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Graduate Admissions Policy

Abstract

This policy covers policies surrounding the graduate admissions process.

Key Words: admissions graduate

Author/Source Academic Policies Committee in consultation with the Graduate Division and the Graduate Council

Responsible Unit Graduate Division

History

Version Approved Revisions(s)

Original. The only previously existing policy within this document is S04-229: Graduate Admissions of Students with Three-year Bachelor's Degrees, Principles and Procedures, which the new policy supersedes in its entirety. Incorporates portions of the Bulletin and portions of policies from other institutions (revocation of admission, applicant records, rights of applicants). Adds text for entirely new sections on

1 04/12/2021 international student admission.

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Policy

I. Role of the Graduate Division

This policy lays out general standards for admission of graduate students. The Division of Graduate Studies is responsible for the implementation and interpretation of these policies. The Division develops and updates effective procedures.

II. Admissions

Admissions is a two-stage process: the University determines eligibility, and then the department or program conducts its review of each applicant according to their developed criteria.

University level

- The University, in its sole discretion, determines admissions based on an applicant's eligibility for graduate study, evidenced by application materials submitted.
- Meeting University eligibility is not a guarantee of admission to any San Francisco State University graduate program or certificate.
- The University reserves the right to select its students and deny admission to the University or any of its programs.

Department or program level

- Each department or program selects applicants based upon the criteria they develop. Beyond the uniform minimum requirements for University admission, a program may choose any criteria that are appropriate as a basis for its evaluation, including, but not limited to, undergraduate and graduate grade-point averages, work experience, standardized test score results or department placement examinations, letters of recommendation, and evidence of past achievements.
- Departments may also include factors related to their mission, goals, resources, and areas of faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity in their selection process.

The University graduate admissions process is conducted in compliance with its Nondiscrimination Policy.

Categories of Admission

A student can be admitted as Conditionally Classified or fully Classified.

- Graduate Conditionally Classified. Most students are admitted to the University in conditionally classified standing. Admission conditions are determined by the program and must be met within the specified time frame set by the program. Programs admit students in this category to evaluate progress toward degree completion. This admission category does not impact Financial Aid eligibility. Students admitted in this category will be moved to classified status after submission and approval of the Advancement to Candidacy Form (ATC).

o Programs may recommend declassification for students who have not met the conditions of their admission within a specified timeframe.

- Graduate Classified. Students are admitted as fully classified if they meet all university and departmental admission criteria. Students may be admitted with classified status or may advance to this status after submitting an approved Advancement to Candidacy Form (ATC).

Revocation of Admission

SF State reserves the right to rescind offers of admission if applicants fail to (1) successfully complete their current academic program, (2) maintain grades that meet the requirements for admission to San Francisco State University, and/or (3) fail to meet other expected professional or behavioral standards. Additionally, SF State may rescind an offer of admission based on cancellation or change of any test score required for admission or if it is determined that admission was obtained through the use of incomplete, falsified, altered, or embellished information. Admitted students are required to update the Graduate Division in a timely fashion of any new information that may affect their admission, including, but not limited to, any changes in their participation in their current academic program, their grades, or any conduct related issues.

Upon learning of any relevant changes to a student's record, either directly from the student or from a third party, the Graduate Dean shall make a decision in consultation with the department. The student shall have an opportunity to provide a written statement to the Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration. This process should follow the procedure for declassification, which involves consultation with the department chair and the dean of the involved college and then, ultimately, a decision by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

III. Standards for Graduate Admission

Minimum requirements for admission to graduate study at the California State University are in accordance with *Title 5, Division 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter 3, of the California Code of Regulations*. The University has the right to require higher standards than the minimum requirements published in *Title 5*.

To meet the minimum eligibility standards for graduate study at San Francisco State, an applicant must:

1. hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution, or shall have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by the appropriate campus authority;
2. be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended;
3. have a 3.0 GPA or better in their earned undergraduate degree or the last 60-semester (90-quarter) units completed, or have earned a post-baccalaureate degree; and
4. meet the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards for graduate study, including qualifying examinations, as appropriate campus authorities may prescribe.

5. In unusual circumstances, a campus may make exceptions to these criteria, as listed in 1 through 4 above. Admission to blended programs or the SF State Scholar programs might fall under this category.

