional application material**, as requested by Uni-Assist (please check with Uni-Assist requirements).

Applicants who fail to proof/fulfil any of these admission requirements will not be enrolled.

For questions regarding the application process, in particular also see our FAQ-section below, the [General Admission and Student's Office website \(TH KÖLN Studienbüro\)](#), the [TH KÖLN's Department of International Affairs](#), or please feel free to contact us at [IB-Master@f04.th-koeln.de](mailto:IB-Master@f04.th-koeln.de).

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All applicants for the International Business Master's program must meet the following minimum admission requirements:

- Completion of a university-level bachelor degree in the field of business administration or economics with a strong international profile (see above) with a minimum grade point average of "good" (2.5) in the German grading system or its equivalent.
- Good analytical skills, proven by a GMAT-score of at least 500 points (or equivalent in the GRE; see the [GRE Comparison Tool](#)).
- An excellent command of the English language: B2 level, as established in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- Basic knowledge of a foreign language other than English and mother tongue.
- Social skills, intercultural competence, international experience, as well as high motivation to successfully participate in and complete the International Business Master Program.

## ***ELIGIBILITY OF BACHELOR DEGREES***

According to the IBMA Examination Regulation (Section 3) candidates eligible for admission must hold a bachelor degree in economics or business administration with a strong international profile (*Einschlägigkeit*). A strong international profile is given if at least half of the following subject areas were part of the undergraduate curriculum: International Marketing, International Finance, International Human Resource Management, International Economics, International Corporate Strategy, International Accounting, International Cost Accounting, International Law, and Intercultural Competence.

Eligibility of a candidate's bachelor's degree can only be assessed by the Schmalenbach Institute's Examination Board post-deadline and after all application materials have been processed. The IBMA Program Director, the IBMA Program Manager and the Examination Board cannot assess a candidate's eligibility pre-deadline.

Holders of non-business degrees (or with only practical knowledge in the fields of business; e.g., through work) are therefore ***not eligible*** for admission to IBMA, if they fulfill all other criteria. We suggest these candidates find a suitable MBA Program, for example in the German Academic Exchange Service's "International Programs in Germany" database ([www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)).

## **APPLICATION AND ADMISSION – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. How do I submit my application to the TH KÖLN International Business Master Program?**

Please see the instructions above: APPLICATION DEADLINES / APPLICATION AND ADMISSION PROCESS (page 1 of this document).

### **2. What is the earliest date that I can submit my application?**

You may submit your application through Uni-Assist starting at the beginning of each year (usually starting around February), just make sure you remember that the documents should have arrived in their office by the application deadline.

TH KÖLN Campus Management System (CaMS) is usually activated in early May of each year.

Regarding incomplete bachelor degrees and/or results of GMAT-/GRE and/or English language tests to be submitted after the deadline, please also see the answer to question 15.

### **3. I only speak my native tongue and English. Am I eligible for your program?**

Given the international outlook of our program, the compulsory semester abroad and because our program is entirely in English, applicants should prove skills in at least three languages. However, if you are currently enrolled in a German (or other language) course at your university or have attended courses at – just as an example - the *Goethe Institut* or the *Alliance Française*, certificates from all of these are considered acceptable proof of your language skills, even if you are not (yet) fluent.

### **4. I have only taken the TOEFL (or IELTS or another university admission test), but not the GMAT. Will you accept my TOEFL-score (or IELTS or another admission test result) instead of the GMAT? Do you accept proof of an academic or professional experience in exchange of the GMAT, perhaps the GRE? Where can I find out if my GRE result is equivalent is to the required minimum of 500 points?**

To ensure the students admitted into our Master Program are all on the same page, we only accept the *Graduate Management Admission Test* (GMAT) or the *Graduate Records Examination* (GRE). The Test of the English Language (e.g. TOEFL or IELTS) is very different from the GMAT or GRE. While the TOEFL tests your language skills, the GMAT assesses your verbal, mathematical and analytical abilities required to master a graduate program in economics or business. The TOEFL can therefore not be understood as a substitute for the GMAT, and neither can any proof of any academic or professional experience. For more information on the GMAT and to

find a test centre near you, please refer to the official GMAT-website: [www.mba.com](http://www.mba.com) ([www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) for the GRE). To find out the equivalent of your GRE result in GMAT points, please refer to the [GRE Comparison Tool](#). (500 points are the benchmark (GMAT Exam).)

