



Policy Directory

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs
Responsible Office: Graduate Studies
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Policy Title: Admission

Policy: *The Graduate School policy on Admission* contains the policies and regulations of the Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies. This policy has been established by the Graduate Council to ensure consistent standards across Graduate programs.

Alcorn State University admits all qualified applicants and offers equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion or disability. Applicants are admitted on the basis of the probability of their success in completing the requirements for graduation.

Eligibility for Admission to Graduate School at Alcorn State University

Applicants holding a bachelor's degree or higher are eligible to apply for graduate admission at Alcorn State University. The following are general admission requisites in submitting complete application packets.

- A complete application for admission as a First Time Graduate, Readmission Graduate, Second Master's Degree, Educational Specialist, Non-Degree or Post Master Certificate.
- An official transcript from all accredited Institutions of Higher Learning (official transcript must document degree conferred).
- Two letters of recommendation (letters are not accepted from relatives of the applicant) and in some cases, three letters based on the requirement of the academic unit.
- Standardized Test Scores [GRE, GMAT (School of Business), PRAXIS CORE (CASE) and PRAXIS Subject Area (Master of Arts in Teaching)]. Test scores must not be older than five (5) years.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 or above for Unconditional Admission and 2.25-2.49 Conditional Admission. A minimum of 2.75 is required for Master of Arts in Teaching. Academic units may require higher academic GPAs.
- A \$10.00 application fee is required for non-residents of the State of Mississippi. Payment should be made in money order only.

Preparation: Applicants should have demonstrated adequate academic preparation in their proposed program of study. Those with deficiencies in academic preparation may be required to take additional work to strengthen their backgrounds or submit additional credentials requested by the admissions committee for the respective academic unit.

Each department has devised its Graduate Admission Formula which is an aggregated score that factors the required standardized test score, GPA, and other admission credentials. Prospective students interested in knowing the admission formula used to make an admission decision are advised to contact the respective department.

International Admission Requirements (additional regulations to the general admission requirements)

- Credential Evaluation. Evaluation conducted by an accredited credentialing evaluation service (Credentialing Service must be a member of NACES – National Association of Credential Evaluation Services) to determine if international transcripts reflect degree is equivalent to U.S. Bachelor degree.
- Applicants whose native language is not English must submit TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System).
- Statement of Finances (Bank statements cannot be older than three weeks). Declaration of finances to verify resources to support educational costs to study in the United States; Affidavit and bank statement must not be older than three weeks upon submission to the Graduate Office; finances must meet the university's assessed tuition and cost of living expenses.
- Tuberculosis Chest X-Ray and Tuberculosis Blood Test (student must make arrangements with a medical facility after arrival in the United States and request results to be sent to the Graduate School). Results must not be older than six (6) weeks at time of submission.
- Applicants should consult with individual programs to see if there are higher standards for English proficiency in their chosen program. Students coming to the University with a master's degree from another accredited institution may receive a master's degree from the University in a different field.

Applicants who are graduates of English-speaking universities are not required to take the TOEFL or IELTS.

Academic units may specify additional requirements depending on the length of the program, prerequisites for the individual student, and/or the nature of the first degree.

Standardized Test Scores

Official test scores are required for admission to the Graduate School at Alcorn State University. Scores sent directly from ETS to the Graduate School are considered official.

The Graduate School does not accept expired scores, personal copies of scores, scores older than five years, or letters attesting to score reports. Students should ask Educational Testing Service to send an official copy of the scores to The Graduate School. Use institution code 4008. Make sure you specify that your scores are sent to the Graduate School. You do not need a department code. If ETS requires a department code for data gathering at time of registration, select any one of the department codes listed on its site. Regardless of the department code entered, the scores will come to The Graduate School as long as you use institution code 4008. **Students should inform The Graduate School if the name on the application is different from the name on the score report.** Applicants are required to take the Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing portions of the General Test of the GRE

GRE scores are considered valid for five years from the testing date. If scores are more than five years old at the time the application is reviewed, new scores will be required. Applicants are advised to take the GRE in time for official scores to reach The Graduate School by the application deadline.

Application Process

Domestic and International students applying for graduate school must:

- Complete the online application for Graduate Admission (includes program requirements). All admission documents must be received by the application deadline.
- Following processing of the online application, a customized admission checklist is sent to the applicant to inform him/her of admission documents relative to the program of interest.
- Letters of recommendation must be submitted by the references only, dated and signed; official transcripts must be requested from the attending university; credential evaluations for International students must be received from the approved Credentialing Service; official test scores must be received from the official testing service.
- Non-Mississippi residents must pay a \$10 **non-refundable** application processing fee (money orders only)
- Following submission of complete application documents by the applicant, the Graduate Office will send a complete application packet notification to the student and department. Following this notification, the complete application packet is sent to the appropriate academic unit for review and an admission recommendation.
- Admission decisions are made within three business days and the student is notified of the admission decision.

The application for admission to Graduate School and all supporting documents should be on file 30 days prior to the date of intended enrollment. Applicants submitting completed applications beyond the deadline are not guaranteed admission. The deadlines to submit an application packet are as follows:

- Fall–July 15th
- Spring–November 25th
- Summer I–April 25th
- Summer II–May 25th

School of Nursing

- December 15th - Nurse Educator & Post Master's Option
- March 15th - Family Nurse Practitioner

Application packets for admission received beyond the deadline for admission will be processed for the next semester.

