

MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Studies Committee
FROM: Elisa M. Maroney, MAIS Coordinator, Denise Thew-Hackett, RMHC Coordinator, Patrick Graham, DHHE Coordinator
DATE: January 8, 2018
SUBJECT: Conditional Admission Catalog Change Proposal

Currently, applicants to the Western Oregon University Graduate programs must have cumulative GPA of 3.0 on their most recent bachelors degree of in the last 90-credits (or 60 semester credits). Students with GPAs lower than 3.0 may meet the MAT or GRE requirements listed below before admission or during their first term as a conditionally admitted student.

Current WOU catalog (2017, p. 86):

*Evidence of completion of a four-year baccalaureate degree (or international equivalent) from regionally accredited institution as defined by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, with a cumulative B average (equivalent 3.00 on a U.S. 4.00 grading scale) on the most recent baccalaureate degree.

If the applicant's cumulative GPA is below 3.00, but a calculation using the last 90 quarter credits (60 semester credits) of graded course work is 3.0 or higher, the latter will be used as the basis for admission.

Applicants not meeting the minimum GPA requirement may be considered with a passing score on the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) or Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Minimum required score for the MAT: 395. Minimum required score for the GRE Verbal Reasoning: 148, Quantitative Reasoning: 174, Analytical Writing: 3.5

While this practice has been used at WOU, in some cases, it has had the unintended consequence of excluding the very students WOU takes pride in serving, those who are first generation and/or non-traditional. In addition, for those graduate programs that prepare professionals in fields seeking qualified employees who can provide services to individuals with disabilities and individuals with diverse backgrounds, applicants who share those backgrounds, are sometimes left out.

The most compelling reasons to provide other provisions for students with GPAs below 3.0 is that in the *GRE Guide to the Use of the Scores*, the Educational Testing Service makes specific mention of the scores of test takers who have disabilities, test takers whose

primary language is not English, and those test takers who are returning to school after a long absence. They recommend that graduate programs consider waiving the use of this test for students with disabilities:

Depending on the nature and extent of the disability, an examinee's scores may not fully reflect his or her educational achievement and because there are so few disabled persons taking GRE tests and their circumstances vary so widely, it has not been possible to provide special interpretive data for these examinees. Therefore, graduate schools should seriously consider waiving GRE requirements for applicants with certain disabilities. (Educational Testing System, 2014, p. 16)

In addition, the Educational Testing Service (2014, p.10) states that "Use of multiple criteria is particularly important when using GRE scores to assess the abilities of educationally disadvantaged applicants, applicants whose primary language is not English and applicants who are returning to school after an extended absence." Other reasons that the WOU Graduate Studies committee should consider changing this policy are the following:

1. An exam that is unrelated to the applicant's field of study can prevent a viable applicant from entering a program, and an exercise (the exam) that does not mimic the requirements of the profession becomes a gatekeeper to entering a field that requires a master's degree;
2. Students attending WOU receive accommodations if they have documentation that their condition is a disability and that it interferes with their ability to access coursework without those accommodations. We do not have any control over whether or how testing companies grant accommodations for students with disabilities;
3. Solid positive evidence about the applicant's performance in the program of study (e.g., their grades in the program during the conditional term) does not play into the decision-making process;
4. The only recourse for a student who has a GPA below 3.00 and does not perform well enough on the GRE/MAT is to either retake the courses that caused the low GPA (which is not always possible) or to take courses (any courses) with the goal of obtaining As to increase the GPA; and
5. Viable conditionally admitted students who have successfully completed a term are rejected by the institution, even when the program faculty and coordinator support the candidate, believing that they will be successful.

The Council for Graduate Schools, the national professional organization of graduate deans, is evaluating the efficacy of a holistic acceptance process, stating, "Understanding the practices and value of holistic review will help graduate institutions develop a broader understanding of the applicant qualities that translate into student success." While it is important for an institution to have high standards and for there to be a way to screen out inappropriate applicants, we must also ensure we are not screening out *appropriate*

applicants at the institution level. Individual WOU graduate programs have additional requirements established to further screen applicants.

We are proposing a policy that would maintain the 3.0 GPA for regular admission while expanding options for converting a conditional admission to a regular admission, allowing programs to screen further for specific fit.

Please see attached to see the proposed catalog changes.

Conditional Admission Catalog Change Proposal

Proposed changes are in *italics* and in *red*.

