



# UNC CHARLOTTE

## Office of the Graduate Council

9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Joel Avrin, Faculty President  
FROM: Dr. Concepcion Godev, Graduate Council Chair  
CC: Mr. Matt Wyse  
DATE: March 16, 2021  
RE: Standardized Tests Policy Proposal

#### **Appendix**

Standardized Tests Policy Proposal

#### **Motion**

At our March 9th, 2021 meeting, the Graduate Council voted unanimously to recommend the Standardized Tests Policy Proposal.

#### **Justification**

The proposed Standardized Tests Policy is designed to encourage the practice of holistic assessment of prospective students. This policy will also align the graduate admissions requirements with those of UNC Chapel Hill and other notable universities within and outside the UNC system.

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Concepción Godev, Chair, The Graduate Council  
CC: Dr. Thomas Reynolds, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School  
FROM: Johnna Watson, Associate Dean  
DATE: February 28, 2021 (modified March 16, 2021)  
RE: Standardized Test Proposal

Graduate policy currently requires applicants to master's or doctoral programs at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to submit official standardized test scores on the GRE, MAT, GMAT, MCAT, or PAEP in support of applications for admission. But over the last decade, many programs have either eliminated the test requirement entirely or adopted conditions by which the test can be waived.

***The Graduate School proposes that the Graduate Council eliminate the standardized test requirement for applicants, beginning with the 2022 application cycle.*** If approved, graduate programs may choose to require the GRE, MAT, GMAT, MCAT, PAEP or other types of tests as part of their admissions applications requirements. Many leading Graduate Schools across the country are test optional, including North Carolina State University, UNC Chapel Hill, UC Davis, University of Minnesota, and the University of Missouri.

Graduate education transforms lives and strengthens universities, communities, and the world. However, *“Standardized tests represent a barrier to higher education for certain populations, both for their costs and for their known disadvantages for underrepresented minorities”* (Miller, C. et. al. Science Advances. 23 Jan 2019: Vol. 5, no. 1, eaat7550 DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aat7550). Ensuring access to post-baccalaureate education by understanding, promoting, and adopting full-file review (holistic admissions) will allow faculty to identify applicant qualities that contribute to success with no single factor leading to inclusion or exclusion from consideration, and may also increase program diversity and inclusion. The 2016 Council of Graduate Schools report on holistic admissions states, *“Diversity is essential to the overall success of graduate programs. All students in a program, regardless of background, benefit from taking part in a learning environment that reflects various kinds of diversity.”*

In support of this change, Graduate Admissions will offer additional resources and training to graduate programs and the University community on holistic admissions, including:

- Kent, J.D. and McCarthy, M.T. (2016). *Holistic Review in Graduate Admissions: A Report from the Council of Graduate Schools*. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools. Retrieved from [cgsnet.org/innovation-graduate-admissions-through-holistic-review](https://cgsnet.org/innovation-graduate-admissions-through-holistic-review). This report offers a legal rationale for holistic admissions as well as resources to support full-file review.

- Posselt, J.R. (2016). *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping*. Harvard University Press. Dr. Posselt's book is the synthesis of firsthand observations of graduate admissions committees and interviews with faculty from 10 top-ranked doctoral programs where she ultimately challenged an over-reliance on GRE scores and GPAs.
- *Navigating Holistic Admissions for a Stronger Graduate Program*. Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from <https://holisticadmissions.org/>
- Malesic, J. *The Problem in Graduate Admissions is Culture, Not Testing*. Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from [news.ets.org/stories/problem-graduate-admissions-culture-not-testing/](https://news.ets.org/stories/problem-graduate-admissions-culture-not-testing/)
- *GRE fails to identify successful Ph.D. students*. (2019, January 24). Rochester Institute of Technology. Retrieved from [rit.edu/news/gre-fails-identify-successful-phd-students](https://rit.edu/news/gre-fails-identify-successful-phd-students)
- Grade Inflation at American Colleges and Universities at [GradInflation.com](https://www.gradinflation.com)
- Gender-bias in recommendation letters demonstrated via a Gender-bias calculator at [slowe.github.io/genderbias](https://slowe.github.io/genderbias)
- Publications/literature on Holistic Review and an Inclusive/Equitable Climate at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hfDS0r4RQuKn0lPexFWDMPRBy6Cb8xwD>
- Fisk-Vanderbilt Program (Holistic Review) Toolkit and associated resource materials at [fisk-vanderbilt-bridge.org](https://fisk-vanderbilt-bridge.org)
- Sample admissions evaluation rubrics which can be modified and utilized by programs not currently using a rubric
- An effort to commence immediately to review and revise if necessary both the Recommendation Form provided by references and the Statement of Purpose submitted by applicants to better evaluate whether an individual has not only the academic background and qualifications required for admission, but also the skills and experiences to complete the graduate program and have a successful career
- Ongoing workshops and resources for Graduate Program Directors on best practices for holistic review in graduate admissions
- Support for programs to link specific admissions practices to student and program outcomes (enrollment, diversity, retention and graduation).

The Graduate School is here to support efforts at the program and college levels to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate a diverse and exemplary class of graduate students who support both the teaching and research missions of the University, and we believe that embracing more holistic admissions processes will help propel us forward. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal.