



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

April 2, 2003

TO: Graduate Faculty
FROM: D.S. Kalika, Acting Dean
RE: GRE Admission Requirement

The Graduate School
351 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY 40506-0027
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www.rgs.uky.edu/gsl

As you know, the Graduate School currently requires submission of official GRE (or GMAT) scores for all applicants. The only exception is for students seeking to enroll in non-degree status. Earlier this year, I commissioned a sub-committee of the Graduate Council to examine our admission policy with respect to the GRE; Prof. Mike Reed from Agricultural Economics chaired the committee. In the course of its work, the committee examined GRE requirements at our benchmark institutions and conducted a comprehensive survey of our Directors of Graduate Studies. The report of the committee is now available at:

<http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gsl/gradcouncil.html>

In its report, the committee made three recommendations intended to provide graduate programs with more flexibility on the GRE requirement. These recommendations are as follows:

- 1.) That individual graduate programs be allowed to petition the Graduate Council to remove the GRE (or GMAT) requirement for all applicants to their program. Such a petition would need to outline the admission criteria used by the program and explain why the GRE is not useful in the admission process of the unit. The petition would come from the program DGS after appropriate consultation with the graduate faculty and chair of the unit. The Dean of the College, or designated individual, would also sign the petition, in the same manner as course and program changes.
- 2.) That units may also petition to allow their applicants to substitute another standardized professional exam (such as the LSAT or MCAT) for the GRE. This petition would be handled in the manner outlined above.
3. That the Graduate School continue to require GRE scores for all fellowship applications.

These recommendations were approved by the Graduate Council at its meeting on March 27th.

As you can see, the recommendations represent a significant change with the respect to the institution's use of the GRE. Based on the survey that was completed by the committee, it would appear that the vast majority of graduate programs at the University would elect to continue to require the GRE for all applicants. However, there is a small number of programs who have indicated that the GRE is of limited usefulness in their applicant evaluation process. Upon full adoption of the recommendations, those programs would then have the option to petition the Graduate Council for the removal of the GRE requirement for their program.

The recommendations will require a modification to Senate Rule 4.2.5. Specifically, the Graduate Council has approved the following addition to 4.2.5:

4.2.5 GRADUATE SCHOOL

Students seeking admission to the University of Kentucky Graduate School must hold a baccalaureate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher learning. All applicants for admission to a graduate degree program must have an undergraduate grade point standing of at least 2.75, and a graduate grade point standing (if applicable) of at least 3.0 on a basis of 4.0. Furthermore, all applicants must submit scores on the verbal, quantitative and analytical writing portions of the aptitude section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). This rule may be waived in individual cases upon recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies in the individual department or program. However, in cases where waivers are granted, the GRE scores must be submitted before the end of the first semester of graduate study. The advanced portion of the GRE may be required by individual programs. A student with a grade point average of less than 2.75, or a graduate of a non-accredited institution, may be admitted or provisionally admitted, only after the (GRE) and other evidence acceptable to the program and the Dean of the Graduate School is submitted indicating that the student is capable of doing satisfactory graduate work. Individual programs may establish higher requirements. US: 10/12/98)

A graduate program may petition the Graduate Council to allow its applicants to substitute another professional standardized exam (for example, the MCAT or LSAT) for the GRE. A program may also petition the Graduate Council to exempt all of its applicants from the requirement to submit GRE scores; for such a petition to be successful, the program must show that the GRE is not useful in its admissions process. Either type of petition must be approved by the Dean of the College in which the program resides before being submitted to the Graduate Council.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

Before this change can be forwarded to the Senate for consideration, it must be approved by the Graduate Faculty. Given the importance of the change and the desire for broad-based input, I would like to conduct a web-based ballot on this issue. However, prior to conducting the ballot, I welcome your comments. Further, in order to facilitate discussion on this issue, we will be conducting an open forum as follows:

GRE OPEN FORUM
Thursday, April 10th, 3:00 PM
18th Floor Patterson Tower

All graduate faculty are invited to attend.

The ballot will be conducted on the Graduate School web page during the period April 14-23rd. More details on the balloting will be forwarded to you in the near future. As per Graduate School rules, only full members of the graduate faculty are permitted to vote.


If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at kalika@uky.edu.



