

## **Report from the Educational Testing Service: A Promising Practice-Holistic Admissions in U.S. Graduate Education (ETS)**

Holistic admissions is becoming an increasingly hot topic among U.S. graduate schools and programs. It's not a new idea. Programs have long used multiple criteria such as undergraduate grades, standardized test scores, English-language proficiency tests, essays, personal statements, recommendations, interviews, and résumés in evaluating prospective students. *What is new is the increased focus on the intentionality of the process and whether it is being carried out in the best way to identify the most promising prospects while ensuring equity, equality, and inclusivity. In a true holistic review, no single data point is considered in isolation.*

## **A Report from the Council of Graduate Schools: Holistic Review in Graduate Admissions (CGS)**

Holistic review, or the consideration of a broad range of candidate qualities including “noncognitive” or personal attributes, is a growing strategy for widening the evidence base that graduate programs consider when evaluating a candidate for admission. Two key trends drive this strategy.

Predictive validity of the GRE Another major challenge identified in the literature is that the predictive validity of many admissions criteria have not been tested. It is difficult for many reasons to definitively tie a portion of an applicant's record to future outcomes, and this is one area where more research is needed. The one exception to this rule is the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General test, which has been studied extensively, and yet still remains the subject of intense debate.

## **Graduate Admissions**

The University considers all applicants without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or religion. All relevant factors are considered, including the academic history of the applicant, recommendations, standardized test scores, and professional experience. The intent of the Graduate School is to offer admission to those applicants whose credentials indicate a strong likelihood of success in their selected curricula.

## **Application Requirements for Admissions Consideration**

To be considered for admission to a doctoral or master's program, an applicant must have a bachelor's degree (or its U.S. equivalent) from a college or university that is accredited by an accepted accrediting body. Some doctoral programs admit baccalaureate (bachelor's degree) students directly to the doctoral program, while others require applicants to have earned a master's degree.

To be admitted to a doctoral program after a master's program, an applicant should have earned an overall grade point average of at least 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) in the master's degree program. To be admitted to a doctoral program after a bachelor's program, an applicant should have earned an overall GPA of at least 3.0 in the

bachelor's degree program. To be admitted to a master's program, an applicant should have an earned overall GPA of at least 3.0 in the bachelor's degree program. Applicants must also be in good academic standing at the last institution of higher education attended.

Applications generally consist of the items listed below.

1. The **application form** and processing fee.
2. A **Statement of Purpose** (essay) must be submitted online as part of the application submission process.
3. **Three recommendations** from persons familiar with the applicant's academic and/or professional qualifications should be submitted.
4. **Transcripts/mark sheets/degree certificates** of all academic work attempted beyond high (secondary) school.
5. Official agency reports of **satisfactory test scores** as specified in the section on graduate programs in this Catalog.
6. **Official scores** on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), if English is not the applicant's native language and he or she has not earned a post-secondary degree from a U.S. institution.

## **Test Information** ([2020-21 Catalog](#))

Some graduate programs have specific test waivers for applicants to their programs; check the Graduate Catalog for details regarding program-specific waiver criteria and/or communicate directly with the Graduate Program Director.

**A student who has already earned a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. from a U.S. institution** will not be required by the Graduate School to take a standardized test. The Graduate Program Director, however, has the right to request that the student take a test and submit official scores. This policy does not apply to the TOEFL/IELTS requirement.

**A student who has already earned a master's degree** will not be required by the Graduate School to retake a standardized test **IF** the applicant can demonstrate that he or she has completed the test in the past. In such cases, the Graduate School will accept the official Student Copy of the official test scores (note that a photocopy is not acceptable) or an official university transcript on which the scores are printed or a letter on official university letterhead attesting to the score. The Graduate Program Director, however, has the right to request that the student re-take the test and submit official scores. Please note that the above exception does not apply to the TOEFL/IELTS.

**A student who has taken the GRE, GMAT, MCAT, or MAT but has not earned a Ph.D., M.D. or J.D. from a US institution or a master's degree** (see above) must submit official scores that are less than five years old. If the student has not taken the test within five years, he or she must re-take the test.

## Standardized Test Score Data

### Fall 2020 Applicants (duplicated):

Fall 2020 Doctoral/Master's Applicants: 5,947

With GRE Scores: 3,304

Without GRE Scores: 2,155

With GMAT Scores: 70

Without GMAT Scores: 5,389

With MAT Scores: 68

Without MAT Scores: 5,391

It is important to note the following test requirement data set does not:

1. include masters and doctoral programs originally established without a test requirement (i.e. DBA);
2. represent the number of times a program revised its criteria; or
3. show the complexity of a waiver criteria (i.e. MBA has 4 distinct categories upon which an applicant can qualify for a waiver).

<p><b>Programs that Do Not Require a Standardized Test</b></p>	<p><b>3 Doctoral Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DNP Nursing Practice</li> <li>• PHD Nanoscale</li> <li>• PHD Biology</li> </ul>	<p><b>18 Master's Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSN Adult Gerontology</li> <li>• MSN Community/Public Health Nursing</li> <li>• MSN Family Nurse Practitioner</li> <li>• MSN Nurse Administration</li> <li>• MSN Nurse Educator</li> <li>• MA Ethics &amp; Applied Philosophy</li> <li>• MA Gerontology</li> <li>• MS Kinesiology</li> <li>• MA Liberal Studies</li> <li>• MA Spanish</li> <li>• MA Anthropology</li> <li>• MSAT Athletic Training</li> <li>• MS/MA Biology</li> <li>• MA History</li> <li>• MS Management</li> </ul>
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<b>Programs with Test Waiver Criteria</b>	<b>7 Doctoral Programs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Bioinformatics &amp; Computational Biology</li> <li>• PHD Civil Engineering</li> <li>• PHD Computing and Information Systems</li> <li>• PHD Electrical Engineering</li> <li>• PHD Infrastructure and Environmental Science</li> <li>• PHD Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>• PHD Optical Science &amp; Engineering</li> </ul>	<b>39 Master's</b> Full list is on the <a href="#">Google Sheet</a> . Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MACC Accountancy</li> <li>• MARCH Architecture</li> <li>• MBA in Business Adm</li> <li>• MS Bioinformatics</li> <li>• MS Chemistry</li> <li>• MSE/MSCE Civil Engineering</li> <li>• MED Elementary Education</li> <li>• MHAD Health Administration</li> </ul>

