



BROWN Graduate School

Brown University
Box 1867
Providence, RI 02912
401 863-2600
Fax 401 863-3471

To: All Chairs and Directors of Graduate Study
From: Peter Weber, Dean of the Graduate School
Brian Walton, Associate Dean of Administration and Program Development
CC: Program Administrators
Re: Graduate School Admission Process and Timeline
Date: November 30, 2011

With the admission season upon us, we send you this overview of goals and steps for the process. It is intended to facilitate efficient processing of applications and offers of admission. Please review these instructions carefully and circulate them within your department or program.

If you have any questions, please contact your Graduate School liaison assigned to process applications for your program. A roster of staff members follows the instructions.

Applying and Application Deadlines

Applying

Brown University accepts only online applications for its graduate programs. Applicants log in at <https://application.embarc.com>.

Deadlines

Based on discussions with each program, the Graduate School posted program-specific deadlines on its website. The Graduate School will close the application period for your program at the end of the business day following the deadline posted on the Graduate School website. Applicants to your program who attempt to initiate or complete an application more than one business day after your posted deadline will not be able to do so. Letters of recommendation that are not submitted as part of the online application will be connected to the application automatically even after the application deadline.

Diversity Goals, Recruiting, and Testing Standards

We take pride in our increasing number of applications for graduate admission over recent years and are focusing on the quality of the overall applicant pool. As we work with you to attract and matriculate the strongest possible incoming class of graduate students, we think it useful to highlight some additional goals and to touch on our roles and some general standards.

Diversity

The Graduate School remains committed to building diversity among its students. We understand that diversity is context-dependent, and that different programs have different considerations that include gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, etc. We remain particularly committed to expanding the presence of underrepresented U.S. citizen minorities in our training

programs. To this end, we maintain a limited and competitive pool of “Targets of Opportunity” for incoming students that may allow programs to extend an additional offer of admission with the recommendation of the Assistant Dean for Recruiting and Professional Development and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Nominations for “Targets of Opportunity” should be noted and articulated in your program’s admission narrative.

The “Target of Opportunity” designation is used to help enhance the diversity of your accepted student pool. While this is an additional offer of admission, it does not alter the previously stated and agreed upon number of overall matriculation target established by the Dean of the Graduate School for your program this year. Funding for “Target” students does not come from a separate pot of money and these students become a part of your admitted student portfolio, and are not uniquely designated as “Targets” in any official student or Graduate School records.

Recruiting

We recognize the crucial role that programs play in recruiting students who have applied to their programs. The Graduate School encourages programs to communicate with their applicants in as many ways as possible at every stage of the application process. A great deal of information about each program’s applicants is available through the online application system before and after they submit their applications. For more information about accessing this information, as well as other tools and capabilities in the online application, please contact Scott Houde, Computing Manager in the Graduate School, at 3-6144.

Every year, we find that many students begin their online application without ever completing it. While there are probably many reasons for this, the Graduate School urges programs to scan the list of incomplete applications for applicants of possible interest and to get in touch with them. To entice completion of an application, programs are, for example, able to pay for the application fees.

Standards

Crafting an incoming class can be a difficult task. Many factors are to be considered, including test scores, undergraduate (and, if applicable, graduate) studies record(s), diversity, research experience, letters of recommendation, and others. Different programs weigh parameters in different ways. Yet in spite of the difference in metrics, it is our common goal to admit the best possible incoming student class.

The Graduate School provides each program with summary statistics of their existing student cohort. It should be the aim of each program to increase the metrics of newly admitted cohorts compared to cohorts that entered previous years. The Graduate School makes available tools that assist programs in their efforts to reach such goals. (See Tools below)

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

The Graduate School requires applicants to Ph.D. programs to submit scores for the GRE General Test. Scores from a test taken within the past five (5) years are valid, and the Graduate School will continue to provide them in a single compilation -- via Excel spreadsheet -- for all the applicants to your program. This report will be generated on demand following your program’s posted deadline.

