

# Best Practices in Graduate Admissions

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- The Division of Graduate Studies
- Departmental/Program Graduate Admissions Committees
- The Graduate Student



**The Division of Graduate Studies**

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## Best Practices in Graduate Admissions

Best graduate admissions practices require timely and complete communication with applicants and responsible action on the part of Division of Graduate Studies staff, departmental graduate advisors and admission committee, and student applicants.

### Division of Graduate Studies

Graduate admission personnel serve academic units in selecting students for admission. Fairness and nondiscrimination are essential components of the admission process.

The Division of Graduate Studies is the only office on campus with the authority to provide official admission offers. It has the responsibility to ensure that the admission process is completed fairly on behalf of the prospective graduate student. As such, it is the responsibility of the Division of Graduate Studies to:

- Approve departmental and college admission procedures, including requirements for admission committees and record-keeping. These procedures must be consistent with the university-wide graduate council and the Division of Graduate Studies.
- Provide all students with accurate information about admission.
- Receive information about applicants in confidence and respect the private nature of these data consistent with federal, state, and local statutes.
- Accept and deem official only those transcripts issued by the registrar's office of the sending institution(s).
- Inform candidates promptly and in writing if they are clearly inadmissible.
- Provide, in a timely manner, an official offer of admission that includes all terms and conditions of the offer
- Establish and publicize a minimum set of documents required for consideration of any applicants.
- Inform students promptly about new or changed admission requirements, especially those which may adversely affect applicants. Ensure that applicants are required to meet only those admission criteria in force at the time the application was received.
- Encourage applicants to fulfill their responsibilities in the admission process, including: a) complying with requests for information in a timely way, and b) responding to institutional deadlines when required to do so.

**Departmental/Program  
Graduate Admission Committee**

The goal of graduate admission at the college or departmental/program level is to enroll top quality graduate students who can complete the program and contribute to teaching, research and professional achievement. It is the responsibility of directors, advisors and admission committees to:

- Establish, maintain, and publicize appropriate admission and selection criteria and ensure that all stated admission criteria are used in admission decisions.
- Appropriately carry out any tasks related to admission decisions, including timely communication with the Division of Graduate Studies about recommendations for admission.
- Ensure that recruitment and admission policies are consistent with stated university goals of maintaining and improving the quality of graduate programs and increasing student diversity.
- Utilize available and appropriate websites to communicate graduate program information to prospective students and to publicize admission processes and selection criteria.
- Attempt to match the knowledge, interests and skills of applicants with the requirements, characteristics and capacity of graduate programs and the research and training interests of their faculty.
- Periodically assess the effectiveness of admission procedures and appropriateness of admission criteria.
- Receive information about applicants in confidence and respect the private nature of these data consistent with federal, state and local statutes. Retain confidentiality in departmental admission deliberations.
- Process applications and respond to inquiries in a timely manner, with attention to stated and relevant deadlines.
- If a waiting lists for admission have been established, ensure that they are a) reasonable in length; b) maintained for shortest possible time periods; and c) not dependent upon a deposit being received nor an enrollment commitment being made until an official offer of admission is issued.

**Graduate Students**

Applicants should seek admission to graduate programs that can assist them to develop their abilities, interests, and skills and can effectively place them in appropriate occupational or educational situations. It is the responsibility of applicants to:

- Seek detailed information about program content, admission procedures, selection criteria, and other resources at the university to which they seek admission.
- Conduct themselves in a mature, professional, and civil manner in all interactions with Graduate Admission staff, graduate advisors, and admission committees

throughout the application and admission process.

- Recognize that the Division of Graduate Studies and graduate programs have distinct roles and procedures in the graduate admission process.
- Recognize that, at Jackson State University, each graduate program has its own set of admission requirements and selection criteria.
- Comply with requests for information in a timely way, and respond to institutional deadlines when required to do so.
- Comply with the stipulation of the Council of Graduate Schools *Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants* that admitted students with an offer of financial support must make a decision on acceptance of their offers by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Accept no more than one offer of admission or financial support and notify the graduate school of this decision in a timely manner. The acceptance of an admission slot or financial support signifies a firm intention to matriculate at the university and to undertake work associated with the commitment from the university of financial support. In unusual circumstances, when students find that they cannot complete these commitments, they should notify the Division of Graduate Studies and the appropriate academic unit immediately.

**Admission Policy at  
Jackson State University**

Admission is granted jointly by the Division of Graduate Studies and the program in which the student plans to study. Each program has its own procedures for evaluating applications. The program recommends admission to the Division of Graduate Studies and the Division of Graduate Studies, in turn, monitors procedures and minimum requirements and makes the final decision on your admission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all admission documents are received in the Division of Graduate Studies on or before the application deadline. All credentials submitted on behalf of an applicant become the property of the University and may be maintained for up to one year. Materials from applicants who do not submit all requested material may be shredded and discarded after one year.