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

April 28, 2003

TO: Dr. Jeffrey Dembo, Chair
Senate Council

FROM: D.S. Kalika, Acting Dean
The Graduate School 

RE: Proposed change to Graduate School Admission Requirements

The Graduate School
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This past Fall, I appointed a working group sub-committee of the Graduate Council to review the admission requirements of the Graduate School, specifically with respect to the requirement that all applicants to graduate programs at the University submit official scores from the GRE or GMAT. The working group undertook a full review of the GRE/GMAT requirement, the end result of which was a report which made specific recommendations for modifications to Senate Rule 4.2.5. The full text of the report is available at:

<http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gsl/GREWorkingGroupReport.pdf>

In its report, the working group made three recommendations intended to provide graduate programs with more flexibility with the GRE requirement. These recommendations are as follows:

- 1.) That individual graduate programs be allowed to petition the Graduate Council to remove the GRE (or GMAT) requirement for all applicants to their program. Such a petition would need to outline the admission criteria used by the program and explain why the GRE is not useful in the admission process of the unit. The petition would come from the program DGS after appropriate consultation with the graduate faculty and chair of the unit. The Dean of the College, or designated individual, would also sign the petition, in the same manner as course and program changes.
- 2.) That units may also petition to allow their applicants to substitute another standardized professional exam (such as the LSAT or MCAT) for the GRE. This petition would be handled in the manner outlined above.
- 3.) That the Graduate School continue to require GRE scores for all fellowship applications.

Further, the working group proposed the following addition to Senate Rule 4.2.5:

4.2.5 GRADUATE SCHOOL

Students seeking admission to the University of Kentucky Graduate School must hold a baccalaureate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher learning. All applicants for admission to a graduate degree program must have an undergraduate grade point standing of at least 2.75, and a graduate grade point standing (if applicable) of at least 3.0 on a basis of 4.0. Furthermore, all applicants must submit scores on the verbal, quantitative and analytical writing portions of the aptitude section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). This rule may be waived in individual cases upon recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies in the individual department or program. However, in cases where waivers are granted, the GRE scores must be submitted before the end of the first semester of graduate study. The advanced portion of the GRE may be required by individual programs. A student with a grade point average of less than 2.75, or a graduate of a non-accredited institution, may be admitted or provisionally admitted, only after the (GRE) and other evidence acceptable to the program and the Dean of the Graduate School is submitted indicating that the student is capable of doing satisfactory graduate work. Individual programs may establish higher requirements. US: 10/12/98)

A graduate program may petition the Graduate Council to allow its applicants to substitute another professional standardized exam (for example, the MCAT or LSAT) for the GRE. A program may also petition the Graduate Council to exempt all of its applicants from the requirement to submit GRE scores; for such a petition to be successful, the program must show that the GRE is not useful in its admissions process. Either type of petition must be approved by the Dean of the College in which the program resides before being submitted to the Graduate Council.

These recommendations, and the proposed change to rule 4.2.5, were approved unanimously by the Graduate Council at its meeting on March 27, 2003. Subsequent to that meeting, an open forum was conducted for all graduate faculty on April 10, 2003 to discuss the proposed change.

Graduate faculty approval for the proposed change to Senate Rule 4.2.5 was then sought by web ballot. Web balloting was conducted during the period April 14-23rd. All full graduate faculty members were notified of their eligibility to vote via e-mail prior to the opening of the web site.

A total of 203 graduate faculty participated in the voting. The final tally was:

Vote to approve the recommendations and change to Rule 4.2.5 = **171**

Vote to disapprove the recommendations and change to Rule 4.2.5 **32**

As you can see, the proposed changes to the graduate admissions requirement passed by a large margin.

On behalf of the Graduate Faculty of the University, I request that the proposed change be given due consideration by the Senate Council. Also, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions of concerns.

March 16, 2003

Graduate Council

Report of the GRE Working Group

Michael Reed, Agricultural Economics (Chair)
Suzie Allard, Communications (student member)
Bob Grossman, Chemistry
Gladys Hildreth, Family Studies
Brian Jackson, Physiology
Megan Streams, Public Administration (student member)

Report and Recommendations of the GRE Working Group

The working group was charged by Dean Kalika to investigate whether the Graduate School should change its current requirement that the graduate record exam (GRE) be compulsory of all graduate student applicants¹. The working group (membership is given in Appendix I) decided to use three sources of information to examine this issue: past literature on the GRE as a predictor of academic performance, requirements of our benchmark institutions, and a survey of directors of graduate studies (DGSs) at U.K. The survey instrument was web-based and is presented in Appendix II.

