Guidelines for GRE Test Score Waiver Petitions
at
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The current policy, approved by the faculty Administrative Board of The Graduate School, requires GRE test scores, with recommended minimum thresholds, as part of the admissions application process for all applicants to graduate degree programs. One approved exception is for applicants who already hold a research or professional doctorate degree (by request from the admitting academic program).

Academic programs may also request substitute test scores specific to their discipline, most commonly MCAT or LSAT scores, be used in place of the GRE. Programs wishing to have a substitute on file in The Graduate School may submit their proposed exam substitute in writing and confirm that any applicant to their graduate program has this exam substitute option available to them.

The following guidelines are intended to assist academic programs that may wish to petition for a waiver of standardized test scores as part of the admissions application. *Please note that international applicants will still be required to submit TOEFL or IELTS test scores.*

Waiver petitions should be submitted to the Academic Policy Committee of the Administrative Board of The Graduate School for review and approval. Proposals will be evaluated at regularly scheduled meetings during the academic year and will only be approved for the upcoming year’s admissions cycle. All proposals should address the following points:

- Provide the rationale and background for the test score waiver petition. What academic goals does the program wish to accomplish with this change?

- Describe the decision process and outcome/votes the faculty used in arriving at a decision to request the test score waiver.

- Describe in detail the formal objective criteria that will be used to evaluate applicants in lieu of GRE scores. Will additional materials be requested as part of the admissions application?

- Specify the timeframe for assessing the impact of this change on the program’s admissions activities and outcomes, typically three to five years with a midpoint check. Provide detailed evaluation criteria for determining the impact and whether the score waiver should continue.
  - Criteria should include trends and analysis beyond base numbers and yield rates, while acknowledging the importance of such input metrics.
  - Incorporate quality, performance, learning outcomes, and assessment metrics and information. For example, how are students progressing in the program?
What do attrition rates appear to be in comparison to past years? How do eligibility standards compare? How has time to degree been impacted? How have job placements (both rate and type) been impacted?

- Consider innovative and future-oriented evaluation criteria for your midpoint and final evaluation reports to The Graduate School.

- Provide confirmation that the program has taken into consideration other possible consequences of waiving GRE scores for students, including applicant and enrolled student competitiveness for fellowship applications and program/faculty NIH funding and training grant eligibility.

- Include any additional supporting materials to assist reviewers in evaluating the program’s proposal.

The Academic Policy Committee will offer feedback as appropriate on proposals prior to a vote. Prior to beginning formal planning, please contact the Associate Dean for Academics to discuss the proposal, address questions, and review sample petitions.