All required information: Division of Graduate Studies Application for Admission, two official transcripts from all accredited universities attended, official GRE, GMAT, or MAT scores for programs requiring test scores, and three letters of recommendation and other materials required by individual departments **MUST** be received by the following deadlines.

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Fall	March 1
Summer	March 15
Spring	October 15

## Deadlines for Specific Programs

January 15

### Summer Enrollment

Ed.S. in Educational Administration & Supervision  
M.S. in Educational Administration & Supervision

### Fall Enrollment

Ph. D.- Clinical Psychology,  
Ph. D.- Educational Administration  
Ph. D.- Urban Higher Education

March 1

### Fall Enrollment

Dr. PH.- Public Health  
Ed.S.- Guidance  
M.S.- Community Counseling  
M.S.- Communicative Disorders  
M.S.Ed.in School Counseling  
M.S.W. and Ph.D. in Social Work  
Ph. D. in Public Administration  
Ph. D. in Environmental Science  
Ph. D. in Urban and Regional Planning

March 15

### Fall Enrollment

Ed. D. in Early Childhood Education  
Ph.D.-Business Administration

### Summer Enrollment

MSW Program - Advanced Standing

Applications received after the admission deadline for the desired enrollment period will be processed for the next enrollment period. Selected academic programs only admit once a year, refer to the department's section of the catalog.

## General Admission Requirements

### **Masters' Level**

Applicants interested in pursuing a masters' degree should submit to the Division of Graduate Studies:

1. The Graduate Application for Admission,
2. Two official copies of transcripts from all accredited colleges/universities attended,
3. All applicants must submit a \$25.00 application fee using a money order.
4. Immunization Record showing proof of immunization compliance for measles and rubella, if born after Dec. 1957.

Students admitted to the Division of Graduate Studies are classified as:

1. Regularly admitted status,
2. Qualifying Status,
3. Conditionally admitted status,
4. Non-degree Status.

**Regular status** is awarded to students who have a minimum GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 Scale) at the undergraduate level and are admitted to a degree program.

**Qualifying Status** is awarded to students who have a minimum GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 Scale) at the undergraduate level but require the completion of prerequisites prior to admission to a degree program. The prerequisites are specified by the degree program, refer to the department's section of the catalog.

**Conditional status** may be assigned to students who possess a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 - 2.99 at the undergraduate level (on 4.0 scale) and are admitted to a degree program. Students must earn regular status in the first semester of full-time enrollment, or in the first 12 hours of part-time enrollment by acquiring a GPA of 3.00 in the first 12 hours of graduate work.

### **Specialist Degrees**

Applicants interested in pursuing a Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) degree should submit to the Division of Graduate Studies:

1. The Graduate School Application for Admission,
2. A masters' degree from an accredited college or university with the departmental required minimum GPA .
3. Two official copies of transcripts from all accredited colleges/universities attended,
4. All applicants must submit a \$25.00 application fee using a money order.
5. Immunization Record showing proof of immunization compliance for measles and rubella if born after Dec. 1957.

### **Doctoral Degrees**

Applicants interested in pursuing a doctoral degree (Ph.D., Dr.P.H., or Ed.D.) should submit to the Division of Graduate Studies:

1. The Graduate Application for Admission,
2. Two official copies of transcripts from all accredited colleges/universities attended,
  - a. A Master's degree or a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university depending on specific program requirements,
  - b. A minimum GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 Scale) and the program /department required minimum GPA on the highest degree earned,
3. All applicants must submit a \$25.00 application fee using a money order.
4. Immunization Record showing proof of immunization compliance for measles and rubella, if born after Dec. 1957.

## International Applicants

International Applicants must also submit the following:

1. A satisfactory TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Score.
2. A \$25.00 application fee using a money order.
3. Two certified, translated copies of all transcripts, mark sheets, and diplomas direct from the university/college(s) to the Graduate School.
4. Certified Declaration of Financial Support on file in the Office of International Programs.

## Departmental Admission Requirements

Departments/programs may require additional admission documents. Typically these documents include the following;

1. Three (3) letters of recommendation.
2. Special application forms and materials required by departments, listed in the department's section of the Graduate Catalog.
3. Standardized test scores, listed in the department's section of the Graduate Catalog.

*These documents must be sent directly to the program or department.*

## Review of Applications

Once all required information is received by the Graduate Admissions Office a transmittal packet is sent to the appropriate department for its decision. The graduate program should follow the established department/program process for review of applications using the information attached to the transmittal and the required department/program admissions documents.

The admission decision of the program should be noted on the transmittal cover sheet. If the decision is NOT to admit, the reason for this decisions MUST be noted on the cover sheet.