Research results concerning the reliability of the GRE (or its subcomponents) as a predictor of academic performance is mixed. Early studies using data back to the 1960s generally found a weak or nonexistent relationship between GRE scores and graduate grade-point average (GPA). Later studies have found that parts of the GRE (especially the quantitative section) had a strong relationship with success in some disciplines. Recent work by House et al. and Neal not only summarize this literature, but also give new findings that support the mixed relationships by discipline. One point is clear from the literature – that the GRE is culturally biased against certain segments of the population.

The Graduate School at most of our benchmark institutions does not require the GRE of all graduate applicants. Of 21 benchmark institutions, 14 allow units at least some flexibility in requiring the GRE. We have not looked at each institution extensively, but we get the idea that most programs require the GRE as part of their admission requirements. The following schools do not require the GRE for all applicants: University of Arizona, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Georgia, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, University of Minnesota, North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, Pennsylvania State University, Purdue University, University of Tennessee, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The DGS survey received 65 responses out of 80 programs, an 81% response rate. Most of the survey gauged how DGSs use GRE in their admission decisions, how they felt about the Graduate School requiring the GRE of applicants, and what the unit would likely do if the GRE was not required by Graduate School. The full results of the survey are presented in Appendix III.

Most units at U.K. use the GRE in their admission criteria. When the importance of various characteristics of applicants was gauged on a 5-point Likert scale (1 being not

¹ The Graduate School allows the GMAT to be substituted for the GRE in some programs. A more accurate writing would always mention GMAT along with GRE. For ease of exposition, we delete GMAT but it should be understood that most of the issues discussed are related to GRE/GMAT.

important and 5 being very important), the GRE score was the third-leading criterion after GPA and recommendation letters. Its average score was 3.84. When each DGS was asked to rank various criteria, GRE score was ranked first and second most important in 22% and 31% of the responses, respectively. The first-place percentage for GRE scores was only exceeded by GPA, indicating that GRE is probably the second most important admission criterion among units (53% of respondents rated it as first or second). However, some units weight it very low relative to recommendation letters.

Some DGSs stated in the open-ended questions that the GRE was the only objective or standardized measure of academic capability. They seemed to realize that there were problems with its use, but they say there are problems with all measures. Cheating was often cited as a problem with the GRE and some DGSs questioned the consistently high scores of students from some countries. The average respondent found the GRE much less useful for international students than domestic students (mean of 3.17 on usefulness for international students versus a 3.84 mean overall). They indicated that they took that uncertainty into consideration when it came to admission decisions. In fact, 93% of the respondents said that they would still consider students who were slightly below the GRE cutoff based on other criteria.

There is a bit more confidence in individual sections of the GRE than in the overall score. However, the most important section varies by discipline. The open-ended responses also show that quite a few DGSs put much emphasis on the Analytical score, the section of the exam that has been dropped. Those respondents are concerned about the use of the GRE when this portion of the exam is gone.

When asked which option they preferred regarding a GRE requirement, 53% said that they prefer that the Graduate School continue to require the GRE for applicants. A clear majority of respondents prefer the status quo. However, 32% believe that individual programs should be allowed to decide whether the GRE should be required. Another 15% feel that the Graduate School should waive the GRE requirement for applicants who have a graduate or professional degree.

Respondents were asked what they thought their unit would do if the Graduate School no longer required the GRE for applicants. The large majority (77%) of respondents said that they felt their unit would still require the GRE for applicants; another 11% were unsure. Only 12% of the respondents said that their unit would probably not require the GRE. Thus, many of the people who thought that the Graduate School should give units flexibility to decide, in fact thought that the GRE should still be used for their unit.

The survey also addresses the issue of whether the Graduate School should require the GRE for some of their fellowship applications even if the exam wasn't required for admission to the unit. Two out of three respondents said that the Graduate School should still require GREs for Graduate School fellowship applicants.

Because the Graduate School does not specify a minimum score for applicants, one might ask why units object to its being required. We feel among the arguments in favor of

requiring the GRE is that it provides an indication of the applicant's capability to succeed in many programs (it does provide standardized information), it is an assessment mechanism for program quality, it is easier (and maybe more palatable) for the Graduate School to require it than to have the policy differ by unit, and finally it makes it clear that the Graduate School is interested in monitoring and maintaining the quality of its applicants.

