

January 2016

Holistic Admissions in Graduate Education Virginia Tech

Identifying and recruiting talented individuals to pursue graduate degrees is a very important function shared by the faculty and the Graduate School. The admission screening process is critical to developing a diverse pool of well-qualified candidates for consideration. High GPA, high test scores (e.g., GRE) and the reputation of the university have been considered the primary factors in developing the pool and establishing the ranking of applicants by many departments, especially those with a large number of applicants. But this practice tends to cultivate a homogeneous pool while excluding potentially qualified applicants, rather than identifying a broad pool of qualified candidates using additional measures. Research shows that some qualified individuals do not perform well on standardized tests, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In order to increase diversity and inclusion within graduate education at VT, the Graduate School has developed three initiatives in response to the InclusiveVT call for action: holistic admissions, affirming environment for graduate education, and inclusive GLC. Together, using these initiatives and other ongoing inclusion and diversity efforts, we can recruit, retain, and graduate individuals who are prepared to work in a diverse and inclusive global society.

To implement and realize holistic admissions in graduate education, the Graduate School has taken the following steps:

1. Revised the application to Graduate School to include more information about the applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA, or success critical skills beyond the cognitive skills). This includes the opportunity to provide brief descriptions of the applicant's leadership, research experience, community engagement, integrity, and ability to overcome barriers.
2. Included additional questions about the rating of the applicant on such abilities as communication, innovation and creativity, curiosity, teamwork, and integrity. In addition to the required letter of recommendation, the referees can provide their evaluation of the applicants' skills and abilities in these areas.
3. Although not used specifically in the admissions screening process, the Graduate School has implemented a post-admissions survey in which we ask (and legally can ask) about additional life and personal factors so that we can identify resources needed to provide an affirming environment for all.

By design, departments will be able to "sort" by the additional information and not just rely on GPA and GRE to identify a pool of qualified candidates. Ranking by these traditional criteria is discouraged but sorting by the new criteria of particular interest to the Department is encouraged. Specifically, we will request that departments "screen in"

candidates using the KSA criteria beyond GPA and GRE. The process used by the admissions committees to accomplish this goal will be determined at the departmental level. Beginning in the spring '16, within-college meetings will be held to discuss the changes made to the application and letters of recommendation forms, to discuss the implementation of holistic admissions, and to learn of holistic admission practices already in place.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete this form. This will serve as the letter of recommendation for this applicant. If you wish, you may attach a PDF-formatted file with any narrative you wish to contribute about this student. Should you attach a file, we ask two things of you:

- Even if you provide your contact information in the file you attach, please enter that information in this form as well. You will not be able to submit this form without your contact information completed.
- Please **DO NOT MAIL** a paper copy of this form or the file you attach. If it is necessary for us to have a paper copy, we will contact you at this email address: cotton@vt.edu.

FERPA ACCESS WAIVER

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, a student enrolled at Virginia Tech has access to his or her academic records. We comply with this law, while still allowing the option of waiving the right to access letters of recommendation. In this case, the **STUDENT HAS WAIVED** this right to access the contents of this letter of recommendation.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full Name:
Email:

Program applied to:
Degree applied for:
Campus:
Starting term:

REFERENCE STATUS

Reference Status: Open

YOUR INFORMATION (ALL FIELD ARE REQUIRED)

First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Address:	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Title:	<input type="text"/>	City:	<input type="text"/>
Institution/Company:	<input type="text"/>	State/Province:	<input type="text"/>
		ZIP/Postal Code:	<input type="text"/>
Daytime Phone:	<input type="text"/>		
Email Address:	<input type="text"/>		

If available, provide the applicant's relative standing in your department:

How would you rate this applicant in:

Communication skills:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement
Ethics & Integrity:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement
Initiative:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement
Innovation & Creativity:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement
Planning & Organization:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement
Teamwork:	<input type="radio"/> Very strong	<input type="radio"/> Strong	<input type="radio"/> Average	<input type="radio"/> Needs improvement

Please provide the most compelling reason for Virginia Tech to admit this applicant and explain your reasoning.

Characters remaining:

Use this section to provide additional comments on the attributes rated above, providing examples where appropriate. Please indicate how long you have known the applicant and in what capacity. You may attach a PDF file of your comments in lieu of entering them below.

Select file: No file selected. (PDF Format Only, please)

[cancel](#) | [save my progress](#) | [finish and submit](#)

ACADEMIC HISTORY**Previous College(s)**

We ask that you list the institutions that you have attended where you have been, or will be, awarded a degree:

- Please list only the institution(s) where you have been awarded a degree(s). We do not need to have information about any community colleges or other schools you may have attended prior to receiving your Bachelor's degree. If you are currently enrolled in graduate school or have earned a graduate degree, please list each institution where you have obtained graduate credit or earned a degree.
- To add an institution, click the  icon below. A pop-up window will be displayed where you can search for your institution's name. Please select the name that most closely matches your school. If you attended a College "affiliated to" a University, please select the name of the University, NOT the College (i.e. University of Mumbai, etc.). If you cannot find your school in the search list, please enter the name of the institution, as well as the city, state/province, and the country in the fields presented in the pop-up and click submit.
- When selecting your major and degree from the lists provided, **you may not find an exact match**. Please select the option that most closely matches the degree you were awarded and your major area of study.
- Prior to submitting your online application, **you will be required to upload a scanned copy of the OFFICIAL transcript** from each institution that you have listed here, both undergraduate and graduate. **DO NOT upload your institution's web-based academic record** or a document stating it is not an official transcript. Make sure that all critical and identifying marks have been scanned and are legible. These include the institution's name, your name, the names of your courses, and the grades you have received. It is important that you **scan both the front and back of your transcript**, as we will need to be able to review the information provided on the back of your transcript concerning credit hours, the institution's grading scale, etc. Non-legible documents will result in processing delays. Please ensure that your file is in PDF format.
- **Applicants from Virginia Tech:** Please attach the output from the unofficial transcript generated from the *Transcripts and Certifications Menu* in **HokieSpa**. Please ensure that your file is in PDF format.
- The process of uploading transcripts is intended to eliminate the need for you to mail in your transcripts. Please **DO NOT** mail in your transcripts at this time, as our departments will be able to review the scanned transcripts you provide with this application. If you are offered admission, you will be required to provide an official copy of your transcript(s) upon the awarding of your degree and its posting to your transcript prior to your enrollment at Virginia Tech. Please **DO NOT MAIL your official transcripts to us until you have received an offer of admission** from Virginia Tech.

Undergraduate History

Lynchburg College <input type="button" value="change"/>	<input type="button" value="X"/>
From <input type="text" value="12/1969"/> (mm/yyyy)	Degree <input type="text" value="Bachelor of Arts (BA)"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
To <input type="text" value="05/2001"/> (mm/yyyy)	Major <input type="text" value="Major Unknown"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
Grad Date <input type="text" value="05/2001"/> (mm/yyyy)	GPA <input type="text"/> out of <input type="text"/> Last 60 GPA (optional) <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
	In-Major GPA (optional): <input type="text"/>
	What do I put in the GPA boxes?
	Thesis Title (optional) <input type="text"/>
	Attach Undergraduate Transcript
	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/> No file selected. (PDF Format Only, please. 10 MB max size)



- One of the universities I attended was in the US:

Graduate History

Virginia Tech <input type="button" value="change"/>	<input type="button" value="X"/>
From <input type="text" value="08/2001"/> (mm/yyyy)	Degree <input type="text" value="Master of Arts in Education (MAED)"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
To <input type="text" value="05/2004"/> (mm/yyyy)	Major <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
Grad Date <input type="text" value="05/2004"/> (mm/yyyy)	GPA <input type="text"/> out of <input type="text"/> Last 60 GPA (optional) <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="?"/>
	In-Major GPA (optional): <input type="text"/>
	What do I put in the GPA boxes?
	Thesis Title (optional) <input type="text"/>
	Attach Graduate Transcript
	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/> No file selected. (PDF Format Only, please. 10 MB max size)

**GRE Test Scores**

If you have taken the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), we ask that you report your scores here. If you have taken the GRE, the Virginia Tech Graduate School **must receive** an official score report from Educational Testing Services in order to consider your scores. **The ETS institution code for Virginia Tech is 5859**. Departments requiring GRE scores will not consider your application to be complete until the official test score has been received. Most departments have specific **score requirements**. Please review them before applying to a program.

- I have taken (or plan to take) the GRE

Date taken or to be taken (mm/yyyy)

Section	Score	Percentage
Verbal Reasoning	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> %
Quantitative Reasoning	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> %
Analytical Writing	<input type="text" value="0.0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> %

GRE Subject Test Scores

If you have taken the GRE Subject Test, we ask that you report your scores here. The Virginia Tech Graduate School **must receive** an official score report from Educational Testing Services in order to consider your scores. **The ETS institution code for Virginia Tech is 5859.** Departments requiring GRE Subject scores will not consider your application to be complete until the official test score has been received. Most departments have specific **score requirements**. Please review them before applying to a program.

Add GRE Subject Test Score

GMAT Test Scores

If you have taken the GMAT, we ask that you report your scores here. We **must receive** an official score report from **GMAC**. **Please request GMAC to send your scores to the program you are applying to in the Pamplin College of Business.** Applications are not considered complete until the official test score has been received. Most departments have specific **score requirements**. Please review them before applying to a program.

I have taken (or plan to take) the GMAT

TOEFL Test Scores (Required for most international applicants)

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores are required of all international students whose first language is not English, except for those applicants who have graduated from an accredited university where English is the language of instruction. **Official test scores should be sent to the Virginia Tech Graduate School, institution code 5859.** Applications are not considered complete until the official test score has been received.

The university-wide minimum requirements are:

- 80 for the internet-based test
- 213 for the computer-based test
- 550 for the paper-based test

However, **some departments** require a higher score or have different criteria. **TOEFL scores are not required of US Citizens, US permanent residents, or US naturalized citizens.**

I have taken (or plan to take) the TOEFL

IELTS International English Language Testing System (1-9) (optional)

Virginia Tech will also consider the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test in place of the TOEFL. However, you should first **check with your department** to see if they will accept this test in lieu of the TOEFL. **The minimum score required is 6.5.**

I have taken (or plan to take) the IELTS

Additional Educational Experiences

Which of the following have you had experiences in? (select all that apply):

Community involvement and/or service

Explain:

Leadership

Explain:

Overcoming social, economic, or physical barriers

Explain:

Personal and/or professional ethics

Explain:

Recognition of achievements over time

Explain:

Research/scholarship

Explain:

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