**GMAT/GRE is a mandatory admission requirement** – that is, we cannot consider your application without such kind of test(s).

#### **5. Does TH KÖLN have a GMAT code?**

Yes. It is: 3KV-F2-02.

#### **6. Is the semester abroad really compulsory?**

Yes, it is compulsory. To truly earn a Master's degree in International Business you should have benefited from an international experience during your studies.

#### **7. Are you accredited? What does this mean?**

Yes, our program was accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA: <http://www.fibaa.org>). Basically, this means that our degree is internationally accepted and that after graduating with your master's from TH KÖLN you are even free to pursue your PhD.

#### **8. How do I know whether or not I am eligible for the IBMA Program.**

Eligibility is defined by the IBMA Examinations Regulations. According to Section 3 candidates eligible for admission must hold a bachelor degree in economics or business administration with a strong international profile (*Einschlägigkeit*). A strong international profile is given if at least half of the following subject areas were part of the undergraduate curriculum: International Marketing, International Finance, International Human Resource Management, International Economics, International Corporate Strategy, International Accounting, International Cost Accounting, International Law, and Intercultural Competence. For more information, please refer to the Application & Admissions Section.

**9. Are classes for the International Business Master Program held in the evenings or during weekends, so that I could work full-time during the week while obtaining my master's?**

No. Our classes are held at various hours during the day from Monday through Saturday. Full-time students in Germany (German and non-German alike) are not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week during the semester in any case if they want to maintain their status as students (from a tax class and health insurance classification point of view). For more information on earning your master's while working part- or full-time in Cologne, refer to the Fachhochschule für Ökonomie (FOM) web pages at [www.fom.de](http://www.fom.de).

**10. Does TH KÖLN, the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law or the International Business Master Program grant scholarships?**

Unfortunately, the Program does not directly provide scholarships or grants. However, there are several other options available, for instance:

- a) TH KÖLN's [Department of International Affairs](#) has more information available on scholarship options for students from transitional and developing countries provided by TH KÖLN.
- b) The [Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft e.V.](#) also accepts applications from graduate students who fulfill all their criteria. IBMA students can apply directly with the Program Director for these scholarships.
- c) Check the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst website ([www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)). They provide scholarships to German students heading abroad (this is an interesting option during the semester abroad) and to foreign students receiving an education in Germany.

There are also funding options available for students during the semester abroad:

- a. Students studying abroad through ERASMUS can apply for an ERASMUS-grant with TH KÖLN's [Department of International Affairs](#).
- b. Students going abroad outside of Europe can apply for a PROMOS-grant with TH KÖLN's [Department of International Affairs](#).
- c. The Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst website ([www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)) also provides funding for students while abroad (either for study or through internships).

### **11. When does your semester begin and end? When does the International Business Master Program start?**

For details, please refer to our [academic calendar](#). Usually the winter term begins in September and wraps up with final exams in mid-February, while the summer term starts at the end of March or beginning of April and classes finish in July. Our Program only starts once a year in the winter term. Please note that classes for the IBMA Program can start earlier than the official start of lectures indicated in the calendar (during the time frame set aside for block courses for example, usually a week or two prior to the beginning of lectures than run throughout the semester).

