Admissions

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Introduction

Qualified graduate applicants can apply for admission to The University of Texas at El Paso as either degree-seeking (master's or doctoral degree) or for non-degree post-baccalaureate or post-master's study (certification or endorsement, completing prerequisite coursework for later graduate study, or taking courses for personal or educational enrichment or for graduate or post-master's certificate). All applications of students who hold or are within a year from receiving a four-year baccalaureate degree or its equivalent must be submitted through the Graduate School, except for applicants pursuing a second or subsequent undergraduate degree. Degree programs differ in the specific requirements and guidelines for admission. The Graduate School makes determinations regarding admissions on the basis of recommendations from the relevant master's or doctoral program.

General Admission Factors

The University of Texas at El Paso takes a holistic approach in the admission of applicants to graduate programs as authorized by section 51.842 of the Texas Education Code. This section authorizes graduate programs to consider certain academic, socioeconomic, family, geographic, and other factors relating to an applicant's background in making an admissions decision for admissions into the graduate program.

This section also provides that an applicant’s performance on a standardized test may not be used in the admissions process as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant or as the primary criterion to end consideration of the applicant. If an applicant's performance is used for such purposes, then the applicant's test scores must be compared with those of other applicants from similar socioeconomic backgrounds to the extent that those backgrounds can be determined. This section provides that the prohibition and score comparison requirement does not apply to a standardized test used to measure the English language proficiency of a student who is a graduate of a foreign institution. This section prohibits the assignment of a specific weight to any one factor being considered in the admissions process for a graduate program.

General Admission Requirements

The following documents must be submitted to the Graduate School for consideration for admission into a graduate degree program:

1. Completed application for admission.
2. Application/processing fee ($45 for U.S. citizens or permanent residents/Mexican nationals; $80 for international applicants). Note: Application fees are subject to change because of legislative and/or institution action and become effective when enacted.
3. An official transcript, with the four-year baccalaureate degree posted, from the degree-granting institution and copies of transcripts for all other relevant upper-division and graduate work at accredited U.S. institutions or equivalent work and degrees at foreign institutions. The application process can begin with copies of transcripts. Individual programs might have additional requirements. Successful applicants generally have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. Programs may have more stringent requirements. Students who apply to receive educational benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs should, in addition to the above requirements, submit copies of transcripts from all other colleges and universities previously attended.
4. For graduates of institutions outside the United States where English is not the first language, a minimum score of 213 (550 on the paper-based exam) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or a minimum score of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Particular programs might have different minimum score requirements, and in some cases, alternative assessments of English language competency can be considered. Applicants should note that appointment to a graduate assistantship usually requires a score of 250 (600 on the paper-based exam). Official test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to the Graduate School.
5. Evidence of satisfactory academic achievement and potential. This will usually be assessed by review of performance in upper-division (junior- and senior-level) courses as well as any graduate-level courses completed. Many programs require other evidence of academic performance and promise including interviews, personal statements, and letters of recommendation.
6. Most programs consider results on standardized tests, including the GRE, GMAT, and Miller Analogies Test in making recommendations for admission. Official test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to the Graduate School. As described in the General Admission Factor section above, programs that consider results on standardized tests will also consider other information regarding the applicant's background.
7. Evidence of adequate subject preparation for the proposed graduate major.
8. Certain programs require students to submit to and satisfactorily complete a background check review as a condition of admission to and/or participation in education experiences. Students who refuse to submit to a background check or who do not pass the background check can be dismissed from the program.

The Graduate Studies Committee of the proposed graduate major will recommend to the Graduate School acceptance, conditional acceptance, or rejection of the application after all required documents have been received and reviewed by the Graduate School. The Graduate School approves these recommendations and notifies the applicant of the final decision.
Graduate Entrance Examinations

As part of graduate admission requirements, depending on the program applying to, students may be required to take one or more standardized tests. Results of standardized tests are used as part of a holistic review process.

Graduate Record Examination General Test

The General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) assesses skills important to all fields of study: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing. The GRE is taken at the applicant’s expense at licensed sites, but is not offered on the UTEP campus.

Graduate Management Admission Test

The Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is intended to assess analytical, writing, quantitative, verbal and reading skills. The GMAT is taken at the applicant’s expense at licensed sites, but is not offered on the UTEP campus.

Miller Analogies Test

The Miller Analogies Test (MAT) requires the solution of problems stated as analogies, assessing analytical thinking skills. The MAT is taken at the applicant’s expense at licensed sites, and is offered on the UTEP campus.