Current catalog copy	Proposed catalog copy
<p>Page 86</p> <p>Procedures for graduate study Admission procedures All persons wishing to enroll at WOU at the graduate level must be admitted to the university by the Graduate Office. To apply for admission to WOU’s graduate programs, students must complete the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit a completed Graduate Student Application (available online or pdf). 2. Pay the non-refundable, non-transferable \$60 Graduate Application fee. 3. Provide evidence of completed bachelor’s degree.* 4. Provide official transcripts from all non-WOU institutions attended. 5. Provide official scores for the MAT or GRE if minimum academic requirements are not met (see below). <p>Minimum academic requirements for graduate admission</p> <p>*Evidence of completion of a four-year baccalaureate degree (or international equivalent) from regionally accredited institution as defined by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, with a cumulative B average (equivalent 3.00 on a U.S. 4.00 grading scale) on the most recent baccalaureate degree.</p>	<p>Procedures for graduate study Admission procedures All persons wishing to enroll at WOU at the graduate level must be admitted to the university by the Graduate Office. To apply for admission to WOU’s graduate programs, students must complete the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit a completed Graduate Student Application (available online or pdf). 2. Pay the non-refundable, non-transferable \$60 Graduate Application fee. 3. Provide evidence of completed bachelor’s degree.* 4. Provide official transcripts from all non-WOU institutions attended. 5. Provide official scores for the MAT or GRE if minimum academic requirements are not met (see below). <p>Minimum academic requirements for graduate admission</p> <p>*Evidence of completion of a four-year baccalaureate degree (or international equivalent) from regionally accredited institution as defined by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, with a cumulative B average (equivalent 3.00 on a U.S. 4.00 grading scale) on the most recent baccalaureate degree.</p>

If the applicant's cumulative GPA is below 3.00, but a calculation using the last 90 quarter credits (60 semester credits) of graded course work is 3.0 or higher, the latter will be used as the basis for admission.

Applicants who hold a master's degree will have the 3.0 GPA requirement waived.

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Students who have been conditionally admitted and achieve a 3.0 GPA in the first quarter of their graduate program may be fully admitted with their graduate program coordinator recommendation.

Classification

The Graduate Office admits and classifies eligible students on the basis of their undergraduate grade-point average and declaration of intent in the application for admission.

Qualified students seeking a degree are classified either as fully admitted or conditional graduate students. All students must be classified as fully admitted by the start of the second term in a graduate program.

Conditional status will not be extended beyond the first term of conditional admission. A student who does not pass the GRE/MAT or provide a 3.0 GPA will be removed from the program. Student will have to reapply to the university after conditions are met.

Conditional admission to the university

Completing undergraduate degree: a student who is completing an undergraduate degree can be conditionally admitted to a graduate program with the following caveats:

- Student must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on completed coursework or have a passing score on the MAT or GRE.
- Student must have met requirements of the specific graduate program to which he/she is applying.
- Student will not be able to receive financial aid until the Graduate and Financial Aid Offices have received proof of

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completion of the undergraduate degree and a program plan is on file.

- Student must provide proof of completion of the undergraduate degree during the first term of enrollment as a graduate student. WOU graduates must show proof prior to starting graduate courses.

All students who are admitted on a conditional basis will have a registration hold placed on their account and will not be able to register for classes beyond the first term of graduate enrollment until the Graduate Office has received proof of completion of the undergraduate degree with a minimum of 3.0 on the last 90 quarter credits or 60 semester credits of coursework.

GPA requirement: A student who has an undergraduate GPA of 2.50 to 2.99 can be admitted conditionally for one term. At the end of that term, a student must meet university requirements, i.e., take and pass the MAT or GRE.

Student can petition for conditional admission via the graduate student general petition located on the graduate office website.

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- *proof of completion of the undergraduate degree with a minimum of 3.0 on the last 90 quarter credits or 60 semester credits of coursework; or*
- *the first quarter WOU transcript indicating a 3.0 GPA in the first quarter of their graduate program and their graduate program coordinator recommendation.*

GPA requirement: A student who has an undergraduate GPA of 2.50 to 2.99 can be admitted conditionally for one term. At the end of that term, a student must meet university requirements, i.e., take and pass the MAT or GRE; *or achieve a 3.0 GPA for the first quarter of their graduate program at WOU and recommendation from their program coordinator.*

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