

# The WSU Graduate School's Guide for Departments and Programs Regarding the Evaluation of Doctoral Admissions Materials

## Introduction

Recent research on graduate student success has yielded important findings regarding graduate recruitment, admissions, retention, graduation, and job placement. Based on this research as well as national work on best practices, the Wayne State University (WSU) Graduate School is providing graduate programs with guidance about these different stages of the graduate student lifecycle to enhance programmatic and student success. To this end, the WSU Graduate School offers the following guide on the intentional and consistent review of applications so that programs may improve applicant selection processes.

During the application process, applicants submit a variety of materials including standardized test scores, transcripts, statements of purpose, and letters of recommendation. The manner in which these materials are evaluated and weighed to produce an admissions decision varies greatly across graduate programs. This is understandable given the diverse goals and needs of the graduate programs at Wayne State University.

Programs across the country are embracing “portfolio review” as a process of consistently and intentionally reviewing application materials to select the best students for their programs. Portfolio review refers to “the consideration of a broad range of candidate qualities including ‘noncognitive’ or personal attributes” (Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Sedlacek, 2017). Under this definition, standardized test scores are but one of several pieces of data that are evaluated in the selection of candidates. In other words, standardized test scores should not be used to make initial cuts. The College Board has noted that the GRE “does not and cannot measure all the qualities that are important in predicting success” (ETS, 2015), and argues that multiple criteria be used when evaluating applications. In addition, initial cuts of applications based solely on standardized test scores contribute directly to a lack of diversity in graduate admissions by eliminating a number of capable students from further consideration very early in the process (Miller & Stassun, 2014). Because of findings such as these, the National Institutes of Health (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-120.html>) and the National Science Foundation (<https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/faqs>) have eliminated the collection of standardized test score data in fellowship and training grant applications. Other key pieces of information that can be evaluated include GPA; research, scholarly, creative, or applied experiences; writing or communication skills; and demonstrated evidence of persistence and motivation. Portfolio review is in accordance with the WSU Strategic Plan, which includes “recruiting and retaining students, faculty, and staff from diverse underrepresented groups,” “promoting cultural awareness and understanding,” and “creat[ing] proven exportable models that advance diversity and inclusion.”

In sum, portfolio review is a method of improving the graduate applicant selection process so that admissions decisions are made consistently and with attention to programmatic and strategic needs.

## Examples of Portfolio Review Processes at Wayne State University

*Note that this is just a sampling of processes that are in use at WSU.*

### **Ph.D. in History:**

The History Ph.D. program reviews the entire application including GRE scores, GPA from previous institutions, letter of interest, writing sample, and letters of recommendation. Admissions decisions are not based solely on scores but from a review of the entire application package. Admissions committee members actively seek information in the application package (e.g., interest in graduate studies in the discipline, persistence, scholarly activity) to put the applicant's application package into context.

### **Ph.D. in Nursing:**

This program no longer requires the GRE to be considered for admission because their review of admissions procedures demonstrated that the GRE did not add predictive value to other information. Admissions decisions are made upon review of the undergraduate (and if available, graduate) GPA, scholarly work, reference letters, and the goal or personal statement. The program has provided more direct requests for specific information such as research interests to ensure that admissions decisions are based on relevant information. Furthermore, the program asks standard questions during the interview process including questions about leadership potential and persistence for graduate studies.

### **Ph.D. in Sociology:**

This program, like many programs at WSU, requires the GRE; however, the department includes language on the website that explains the relevance of the GRE score in the entire application package: "GRE scores will be considered, but will not be a binding criterion for admission. The Department realizes that scores on standardized tests are greatly influenced by social and cultural factors, and may not be accurate indicators of performance ability. A combined assessment of students' GPA, GRE scores, transcripts, letters of recommendation, writing sample, and statements of interest will be used to make admission decisions." Most students that are accepted into the MA program have an overall GRE score in at least the 50th percentile. In the event that a student's GRE score falls considerably short of the 50th percentile the graduate committee looks for evidence of excellence in the other criteria (e.g., GPA, letters of recommendation, writing sample) used to make their admission decisions. Students with G.R.E scores below the 50th percentile are encouraged to explain the reasons for lower scores in their statement of interest.

### **Ph.D. in English:**

In 2016, the departmental Graduate Committee began the process of planning a more fully articulated holistic method of reviewing admissions documents for the Ph.D. program. Through a series of meetings throughout the Fall semester, faculty members adapted rubric templates developed by the Graduate School's Graduate Admissions Review Committee. The adaptations consisted of developing rubrics for the evaluation of all materials in the file and a separate rubric that followed our published hiring criteria for evaluating funding decisions. The admissions rubric now emphasized categories such as the student's academic background (coursework, research experiences), GPA, GRE scores, the sense of professional purpose demonstrated in the written statement, the analytic ability demonstrated in the writing sample, the evidence of the student's readiness to begin a Ph.D. program as exhibited in the letters of recommendation, evidence of the student's persistence and motivation, evidence of the

student's perspective relevant to pursuing a Ph.D. in English, and whether the student's interests could be supported by current staff. The Graduate Committee conducted a norming exercise, and the evaluation of a selection of past applicants through this method demonstrated that with the consistent application of the criteria, the program would have had different outcomes in some circumstances resulting in more offers of admission and a more diverse cohort. The department plans to further revise the admissions rubric, in particular examining whether having the current categories of equal weight is ideal, or if weighting different parts of the application with more emphasis would be useful.

## Steps of the Admissions Cycle

Below we provide guidance regarding steps that can be taken at the different stages of the admissions selection cycle. See **case studies** for ideas about how to implement these steps.

### 1. Before the Next Admissions Cycle:

- Review “Best Practices” in graduate admissions. See resource list below.
- Programs are encouraged to review the mission of Wayne State University, the School or College, Department, and Program and meet to discuss the diverse qualities and experiences of students and cohorts that ideally meet these missions as well as the learning outcomes of the program. Clearly articulate the ideal qualities and experiences, such as academic prowess, research, creative or professional experiences, volunteerism, prior educational background, prior schools and colleges attended, communication skills, community service, economic disadvantage and many other distinguishing factors. Consider these questions as starting points:
  - What are the strategic plans of Wayne State University and its units? How does our program align with elements of these plans?
  - What qualities and experiences is the program seeking in students to succeed in the program, in a lab, or a work group? And what qualities or experiences could enhance the program mission and goals (e.g., particular research, creative, or professional experiences? Grant-writing experience? Non-cognitive factors such as the ability to work independently and/or in a team, ability to work with team members holding diverse perspectives, ability to persist despite setbacks)?
  - How are these qualities and experiences educationally connected to the admission outcome, i.e. the program goals and strategic goals of WSU?
  - What evidence can students provide to demonstrate that they have these qualities and experiences? Is it clear to applicants that this information is being reviewed and where they should include such information? (See attached “**Tips for Writing a Compelling Personal Statement for Graduate Admission at Wayne State University**”, which clearly communicates to applicants the important information they should include in their personal statements. This information will be posted on [www.gradadmissions.wayne.edu](http://www.gradadmissions.wayne.edu)). Consider posting this or program-specific guidance on your website and in marketing materials.
  - How should the evidence be weighted in admissions decisions?
  - From this discussion, the program can create a rubric for application portfolios to ensure consistency of review across applications.
    - Keep in mind that all evidence that is evaluated for admission should appear in a rubric to ensure consistency of portfolio ratings across applicants (omitting some items introduces potential bias).
    - See attached “**Sample Wayne State University Personal Statement Rubric**” and “**Graduate Application Rubric Template**” for ideas.
- Communicate the admissions decisions process clearly to all stakeholders including prospective students and faculty involved in admissions decisions.
  - Ensure that faculty receive timely information about the admissions review process and the use of the rubric.

### 2. During Admissions Cycle

- Test out the rubric.
  - Have open discussion about the process.
  - Make admissions decisions based on the rubric to ensure consistency of review.
  - Make admissions offers.
  - Conduct research using the rubric with applications submitted in the past few years. Would the program have made different decisions with the rubric?