There are several arguments against requiring the GRE. One is the cost to the applicant. The exam costs \$115 in the US and \$145 outside the US. If many programs in the US don't require the exam, some applicants may not apply to University of Kentucky programs because of this requirement. Despite having no GRE minima, some individuals may feel the exam will jeopardize their application, especially if the unit is not in favor of the requirement. Finally, the unit may give applicants a mixed message about the GRE. The Graduate School says it is important, but the unit simply says it is a bureaucratic hurdle that must be jumped.

Given the results of the literature review, DGS survey, and findings regarding benchmark institutions, the working group recommends that individual units be allowed to petition the Graduate Council to permit students to enter their program without the GRE. The petition should outline the admission criteria used and explain why the GRE is not useful in the admission process for the unit. The petition should come from the unit's DGS after appropriate consultation with the unit, graduate faculty, and the unit's chair. The Dean of the College, or a designated person, must also sign the petition, as they do with course and program changes.

Units may also petition to allow their applicants to substitute another standardized professional exam (such as the LSAT or MCAT) for the GRE. This petition should be handled in the manner outlined above.

The working group feels that the Graduate School should continue to require GRE scores for their fellowship applications. It should be made clear through the Graduate School website and on the website and other promotional material from units that do not require the GRE, that all Graduate School fellowships require the GRE. This way students entering units that do not require the GRE will understand that they must take the GRE to be eligible for a Graduate School fellowship.

The working group suggests the following addition to section 4.2.5 of the University regulations:

"A graduate program may petition the Graduate Council to allow its applicants to substitute another professional standardized exam (for example, the MCAT or LSAT) for the GRE. A program may also petition the Graduate Council to exempt all of its applicants from the requirement to submit their GRE scores; for such a petition to be successful, the program must show that the GRE is not useful in its admissions process. Either type of petition must be approved by the

Dean of the College in which the program resides before being submitted to the Graduate Council.”

Finally, the working group recommends that an open forum for Graduate Faculty and students be held before the final approval of these recommendations. In this way, more widespread, qualitative input can be received on this important matter.

Appendix I Working Group Membership

Suzie Allard, Communications (student member)

Bob Grossman, Chemistry

Gladys Hildreth, Family Studies

Brian Jackson, Physiology

Michael Reed, Agricultural Economics (Chair)

Megan Streams, Public Administration (student member)

Appendix II

Survey Instrument (web-based)

<http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gs/GradCouncil/GREsurvey.html>

Appendix III Survey Results

<u>Admission Criteria</u> (1 not important, 5 very important)	Mean	Standard Deviation
How important is GPA in admission decisions?	4.48	0.66
How important are recommendation letters in admission decisions?	4.15	0.84
How important is GRE/GMAT in admission decisions?	3.84	0.91
How important is research experience in admission decisions?	3.76	0.99
How important is the applicant statement in admission decisions?	3.76	1.10
How important is diversity in admission decisions?	3.75	1.13
How important is reputation of previous school in admission decisions?	3.53	0.91
How important is teaching experience in admission decisions?	2.15	1.18
How important are other standard test scores (such as LSAT, MCAT) in admission decisions?	1.4	0.48

<u>Most Important Admission Criteria</u> (1 not important, 5 very important)	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
GPA	45%	23%	8%
Letters of Recommendation	3%	9%	24%
GRE/GMAT Scores	22%	31%	10%
Applicant Statement	11%	6%	11%
Diversity	3%	3%	13%
Reputation of previous school	0%	11%	6%
Applicant Research Experience	8%	2%	10%
Applicant Teaching Experience	2%	5%	3%
Scores on other Standardized Tests	6%	9%	16%

Do you consider only the composite score or do you consider the individual scores?

Composite 5% Individual 95%

How much consideration do you give each section of the GRE/GMAT?
(1 little consideration, 5 much consideration)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Verbal	3.91	0.97
Quantitative	4.00	1.19
Analytical	3.69	1.28
Overall	3.58	1.33

Would a student with GRE/GMAT scores just below your cutoffs still be considered for admission based on other criteria?

93% No 7%

How useful is the GRE/GMAT for making admission decisions for international students?

(1 not useful, 5 very useful)

Mean 3.17 Std Dev 1.16

Which GRE options do you prefer?

GRE/GMAT is required for all applicants 53%

GRE/GMAT requirement is waived for applicants who have a graduate or professional degree 15%

Individual programs can decide whether to require the GRE/GMAT 32%

If the Graduate School did not require GRE/GMAT, what would your program do?

Require the GRE/GMAT 77%

Not require the GRE/GMAT 12%

Not sure 11%

If the GRE/GMAT is not required of all programs, should it be required for University fellowships?

67% No 33%