

# How to pursue post-graduate studies in Economics abroad

Belarusian Economic Research  
and Outreach Center Presentation

# Levels

- Undergraduate
- Graduate (sometimes called post-graduate):
  - MA
  - PhD

# Differences in education systems

- Europe:
  - Often policy-oriented
  - Good integration with policy institutes/other European universities
  - Usually mid-to-bottom ranking institutions
  - European alumni usually stay in European schools/institutions after graduation

# Differences in education systems

- USA
  - On average, more “academic”
  - On average, higher ranking
  - USA graduates end up around the globe

# Differences in education systems

- Canada
  - On average, not as well-ranked as US, but not as low as European schools.
  - Very friendly to students with families

# Financing sources

- Scholarships/fellowships
  - Tuition waiver
  - TAing/RAing
  - Outside grants
  - Working on campus
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- NB: when you apply to the school, make it implicit that you need financial assistance

# Financing sources

- Make sure you study carefully outside funding options, e.g. Open Society Institute Global Supplementary Grant
- Always apply to school that provide assistance to almost all students (KSE, CEU, CERGE, etc)

# Application documents

- Transcript
- CV
- Essay(s)
- TOEFL/IELTS
- GRE
- Application fee (free-\$100)
- LORs!
- LORs!!
- LORs!!!

# TOEFL

- <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>
- 300 points max; acceptable-225 points.
- Costs \$140 to take (includes mailing documents to 4 schools of your choice. Additional mailouts can be ordered afterwards)
- Can be taken in Minsk
- Results are valid 3 years

# GRE

- <http://www.ets.org/gre/>
- 3 parts; 800 points each:
  - Verbal
  - Analytical writing
  - Quantitative
- No testing center in Minsk
- Not required by most European schools
- Costs around \$150-\$200

# Some practical hints

- Ask the professors who are writing you recommendation letters where they'd apply if they were in your position.
- Don't apply to just the highest ranked schools. This is one of the biggest mistakes you can make. If you're interested in studying time-series econometrics, apply to schools which have active researchers in that area. What's the point of going to a great theory school if you're not a theorist?

# Some practical hints

- Apply to as many schools as possible. I'd recommend applying to about 10.
- Make sure you have some back up plans, or else you might lose a year of study.
- Talk to the graduate students at the school you're thinking about attending. They'll usually tell you how things *really* work in a department.

# Some practical hints

- If at all possible, I'd recommend going to a larger school. Smaller schools are good, but if one or two key professors leave they can be decimated. It helps if the school you are applying to has 3 or more active researchers in the area you are interested in, that way if one or two leave, you'll still have an advisor you can work with.
- Look for schools with some people from Russian-speaking community both among students and faculty members.

# Usual schedule

- August: register for TOEFL/GRE
- September: ask for LORs, order transcripts
- October: take TOEFL, GRE
- November: start applying
- March-April: application results
- May: book tickets, seek outside sources of financing if needed