These test scores are one of many indicators to review in the admissions process. The Graduate School has, however, set score levels that trigger additional review. If you wish to admit applicants with a score of less than 500 (or equivalent score on the new scale) on either the verbal or quantitative GRE tests, you must make a case for their admission. A score below that level does not immediately preclude admission, but does require additional justification for the Dean of the Graduate School's consideration. The aim of the review is to consider whether an applicant has the potential to succeed at Brown.

TOEFL and Language Proficiency

Similarly, we seek assurance of language proficiency that will allow graduate students to excel in the classroom, both as students and as Teaching Assistants, to thrive in an interactive research environment and to complete the dissertation. Therefore, scores for the official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) are required of all international students whose native language is not English or who did not earn a degree at a U.S. college or university or in an English-speaking country where English was the language of instruction. Applicants should take these exams early enough to allow the scores to reach the Graduate School by your program's deadline. The Graduate School recommends a minimum score for the TOEFL of 577 on the paper-based test or 90 on the Internet-based test and a minimum score for the IELTS of 7. ETS will only report scores for two years after the test date.

Some programs may have more rigorous language proficiency standards for admission to their program. The Graduate School is aware that test performance is one of many factors considered in making admission decisions.

Beyond relying on standardized tests, programs are highly encouraged to directly contact applicants before admission decisions are rendered. The Graduate School is aware of programs that use phone interviews or video chats with applicants to guide the selection process.

In addition to meeting the minimum TOEFL or IELTS standards, incoming students scheduled to receive instructional appointments must also pass a screening test administered by the English for International Teaching Assistants Program. Successful completion of this test is required before any instructional appointment can be processed for all students who are required to submit a TOEFL.

Admission Process – Review and Decision Recommendations

Admission Target

For programs that do not participate in the Financial Plan:

For those programs, the number of students targeted for matriculation and the number of offers that the program will be allowed to extend will be communicated separately. As in previous years, each offer beyond the original number must be approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Any applicant to your program who was admitted in the prior year and deferred acceptance of admission to next year will be deducted from your program's overall admission target next year,

unless the deferred applicant has indicated that he or she no longer plans to matriculate at Brown. If a program is unclear on the status or intention of any deferred applicant, we strongly recommend that the program contacts the deferred applicant directly as soon as possible.

For programs participating in the Financial Plan:

Those programs enjoy considerable freedom in determining the size of the incoming class and the number of offers to extend. A short worksheet, copied at the end of this memo and available online on Google Sites, may be used to do so. The completed worksheet should be emailed to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval of the proposed target numbers. The Graduate School will issue a target letter within one week after receipt of the completed worksheet.

Waitlists

The use of waitlists is generally discouraged, especially as the April 15 deadline approaches. It is a long-standing rule of the Graduate School that over-yielding in one year leads to a reduced target class size in the subsequent year. Because of significant over-yielding in recent years, programs should not assume it possible to dip into a wait list to reach the targeted number of incoming students. Exceptions will only be possible in cases of significant under-yield and require approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Tools

The Embark system provides flexibility that allows a program to review specific criteria of their applicant pool. The Graduate School has created views that enable us to review admit recommendations in a snapshot format that details the quality of the applicant pool. Information that is readily available includes diversity (race and ethnicity), gender, citizenship, and test scores (general GRE, subject tests, TOEFL). Additionally, the Graduate School reviews the academic transcripts, personal statements, and recommendations of each admitted applicant.

We recommend that each program creates customized views that will assist you in focusing on the highly qualified applicants within your application pool.

Application Processing – Electronic via Embark

Applications are processed at the Graduate School in accordance with the application deadline. The Graduate School will not process an offer of admission to an applicant who has not applied to that specific program. Supporting materials sent directly to a program by the applicant must be forwarded to the Graduate School Admission Office for recording and processing.

