

Graduate Admission Policy and Procedure
(Amended March 2024; original adopted October 2007)

Decisions for admission to the graduate program are initiated by the individual faculty who will serve as mentors. Primary considerations for admission are quality of the student and fit with the department. The Graduate Financial Aid Committee (GFAC) ranks admitted students for financial aid on behalf of the department. The Department Chair makes all final decisions on financial aid.

I. Application

1. Applications must be complete by the deadline to be considered for admission. The Graduate Assistant separates complete from incomplete applications and makes complete applications available for faculty review, sorted by subfield.

a. Exception: Applications filtered through third parties (Fulbright and similar fellowship programs) such that the applicant cannot control when the department will receive the application maybe considered after the deadline.

2. Applications with a waiver of the deadline requirement and the addition of any complete applications mistakenly left out of the pool of applicants must allow for all faculty in the appropriate subfield to review and rank the application. This should normally be done before the review by the Graduate Financial Aid Committee.

3. Information posted on the department website should guide potential applicants through a successful application process so that their application will be complete and acceptable by the deadline.

II. Review and Ranking by Subfield Faculty

1. Applications are made available for faculty review at least two weeks prior to the subfield meetings during which applications are ranked for admission. Because applications are separated by subfield, subfield liaisons or other members of the GFAC should review applications early to identify students whose interests cross subfields and whose applications should be reviewed by more than one subfield's faculty.

2. Faculty are asked to review all completed applications and indicate on a standard form whether they are willing to chair any applicant's supervisory committee or are willing to be a member of the committee. Faculty not willing or most appropriate to serve on the committee should nevertheless indicate on the form a measure of their support of an applicant's admission in terms of academic quality and expectations of success.

- a. Faculty members who indicate their willingness to chair or serve as committee member for an applicant obligate themselves to serve on that student's committee for a minimum of one year if the student, once admitted, so requests.

3. At the subfield meeting faculty will discuss and rank applicants for admission. Minimally this ranking should form two tiers: high priority or low priority for admission. High-priority applicants should be individually ranked for financial awards, identifying the top four-five candidates for financial aid.

- a. Priority should be determined by quality of the applicant and fit with department and university faculty and programs. High-priority applicants will typically have an identified chair, at least two additional members of the committee, and the support of additional faculty.

- b. Applicants who do not garner a chair and at least two committee members will not be admitted.

- c. Faculty members who wish to chair more than one applicant's committee should provide a ranking of those applications as part of the faculty discussion.

- d. Ranking for financial aid should consider a range of criteria including but not limited to GPA, quality of the research statement, commendations from referees, relevant work experience, general academic background, and alignment with faculty interests and university resources.

4. Faculty who wish to chair committees should attend the subfield committee to make the case for their admittees and participate in the ranking.

5. Subfield faculty may be given a suggested target for admission based on the number of students in that subfield who left the department in the previous year (due to terminal graduation or attrition) plus a percentage overage to compensate for those applicants who decline admission. The target and percentage overage will be determined year-to-year based on past experience.

III. Review by Graduate Financial Aid Committee

1. The Graduate Financial Aid Committee (GFAC) represents the entire department in the ranking of graduate students for financial aid. The ranked requests for financial aid made by the individual subfields are compiled and presented to the Department Chair by this committee.

2. Composition of Graduate Financial Aid Committee is detailed in the Department Bylaws.

3. The GFAC meets after all subfield admissions meetings are completed to carry out the following tasks:

- a. Create a comprehensive list of all admittees, by priority, across the subfields.

- b. Suggest a final department-wide ranking for financial aid based on information presented and discussed at each subfield meeting and any further information obtained by the GFAC.
- c. Assure that admittees are entering the appropriate degree program (MA, Terminal Master's, or PhD), according to the guidelines in the Graduate Program and Policies.

IV. Final Financial Aid Decisions

1. The GFAC presents the final list of admittees with suggested ranking for financial awards to the Department Chair.
2. The Department Chair makes the final decisions for employment offers and financial awards (fellowships).
3. The Department Chair certifies the final list of admittees with financial awards and presents it to the Graduate Program Assistant for processing and notification of admittees. Only applicants that have gone through this process will be admitted.
4. The Graduate Program Assistant disseminates the final list of admittees to the faculty. Included with the list is the provisional first-year committee composition for each admittee. Admittees who accept admission will be advised to affirm the composition of their supervisory committee within their first year.
5. Upon receipt of acceptances, the Graduate Assistant disseminates to the faculty a list of all admittees who have accepted or deferred admission.