Admission Decisions

Notification of complete application packet is sent to each applicant within 1-3 days once all documents have been submitted. Each department has an appointed admissions committee to review complete application packets. Each graduate academic unit makes the initial evaluation of applications for admission based on their unit's admission guidelines in compliance with the Graduate School academic regulations. After review, a recommendation for admission is submitted to the Graduate Office. Admission committees make admission decisions within three days after receiving complete application packets. The dean/administrator of the Graduate School, upon the recommendation of the graduate faculty, makes the final decision regarding admission. After the program recommendation, the Graduate Admissions Office will send the student the official admissions notification and other materials.

All credentials become the property of the Graduate School at Alcorn State University and will not be returned. Submission of an application packet does not grant automatic admission to a degree program.

Admission Classifications

Graduate students are admitted in one of three categories: Unconditional, Conditional and Non-Degree.

Readmission

A graduate student who does not continue enrollment for one or more semesters must reapply for admission to his/her graduate program. If changes occur in the curriculum during non-enrollment, the student falls under the new requirements upon being readmitted. Students who have not been in attendance at Alcorn for one or more semesters need to reapply for admission. This includes students on academic probation who do not continue their program to improve their GPA after being placed on academic probation. Readmission entails completing the Readmission Application to reenter the same program of study. If the admission guidelines have changed since a student's last attendance, the student must comply with the guidelines in place at the time he/she is seeking readmission.

ADVANCED GRADUATE ADMISSION FOR UNDERGRADUATES

An undergraduate senior student with minimum total cumulative GPA of 3.00/4.00 who is enrolled in the last semester of course work that will complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree, may request advanced graduate admission to enroll in (3) three to six (6) hours of graduate courses provided the total course load does not exceed twelve (12) hours. Courses for seniors are limited to first-year graduate level courses. Graduate courses may not be used as credit toward an undergraduate degree. The combination senior is not considered a graduate student but may apply for admission to a graduate program upon completion of the bachelor's degree.

However, advanced admission to the graduate courses does not guarantee subsequent admission to a graduate program. Courses taken for graduate credit may count toward a graduate degree when/if the student is admitted to a degree program at Alcorn State University and if approved by the program's graduate coordinator and department Chairperson. The Application to Enroll in 500 Graduate Level Course(s)-Undergraduate Senior Only form for admission to the Graduate School must be completed six (6) weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which advanced admission is sought.

Duplication of Advanced Degree

Students who already hold an advanced academic degree may be admitted to a second master's degree different from the first master's. The Graduate School does not allow dual degree enrollment or duplication of the same degree for enrollment.

Degree Plans and Program Change

Students must submit a degree plan after admission within the first semester of enrollment. This curriculum plan is a contract of the program of study based on the program of interest the student is admitted.

Disposition of Application Materials

Credentials or supporting materials submitted for admission to the Office of Graduate Studies become the property of the University and are not returned. Copies will not be provided to a third party outside the University even at the applicant's request. Copies of application materials may be provided to appropriate offices at the University in the interest of academic matters or in the interest of financial aid awards, or scholarships that are relative to the applicant. Any exception to this process will be determined by the appropriate Graduate Studies Administrator.

SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

Admission to the Specialist Program is contingent on the applicant holding endorsement in elementary education, or related field, AA Educator License in elementary education and a transcript documenting completion of a master's level program of study. Thirty-nine (39) hours are required for degree completion. Students are required to complete a thesis.

MASTER'S DEGREE APPLICANTS

The master's degree requires a minimum of 33 semester hours of graduate course work. Some master-level programs may exceed this number of hours. Students pursuing a degree or endorsement in Agriculture, Applied Science, and Biology have an option of thesis or non-thesis.

NON-DEGREE ADMISSION

Applicants must meet general admission requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies. Non-degree admission is granted to those who wish to enroll in courses but do not intend to qualify for a degree. The non-degree admission category includes prospective students entering Graduate School for these purposes:

- a. to enrich their professional development;
 - to complete certification requirements, students should consult the appropriate academic department and School of Education Dean and Department Chair;
 - to enroll in courses related to a program of study until applicant can satisfy all credentials required for admission;
 - to transfer credits earned to a degree program at another institution.

Credits earned in the non-degree category are not ordinarily requirements for degrees. If subsequently, a student classified as non-degree is accepted into a degree program, the student may by petition, if approved, carry forward not more than nine (9) semester hours of credit previously earned as a non-degree student in graduate-level courses, provided that the grade in each course is not less than 3.0. Departments may restrict non-degree students to designated courses only. Non-degree students must have the approval of the department head (or designee) to enroll in a class. The School of Nursing does not permit Non-Degree admission.

The Graduate Studies Administrator is the Advisor for all non-degree students. If students desire to change their status to degree seeking, they must complete a "First Time Graduate Application" for Admission to the Office of Graduate Studies, submit all required documents such as test scores, official transcript, letters of recommendation, and subsequently be recommended for admission to the graduate degree program by the academic unit's admission committee in accordance with their departmental program requirements.