2.1.1 Admitting Graduate Students to Matriculated Study: Policy

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Summary

Admitting degree programs are responsible for graduate admissions decisions at Stanford University. This policy sets forth many of the general eligibility requirements for admission to graduate study, along with the elements of the application process from receipt of the application up to the point of activation of the admitted student.

Authority:
Graduate Admissions Office [1]

Applicability:
Applicable to all admissions for Stanford graduate degree programs, with the exception of: all programs in the Graduate School of Business; all programs in the School of Law; and M.D. admissions in the School of Medicine. For those schools and programs, see the relevant school or program web site. Applicants to the Master of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.) degree and the Honors Cooperative Programs are not exempt from the required elements of the application described below.

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1. General Requirements

Applicants from colleges and universities of recognized standing who hold a U.S. bachelor’s degree or its equivalent, or are anticipating conferral of the degree prior to admission, are eligible to be considered for admission to matriculated graduate study at Stanford University. The number of applicants who can be admitted for work in a
particular field of study at any time is limited by the facilities and programs of the school or department and by the
number of matriculated students who continue their work in that field. Stanford University welcomes applicants who
will add to the diversity (broadly defined) of its graduate student population (see GAP 2.5, Commitment to Graduate
Student Diversity [2].)

Students who have completed two years of Classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles (CPGE) and two years of
course work toward the Diplome d'Ingenieur degree in France are eligible to be considered for admission.

Applicants may only apply to one graduate program in an academic year, with the exception of those applying to the
Biosciences Program where applicants may indicate up to three possible programs. This limit applies to those
applying through the central graduate admissions process, i.e., it does not take into consideration whether
applicants are also applying separately to the M.D. program, or to any program within the Medical, Law or Business
Schools, whose applications are processed separately.

2. Elements of the Graduate Application

To be considered for matriculated graduate study at Stanford, an applicant must provide:

- a completed application submitted electronically
- the non-refundable application fee
- a statement of purpose describing the applicant’s reasons for applying and selection of the particular degree
  program
- three recommendations - at least one of the recommenders should be a member of the faculty at the last school
  attended by the applicant (recommenders submit these letters directly to Stanford; it is the responsibility of the
  applicant to see that they are sent)
- two official transcripts from every postsecondary school attended by the applicant (the applicant should make
  necessary arrangements to have these sent directly from the attended school to the department to which they
  are applying)
- if the particular program requires scores from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) General Test and/or Subject
  Test, the corresponding scores for the applicant must be reported directly to Stanford from the Educational
  Testing Service (ETS)
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores are required of all applicants whose first language is not
  English. Exceptions are permitted for individuals who have earned a U.S. bachelor’s or master’s degree from a
  college or university accredited by a regional accrediting association in the United States, or the equivalent of
  either degree from a non-U.S. college or university of recognized standing where all instruction is provided in
  English. This exception does not apply if the courses were completed in a country where English is spoken but
  not all instruction is provided in English (See GAP 2.2, Requirements for New International Students [3]).
- additional application documents (e.g., writing samples, portfolios, etc.) as required by the department/program.

Stanford reserves the right to investigate the authenticity, accuracy, and authorship of materials submitted,
information provided and assertions made in connection with the application, and to require from the applicant
additional information and authorizations to allow additional information to be obtained.

Application materials, once submitted as part of the application, become the property of Stanford University. Copies
are not provided to the applicant, nor forwarded to other institutions.

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3. Processing the Application

The Office of the Registrar is the functional owner of the administrative systems (PeopleSoft Student Administration and the electronic admission application and online evaluation system, CollegeNET) that support this process. Working with Stanford’s information technology infrastructure, they will maintain these applications for use by the campus community.

Both the Office of the Registrar and the individual offices of graduate degree-granting programs are responsible for monitoring the data in the electronic application and in the PeopleSoft Student Administration data base.

The admissions application process is described at the Graduate Admissions web site [4].

Upon receipt, applications are available to the admitting department. In addition, individual applicants are responsible for providing the necessary transcripts, test scores and recommendations for use by department or program admissions personnel and committees.

All decisions regarding admission and financial aid (other than loans) are made by the admitting department, subject to verification of university admission requirements such as completion of the bachelor’s degree, if applicable, official English Proficiency (TOEFL) test scores, visa certification funding, etc. by the Graduate Admissions Office.

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4. Notifying Applicants of Admissions Decisions

The admitting department/program is responsible for communicating admissions decisions to applicants. In no event should an admitting department offer unconditional acceptance to an applicant until the Graduate Admissions Office has confirmed the verification of credentials, visa request (if applicable) and receipt of official English Proficiency (TOEFL) test scores, if applicable.

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5. Applications to Joint Degree Programs

Applicants who are interested in combining a graduate degree with a professional degree (M.D., J.D., or M.B.A.) should contact those admissions offices directly to determine the appropriate application process. To enter a joint degree program, applicants must be admitted separately to both participating Stanford schools, departments or programs, as well as to the joint degree program (see GAP 4.9, Joint Degree Programs [5]).

Stanford University will award joint degrees where the requirements of both programs have been met. In most cases, the applicant applies initially to only one program, applying to and adding the second program using the Graduate Authorization Petition after arrival at Stanford (see GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Degree Programs [6]).

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6. Application Fee Waivers
Stanford University will not normally waive the one-time graduate application fee. An exception is permitted for applicants who are eligible for a reduction in GRE fees; who participate in particular diversity programs; or who are eligible for a fee waiver from certain Stanford Schools. The GRE-based fee waiver is only available to applicants who are citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. and who obtain a GRE Fee Reduction Certificate for the current academic year. More information about these fee waiver options is available on the Graduate Diversity website. 

Fee waiver requests should be received at least 15 business days prior to the program application deadline, before the application is submitted. The applicant must request a Stanford graduate application fee waiver via the appropriate online fee waiver application. If the application fee waiver request is approved, the applicant will be sent a code to enter in the payment section of the application. No refund will be given if the applicant applies for the fee waiver and pays the application fee instead of using the code.

7. Deferring Admission

Applicants who have been accepted for admission, and who wish to delay the start of their academic program for up to one year, may do so at the sole discretion of the admitting department. Applicants should communicate with the admitting department, and, if deferral is agreed upon, the admitting department will enter the deferred status into the PeopleSoft Student Administration data base. This must be done before the first day of the original admission starting term.

Admitting programs may not approve deferral of admission for more than one year. If an applicant wishes to delay the start of the academic program for more than one year, the request, endorsed by the admitting program, should be sent to the Graduate Admissions Office. Approvals of such requests are rare.

8. Withdrawing Before the Start of the First Term

If an admitted student contacts the admitting department to reverse an earlier acceptance, i.e., to turn down an offer of admission after it had been accepted, the admitting department should contact the Graduate Admissions Office who will process the cancellation of the student’s admission at Stanford.

If an admitted student does not arrive on campus and submit a timely study list for the first quarter of the academic program, the Enrollment Services Office will discontinue the student’s program plan in PeopleSoft Student Administration. Graduate Admissions will return the student file to the appropriate department.

Related Content:
Related Policies
- GAP 2.2, Requirements for New International Students
- GAP 2.3, Activating Nonmatriculated Graduate Students
- GAP 2.5, Commitment to Graduate Student Diversity
- GAP 4.9, Joint Degree Programs
- GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Degree Programs