English Proficiency Requirements for International Applicants

International applicants are required to demonstrate English proficiency as a requirement for admission.

This requirement can be met by the following:

• Minimum score of 550 on paper-based TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam
• Minimum score of 79 on internet-based TOEFL exam
• Minimum score of 6.5 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
• Minimum score of 67 on the PTE (Pearson’s Test of English Academic)

Exceptions

1. Programs may require English-language training for applicants whose score is between 500 and 550 on the paper-based exam. However, the applicant must enroll in at least one of two leveling workshops offered by the English Language Institute in the first semester of enrollment. By the end of the first year of enrollment, the applicant must either succeed in the final workshop or achieve a TOEFL score of 550.

2. Graduate Assistantship may require a score of 600 on the TOEFL paper-based exam, depending on the program.

3. Programs may have higher minimum score requirements- see program webpage for specific information

4. Alternative assessments of English language competency may be considered in some cases

Student Assessment and Testing Office

The Student Assessment and Testing Office provides a wide array of testing services for admissions, professional certification, course placement, and credit by examination purposes. Institutional administrations of the TOEFL are offered throughout the year; TOEFL tests taken at UTEP are valid only at UTEP.

Transfer of Credit

Except for shared/co-operative programs, the majority of credit for a graduate degree must be taken at the University. For a master’s degree, up to fourteen (14) semester hours of graduate work can be transferred from another accredited institution with the approval of the program. Doctoral students are advised to consult their respective doctoral program for information on transfer of credit. All coursework transferred from other accredited institutions requires both the approval of the committee on graduate studies in the student's major area and the Dean of the Graduate School. When such transfer is approved, the student must still meet the residence requirements of two full semesters or the equivalent, and coursework must fall within the six-year time period.

• Only credit hours transfer; grade points earned at other institutions do not transfer.
• Only graduate-level courses can be transferred for credit.
• Only earned credit hours transfer; institutional grade point average does not transfer.
• Courses used to fulfill other degree requirements cannot be transferred.
• Courses for which a grade of C or lower was earned cannot be transferred.
• Correspondence courses are not accepted for graduate credit.

All documents submitted to the University for transfer purposes become part of the official files of the University and cannot be released or returned to the student or to another institution.
Prerequisites
Every master's degree program is based on the assumption that the student participating in it already possesses a general college education through the baccalaureate level. Accordingly, the first prerequisite for the entering student is a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. A second prerequisite is that the entering student must have taken at least 12 semester hours of advanced undergraduate courses in the area of study in which he or she proposes to pursue a graduate major. Some areas may require more semester hours of undergraduate preparation. Students must earn at least a 3.0 grade point average in any deficiency or leveling work required. If a student without adequate preparation is admitted to a given graduate program, admission will be conditional until such time as the student has completed the courses of preparatory work designated by the graduate advisor. These courses will be in addition to the 30 hours (or more) required for the master's degree itself. Deficiency or leveling work will be generated on a transcript reflective of the level of the course and will affect cumulative grade point average.

Academic Fresh Start Program
An applicant who has earned a baccalaureate degree under the Academic Fresh Start statute, Texas Education Code, §51.931, and applies for admission to a postgraduate or professional program will be evaluated on only the grade point average of the coursework completed for that baccalaureate degree and the other criteria stated herein for admission to the postgraduate or professional program.

Acceptance into a Graduate Program
Acceptance
Applicants who are judged to meet the requirements for admission into a graduate degree program can be accepted into the program without conditions. The Graduate School is responsible for contacting the successful applicant.

Conditional Acceptance
Conditional acceptance is offered to students who do not meet all of the specific criteria for admission but who show promise of success in graduate study. Applicants who lack sufficient foundation in the proposed area of study can be required to successfully complete designated courses before qualifying for unconditional admission. Other applicants can be required, on the recommendation of the graduate advisor, to meet particular conditions during the first semester of study. Among the factors that programs can take into account in recommending conditional admission to the Graduate School are the applicant’s academic record, the socio-economic background of the applicant, the native language of the applicant, the applicant’s involvement in relevant community or extracurricular activities, a personal interview, and other material that the candidate can submit to provide evidence that the candidate would make an important contribution to the program or to the University’s objectives and mission. An applicant who is accepted conditionally must remove conditions within one semester. Conditions for acceptance as recommended by the graduate advisors are subject to final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Rejection
An applicant who fails to meet the minimum requirements for admission to a degree program will usually be denied admission into that program. An applicant meeting the requirements for admission can be denied by the Graduate Studies Committee of the proposed major if the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of students who can be accommodated in the available facilities or who can be adequately instructed by the available faculty. A student who has been rejected can reapply at a later time, can apply to another program, or can apply as a post baccalaureate non-degree student. The Graduate School is responsible for contacting the applicant whose consideration for admission has ended.