After your program's application deadline, if an online application is not complete, you may contact your liaison in the admission office and if we have the information you are looking for on file we will scan it and attach it to the relevant online application for your review.

Recommendations for Admission – Electronic Decision process

All programs must process the relevant decisions electronically through Embark. Please note that decision information is not visible to applicants. Training sessions will be scheduled for electronic decision processing.

The electronic review of applications enables programs to conduct evaluations of submitted applications prior to and after the application deadline. Programs that have identified highly qualified applicants may make a recommendation to extend an offer of admission in advance of rendering decisions on the entire applicant pool. See the decision timetable below.

<i>Decision group</i>	<i>Program response timeframe</i>	<i>Graduate School action</i>
<i>Accelerated admit(s)</i>	Within 5 business days of the program application deadline	Graduate School will strive to process within 2 business days
<i>Additional accelerated admit(s)</i>	Within 14 business days after the program application deadline	Graduate School will strive to process within 5 business days
<i>All remaining applicants</i>	Within 20 business days after the program application deadline	Graduate School will schedule programs on a first-come first-serve basis and will review all class metrics

Ranking

The Graduate School is required to track admission statistics. For this reason, we require that as part of your final decision group, you provide a list with rankings from 1 to 10 of your top students from all decision groups.

Nominations for Named Fellowships

As you rank the candidates you recommend admitting to your program, please consider whether the top candidate warrants nomination for a named fellowship. This may be done via email to your admission liaison. You need not indicate which fellowship you think appropriate. The Graduate School will review nominated candidates and will revise admit offers that can be used to yield the best and brightest applicants.

Deferral Request

A program may recommend in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School that an offer of admission be deferred; an email request is sufficient. While an admitted student may be deferred, any associated financial support does not extend to the next year unless the program is a participant in the *Financial Plan*. For programs not participating in the *Financial Plan*, funding must be reconsidered in the annual budgeting process.

Decision Notification and CGS Resolution

The Graduate School will again use an online notification process to inform applicants of the application decision. The applicant receives an email notice from the Graduate School that informs them that a decision has been made and is available to view via the online application system (Embark).

Admitted applicants will be able to respond electronically to the email notification immediately – if they choose – or they can respond at any time prior to 10:00 am EST on April 15. The online notification process is the only acceptable method for applicants to notify us of their decision to matriculate. Matriculating students will receive a hard copy letter of admission after April 15. If a matriculating student needs a hard copy letter of admission before April 15, please inform your admission liaison.

Brown University, as a member of the Council of Graduate Schools, has agreed to honor the April 15 deadline for applicants to indicate their decision on offers of admission with financial support. Offers made to applicants cannot be rescinded until April 15. For additional information regarding the resolution of Council of Graduate School members go to:

http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/CGS_Resolution.pdf

Graduate School Program Representative Contact Information

Marie Carreiro: 863-2698, Marie_Carreiro@brown.edu

- American Civilization
- Chemistry
- Economics
- Geological Studies
- Africana Studies
- Archaeology/Ancient World
- Computer Science
- Egyptology
- Hispanic Studies

Maria Faria: 863-2199, Maria_Faria@brown.edu

- Classics
- Environmental Studies
- Literary Arts
- Modern Culture & Media
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- English
- French Studies
- Mathematics
- Philosophy
- Portuguese & Brazilian Studies

Lisa Ramos: 863-3886, Lisa_Ramos@brown.edu

- Applied Math
- Brown-Trinity Consortium
- History of Art
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Center for Computational Molecular Biology (CCMB)
- Biology and Medicine (all programs)
- History
- Neuroscience
- Slavic Studies
- Theatre Studies

Michelle Rose: 863-3648, Michelle_Rose@brown.edu

- Anthropology
- Comparative Literature
- Education
- German Studies
- Music
- Public Affairs
- Cognitive & Linguistic Sciences
- Development Studies
- Engineering
- Italian Studies
- Psychology
- Public Policy