Once the Division of Graduate Studies receives a recommendation from the department and the College Dean or designee, applicants are notified by the Graduate Dean of the decision to admit, conditionally admit, or deny. Once an admission decision is made, the decision is valid for 12 months for purposes of initial enrollment. Thereafter, the applicant should contact the Office of Graduate Admissions for readmission.

## NON-DEGREE ENROLLMENT

### Admission Requirements

Students may be granted special admission to earn certification, update professional skills, earn transfer credit, or to attend a workshop. Applicants for special status must file:

1. Application for Admission and Non-degree Enrollment form to the Graduate Admission Office.
2. Transcript(s) direct from college(s) to the Graduate Admission Office.
3. A cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 at the undergraduate level (on 4.0 scale).
4. International applicants whose native language is not English must submit a satisfactory TOEFL score.
5. Out-of-state and international students must submit a non-refundable \$25 application fee to the Graduate School with the application. Only money orders or certified checks are accepted.

### Registration Procedure

1. After the appropriate credentials are on file with the Graduate School, the Graduate Dean will authorize admission as a Non-Degree Student.
2. The student should meet with the department chair or designee offering the desired course(s) for advising and course selection.
3. Approval for these courses is obtained by the student with the signature of the department chair.
4. **The student is enrolled into the selected course(s) by the department chair.**
5. After enrollment in courses, registration is completed by payment of tuition and fees.

### Regulations

1. Students admitted in non-degree status may not enroll in more than six hours per semester.
2. Not more than 12 semester hours may be taken while updating professional skills, earning transfer credit, or to attend a workshop.
3. A total of no more than eighteen semester hours may be taken as a non-degree student earning certification.
4. Non-degree students who may wish to continue at a later date must earn a 3.00 average for any graduate courses completed as a special student.
5. Non-degree students who may wish to earn a degree at a later date must meet all regular or conditional admissions criteria and earn a 3.00 average for any graduate courses completed as a special student.
6. Students previously registered as non-degree students in the Graduate School should note that work taken in this category is treated as transfer credit if the student is later admitted to a degree program. A maximum of twelve (12) semester hours may be transferred to a graduate degree program from non-degree status subject to approval by the department chairperson and the Graduate Dean.

## **Best Practices in Graduate Admissions From Other Sources**

By Daniel J. Bennett, Research and National Issues Committee  
<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/admbestpractices.pdf>

### **Baseline Standards**

1. The ultimate goal of the admissions process is to enroll top quality graduate students who can complete the program and contribute to research and professional achievement.
2. Policies and procedures should facilitate, not impede, reaching this goal. University graduate admission baseline standards, including a bachelor's degree with minimum grade point average, standardized tests and English-language requirements, and administrative procedures, including requirements for admissions committees and record-keeping, need to be clearly articulated and widely disseminated.
3. Academic senate faculty and graduate admissions personnel need to be involved in the generation of such policies and procedures, to ensure widespread agreement and the ability to effectively administer them.
4. Baseline standards and admissions procedures should be in keeping with established academic standards (e.g., require accredited degrees) and legal requirements of the university.

Baseline standards provide a defined framework for graduate admissions to ensure that applicants are qualified for graduate study and can complete their programs if admitted. However, keeping in mind the ultimate goal, there also must be flexibility to allow the admission of an applicant with alternative credentials and other outstanding qualities, through special recommendation by faculty and approval of graduate admissions.

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### **SACS Statements (Selected)**

#### **Section 3.4 Educational Programs: *All Educational Programs***

- 3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.
- 3.4.3. The institution publishes admission policies consistent with its mission.
- 3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

#### **Section 3.6 Educational Programs: *Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Professional Programs.***

- 3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.
- 3.6.2 The institution ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study.
- 3.6.3 The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree is earned through the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through the participating institutions.

**The Council of Graduate Schools' (CGS)** mission is to improve and advance graduate education in order to ensure the vitality of intellectual discovery. CGS accomplishes its mission through advocacy, innovative research, and the development and dissemination of best practices. Supporting graduate education is critical to achieving the highly skilled workforce needed for the U.S. to compete effectively in the 21st century global economy.

*"Graduate education in the United States has been an enormously successful enterprise, serving the vital scientific, cultural and economic needs of the national and global community. Our graduate schools are epicenters of discovery, innovation, and application, leading to advancements that affect every one of us." CGS President Debra W. Stewart*

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**The Council of Graduate Schools**

**"Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants"**

Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer.

It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

<http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/CGSResolutionJune2005.pdf>

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References:

"Best Practices for Educational Experience" The Graduate School at the University of Toledo.  
<http://gradschool.utoledo.edu>

The Council of Graduate Schools  
<http://www.cgsnet.org>

"Graduate Catalog, 2005-2007"