Admission to Credentials Only

Applicants for credential programs only must have a GPA of 2.67 overall or 2.75 in the last 60 semester units or 90 quarter units. Applicants for MA+ credential programs must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate coursework. There are additional program requirements set by each department.

Doctoral Program Admissions

Doctoral programs have different admissions requirements and standards that may exceed those of masters' level degrees.

Level 1 English Requirements

The Level I requirement must be met prior to admission or no later than the first year of enrollment. Typical Level I written requirements may include a department placement exam, writing samples, standardized writing tests, or creative works portfolio as determined by the department. The required scores on standardized tests are laid out in S19-014: University Policy on Written English Proficiency.

IV. Admission of International Applicants Academic Eligibility

Applicants educated outside of the United States must have earned a degree or diploma that San Francisco State considers to be the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution. An official determination of eligibility will be made during the application process.

Applicants with Three-Year Bachelor's Degrees (includes the whole of S04-229: Graduate Admissions of Students with Three-Year Bachelor's Degrees, Principles and Procedures)
Applicants graduating from international institutions with three-year degrees except those preceded by thirteen years of pre-collegiate work and "A-level" passes or degree programs comprised of 180 ECTS may be eligible for admission following a comprehensive evaluation of documents.

1. As a general principle, students with twelve years of pre-collegiate education and three-year bachelor's degrees are admissible to graduate programs at SFSU **only** if they complete the equivalent of one additional year of acceptable coursework.
2. 'Special Action' exceptions [under Section 41001 of Title 5] will be considered 'if on the basis of acceptable evidence the applicant is judged by the appropriate campus authority to possess sufficient academic, professional and other potential pertinent to the applicant's educational objectives to merit such action.' Special Action exceptions require submission of additional information. Examples of additional information needed to support the request for Special Action admission are:
 - a) Standardized test score results or department placement examinations
 - b) Completion of one year of college-level work at a regionally accredited U.S. university in a field related to the field of application.
 - c) Department faculty evaluation of a portfolio of the student's work in the field (e.g., published articles, research, creative work, relevant awards, professional licensure)
 - d) Department faculty evaluation of coursework taken at the international university (e.g., review of syllabi, reading lists, prerequisite preparation, recommendations) and of English communication skills
 - e) Commitment of individual faculty members who will act as advisors to the student
3. All admissions requests under either #1 or #2 above must be approved by the department designee (i.e., the graduate coordinator or the chair) and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
4. When additional coursework is required before admission to graduate study, specific courses must be approved by the graduate coordinator. Any additional coursework required for graduate admission cannot be counted towards the graduate degree.
5. Formalized one-year 'bridge' programs for cohorts of disciplinary majors from a particular international institution/country may be developed as templates for graduate admission preparation. Academic certificate programs may be developed for bridge programs [with approval by the Academic Senate] to ensure that students meet all prerequisite requirements for a particular SFSU graduate degree program.
6. Admission to San Francisco State University to complete graduate admission preparation or with a 'Special Action' exemption does not confer 'baccalaureate possession' rights or privileges acceptable either for the seeking of a U.S. teaching credential or for transfer to graduate programs at other U.S. higher education institutions. Moreover, students so admitted will not be eligible to earn a baccalaureate degree at the University.

V. Applicant Records- Release of Applicant Information

In compliance with California's Information Practices Act of 1977 (IPA), the Graduate Admissions Office will release information on an applicant's status only to the applicant. Applicant records can only be released to an alternate contact listed in the section of the online graduate application for admission that grants permission to release information or if the applicant submits a written statement giving permission to a person specifically named.

The Graduate Division's policy, based on IPA guidelines, is to hold in confidence all information provided in application materials except the names of applicants, and the programs to which they applied, which is considered public information. An applicant can include a written request to withhold that information with the application and must also inform the program not to release this information.

VI. Rights of Applicants

Under this Information Practices Act, letters and statements of recommendation and admission committee appraisals are considered "personal information." The IPA requires disclosure of personal information to the individual concerned. Applicants legally have access to letters of recommendation and admission committee evaluation material unless they have formally waived that access.

Applicants complete the waiver question on the letter of recommendation page online and submit it with their letters of recommendation. If an applicant has not waived the right of access, then the

program must disclose the letters of recommendation to the individual upon request, regardless of where the letters are filed.

Sources:

- George Mason University. 2021. Graduate Admissions Policy. Available at <https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>, February 21, 2021.
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Signed Memo:
S21-294 memo