<b>COVID: Temporary Waivers</b>	<b>Existing Waiver Criteria?</b>	<b>Waive for 2020 Summer/Fall</b>	<b>Waive for 2021?</b>
6 Doctoral Programs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Computing &amp; Info...</li> </ul>	Y	N	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Electrical Engineering</li> </ul>	Y	Y	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Geography</li> </ul>	N	N	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Health Psychology</li> </ul>	N	N	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Organizational Science</li> </ul>	N	N	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHD Public Policy</li> </ul>	N	Y	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PhD in Special Education</li> </ul>			
24 Master's Programs	Yes-21, No-3	No-9, Yes-13	No-2, Yes-22

## Example of a program that does not require a standardized test

### Admission Requirements for the Ph.D. in Biology ([2020-21 Catalog](#))

Applicants will be evaluated in a holistic manner to identify those who have the greatest potential for success. In addition to the general requirements for admission to the Graduate School, to begin study toward the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Biology, students admitted to the program should have:

1. A B.S. or B.A. degree from a college or university accredited by an accepted accrediting body.
2. An overall grade point average of at least 3.0 out of 4.0. Additionally, applicants must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in biology, 3.0 in chemistry, and 3.0 in mathematics.
3. A minimum of 24 hours in biology, including at least one course in genetics, physiology, and cell/molecular biology. Additionally, applicants should have one year each of general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, and mathematics. Applicants with academic deficiencies may be admitted on the condition that any deficiencies are corrected during the first year of graduate study. The Graduate Ph.D. Committee will determine the remediation necessary for identified deficiencies.
4. A score of at least 100 on the Internet-based, 220 on the computer-based, or 557 on the paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or a minimum overall band score of 6.5 on the IELTS, for applicants whose native language is not English. Students who do not pass this examination must pass ENGL 1100 (English as a Foreign Language) with a grade of C or above. In addition, these students who will be involved in any instructional activity (e.g., teaching assistants) will be required to be evaluated by the English Language Training Institute at UNC Charlotte prior to the beginning of the first semester of study.
5. Three letters of reference, at least two of which must be from faculty members.

### GRE Waiver

The GRE General Test requirement is waived for all applicants to the Ph.D. in Biology program.

## Example of a test score waiver criteria for the master's program

### GMAT/GRE Waiver

Prospective Belk College MBA students who meet certain requirements may request a GMAT/GRE waiver. When evaluating waiver requests, the MBA Admissions Committee considers factors such as:

- Prior academic coursework and grades (specifically in quantitative coursework)
- Professional or military experience that demonstrates applied quantitative and analytical skills
- Professional certifications with a quantitative focus such as PE, CPA, CFA, FINRA, Six Sigma, etc.

Please note that no GMAT/GRE waiver is automatic, and an approved waiver application does not guarantee later acceptance into the program.

An unapproved waiver application does not mean that a candidate will be denied admission to the program. It means that the MBA Admissions Committee is requiring the GMAT/GRE as additional information needed to evaluate an applicant's academic readiness and quantitative competencies.

The GMAT/GRE waiver is only available to candidates who have not yet taken a standardized test or who have not had their test scores reported to UNC Charlotte.

### Waiver Requirements

To be eligible for a GMAT/GRE waiver, candidates must fully satisfy the requirements for one of the following options:

#### *Option A (Standard Waiver)*

Candidates must possess at least 5 years of professional or military experience with increasing levels of responsibility (significant leadership experience is a plus), a cumulative undergraduate from an accredited program and, if relevant, institution\*, and/or at least nine hours of earned graduate credit with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

#### *Option B (Quantitative Coursework Waiver)*

Candidates must possess at least 5 years of professional or military experience with increasing levels of responsibility (significant leadership experience is a plus), and be able to demonstrate preparedness in quantitatively-oriented coursework (must have at least a 3.0 GPA in courses in the areas of Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Managerial Accounting, Financial Accounting, Statistics, and Calculus).

Candidates who meet the experience requirement, but do not have enough (or any) quantitative coursework to have their quantitative competencies assessed, must complete MBAMath.com or other approved online providers with scores of 80% in each required module among the 5 areas (economics, finance, accounting, statistics and spreadsheets).

### *Option C (Exemplary Professional or Military Experience Waiver)*

Candidates must possess at least 10 years of professional or military experience with increasing levels of responsibility. The candidate's experience should demonstrate leadership, problem solving ability, and analytical thinking.

### *Option D (Doctoral Degree Waiver)*

Candidates who possess a doctoral degree (J.D., M.D., Ph.D., etc.) with at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA from an accredited institution\*, will automatically have their GMAT/GRE requirement waived.

*\*AACSB accreditation for business programs; LCME or COCA for medical programs; ABA for law programs; ABET for engineering, computer science, and information systems programs; others on a case-by-case basis.*