### **12. If I am accepted into the program, can TH KÖLN provide me with housing?**

Unfortunately, TH KÖLN cannot provide any housing. You thus have to find an appropriate accommodation on your own. However, IBMA students can apply for a dorm room at the Kölner Studentenwerk ([www.kstw.de](http://www.kstw.de)) which provides student housing (dorms) (once you are accepted to the program). Candidates apply for a dormitory room (usually singles in co-educational dorms, bathrooms and kitchens are mostly shared with other residents of one floor). [TH KÖLN's Department of International Affairs has information on the subject of finding housing in Cologne here.](#)

### **13. What about tuition fees?**

Tuition fees have been abolished. Students must however pay a fluctuating figure of around € 300 or more in contributions to the university per semester. This includes a student ticket granting use of the entire public transportation system in and around Cologne as well as the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the student activity fee, funding for the student union, etc. It also includes participation in all sports courses (except otherwise stated) offered by the Student Union in cooperation with all institutions of higher education in Cologne (see [www.hochschul-sport-koeln.de](http://www.hochschul-sport-koeln.de)).

### **14. How high can I expect my living expenses to be in Cologne and throughout the IBMA Program?**

TH KÖLN's Department of International Affairs has created an estimate of expected living cost for students in Cologne, [available here](#).

During the semester abroad, living expenses will vary according to the country and city, but tuition fees are waived at our partner institutions. Students can also spend the semester abroad

at a university of their choice (provided they are outside of Germany/their home country, accredited and offer the core courses as indicated in the curriculum), but have to cover all costs for tuition fees themselves.

**15. I won't be graduating from my bachelor program or receiving my GMAT/GRE or English language test result until after your application deadline. What can I do?**

Incomplete bachelor degree: Simply transfer a certified copy of your transcript to us and let us know in your letter of motivation that you will submit your diploma at a later point in time and when this will be (the deadline would be 31 October of each year). However, please note that you cannot enroll for the program unless you have submitted proof of your undergraduate degree (bachelor certificate).

When being admitted to the program, you will receive instructions on how/when to submit the required yet missing documents.

Incomplete GMAT/GRE: The same applies for the GMAT or GRE – it is possible to submit the official GMAT (or GRE) results after the application deadline (the very last deadline would be 15 September of each year). However, then you would need to indicate in your application (more specifically in the particular GMAT section of the IBMA Application Form) when you will take the test and submit a confirmation of the registration for the test. Please note that we need at least a confirmation for the registration for the test and a test date, otherwise your application cannot be processed.

When being admitted to the program, you will receive instructions on how/when to submit the required yet missing documents.

Incomplete English language test: English language tests may also be submitted after the application deadline (the very last deadline would be 15 September of each year). However, then you would need to indicate in your application (more specifically in the particular English language test section of the IBMA Application Form) when you will take the test and submit a confirmation of the registration for the test. Please note that we need at least a confirmation for the registration for the test and a test date, otherwise your application cannot be processed.

When being admitted to the program, you will receive instructions on how/when to submit the required yet missing documents.

**16. I am from the People's Republic of China, India, or Vietnam. Do I have to submit an APS certificate?**

Yes. For more information on applying through Uni-Assist, please check [here \(in English\)](#).

**17. Are there any special procedures for applications from advanced standing (admission into a higher study semester)?**

Yes. The applications process for admission with advanced standing slightly differs from the "regular" applications process. Additionally, applicants are required to complete the special application form for advanced standing (available at: [http://www.th-koeln.de/en/academics/admission-with-advanced-standing\\_15812.php](http://www.th-koeln.de/en/academics/admission-with-advanced-standing_15812.php)) and mail it along with all required documents to the address indicated on the application form for advanced standing. However, irrespective of the application from advanced standing, in principle, applicants have to meet all the admission criteria that our "regular" candidates (regular applicants for the first study semester) have to meet.

Applicants that were enrolled in the same degree program in the past are automatically granted advanced standing, irrespective of their academic achievements during their previous studies. In all other cases applicants may be granted advanced standing depending on their academic achievements at their previous university. The Chairperson of the Examination Board decides in which semester an applicant will be placed.

Please note that in either case credit transfers are evaluated separately after enrollment.

For more information on the admission from advanced standing see [the central admission website](#).