Readmission into Graduate School
An application for readmission and payment of admission fees is required for a student who

• has not enrolled for twelve (12) months or more;
• was not accepted at an earlier date and wants to pursue admission into the same or a different field based on revised criteria or more current documentation; or
• was eligible to enroll, and failed to do so.

The academic record of student who has not enrolled for twelve months will be inactivated at the conclusion of the twelfth month and an application for readmission is required.

The academic record of a student who is admitted and fails to enroll the semester of admission will be inactivated at the conclusion of the semester of admission and an application for readmission is required.

A student who is accepted into a graduate program and is interested in changing the current program of study must reapply for admission and undergo the admission process. The student must complete one semester in the current program before reapplying for admission to a new program. Application fees are assessed for every application submitted.

If extenuating circumstances exist, a student may request a Leave of Absence. Requests for leave of absence are submitted to the Graduate School by the graduate advisor.
Readmission of a Student Who Withdraws to Perform Active Military Service

1. This section applies only to a student who withdraws from an institution of higher education to perform active military service as a member of the United States armed forces or the Texas National Guard. This section does not apply to a student who withdraws from an institution solely to perform one or more training exercises as a member of the Texas National Guard.

2. For any academic term that begins after the date a student described by Subsection (a) is released from active military service but not later than the first anniversary of that date, the institution of higher education from which the student withdrew shall readmit the student, without requiring reapplication or charging a fee for readmission, if the student is otherwise eligible to register for classes at the institution. On readmission of the student under this subsection, the institution shall:
   a. provide to the student any financial assistance previously provided by the institution to the student before the student's withdrawal if the student meets current eligibility requirements for the assistance, other than any requirement directly affected by the student's service, such as continuous enrollment or another similar timing requirement; and
   b. allow the student the same academic status that the student had before the student's withdrawal, including any course credit awarded to the student by the institution.

3. An institution of higher education can adopt rules requiring reasonable proof from a student of the fact and duration of the student's active military service.

Post-Baccalaureate Non-Degree Admission

An individual who has received a baccalaureate degree but who does not wish to apply for admission into a graduate degree program can apply for admission as a post-baccalaureate non-degree student. This type of admission is available to individuals who wish to obtain teacher certification or endorsement, graduate certificates, or post-master's endorsement, or to complete prerequisite work to demonstrate their ability to do graduate-level coursework.

Interested individuals must complete an application for admission and must submit to the Graduate School an official transcript with the baccalaureate degree posted. If several institutions were attended, copies of those transcripts are required from each institution from which relevant junior- and senior-level credits and any graduate-level credits were earned. UTEP transcripts are not required of students who received their baccalaureate degree from UTEP.

Initial teacher certification and professional certification for classroom teachers can also be earned. Eligibility for these programs includes a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average from an accredited college or university, successful completion of THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment), and development of an approved plan of study. Eligible applicants for certification and endorsement programs will be notified that they can enroll, but will need to contact the Certification Office in the College of Education immediately for eligibility into one of several certification or endorsement programs. The Certification Office and the College of Education are responsible for course scheduling and can require a minimum enrollment per term for admitted students. Additionally, this office will develop a plan of study for each student in keeping with the requirements set forth by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The certification or endorsement will be earned upon successful completion of all requirements.

Graduate-level coursework completed during the certification or endorsement program that has not been used to meet other degree requirements can be recommended by the departmental graduate advisor to the Graduate School to count toward an advanced degree under certain circumstances. These courses are limited to a maximum of nine (9) semester hours in which the grade of B or higher has been earned within the time limits, and other restrictions detailed in this catalog. Additional information on certification and endorsement programs is available from the Certification Office within the College of Education and the Graduate School.

Post-baccalaureate non-degree admission is not available to international students who need a visa (I-20) to attend school in the United States unless approved by the Office of International Programs. Post-baccalaureate non-degree students are ineligible to receive any type of federal or institutional financial aid, including VA benefits. Post-baccalaureate non-degree students cannot be appointed in any capacity such as teaching assistants, assistant instructors, graduate research assistants, academic assistants or graduate assistants and cannot participate in UTEP's co-op program. Enrollment as a post-baccalaureate non-degree student is limited to nine (9) hours.