### 3. After the Admissions Cycle (and Continuing)

- Test the rubric and whether it in fact aligned with the items discussed in point #1 above.
- Test the extent that admitted and non-admitted students differed on criteria the program used in prior admissions cycles.
- Track students who were admitted using the rubric on their performance in the program as well as job placement.
- Treat the admissions process as an ongoing process in which you periodically evaluate program mission and needs as well as student outcomes. Think about the metrics that will help you evaluate the success of the rubric (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> year graduate GPA, publications and scholarly/creative output, networking abilities, etc...)
- Given the ongoing data collection efforts at The Graduate School, consider collaborating with us on research to evaluate the effectiveness of your amendments.

### Additional Resources and References (\* denotes references cited above):

Association of American Medical Colleges:

<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview/about/>

Council of Graduate Schools:

For an overview: <http://cgsnet.org/innovation-graduate-admissions-through-holistic-review>

Full report: [http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS\\_HolisticReview\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_HolisticReview_final_web.pdf)

\*ETS. 2015 [https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre\\_guide.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide.pdf)

\*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

\*Miller, C. & Stassun, K. (2014). A test that fails. *Nature*, 510, 303-304.

\*Posselt, J.R. (2014). Toward inclusive excellence in graduate education: Constructing merit and diversity in Ph.D. Admissions. *American Journal of Education*, 120, 481-514.

\*Sedlacek, W.E. (2017). Measuring noncognitive variables: Improving admissions, success, and retention for underrepresented students. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **1. Our program makes initial cuts based on standardized test scores, after which we review all the materials of applicants who made the cut.**

Making the initial cut on test scores is not consistent with portfolio review practice. As noted above, initial cuts on scores can eliminate qualified students from your applicant pool and affect your programs in the long run. The Graduate School's guidance above can help programs develop a process that can be structured and efficient.

### **2. How can we do portfolio review if federal funding agencies evaluate GRE scores for fellowship applications?**

Note that GRE scores are no longer part of the Graduate Research Fellowship Program at NSF (<https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/faqs>). In addition, NIH has eliminated standardized test scores from individual fellowship applications (F30 and F31): <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-120.html>.

### **2. Other high profile programs require the GRE. If we do not, won't we lose applicants because our program won't look as competitive?**

More and more programs at top tier schools are dropping the GRE requirement. For a recent example, see the University of Michigan's [Announcement](#). Applicants are learning that program quality cannot be equated with the GRE requirement.

### **3. Doesn't the WSU Graduate School require the GRE on internal scholarship and fellowship applications?**

No, the WSU Graduate School does not collect standardized test score information on scholarship and fellowship applications. In fact, the Graduate School has incorporated portfolio review into many of its funding mechanisms. For instance, the Graduate Professional Scholarship essay allows students to discuss evidence of persistence and the ability to overcome obstacles. The Dean's Diversity Fellowship requests that programs evaluate candidates based on Inclusive Excellence principles, including the extent to which the student will contribute to diverse perspectives in the program and/or the discipline and how diversity and inclusion efforts benefit the program and/or research to be undertaken. Finally, a new endowed scholarship was created by Dean Ambika Mathur to further support portfolio review and retention (link forthcoming).

### **4. Our program makes a first cut using standardized test scores because our program demands high test scores to succeed in coursework.**

The decision to create cuts is often based on tradition, anecdotal or personal experience, and the availability of certain cases in our memories that fit predicted patterns (the so-called "availability heuristic" in social science research; Tversky & Kahneman, 1976). This is not necessarily bad if we also attend to cases that do not fit our expectations (e.g., high scoring students who have difficulty completing their degree; low scoring students who perform well). In other words, before the argument is made that a cut before portfolio review is necessary, admissions data should be fully evaluated rather than relying on select cases. A growing body of evidence shows that standardized test scores are inconsistent predictors of graduate school success; several of these same studies have shown that undergraduate GPA is a more robust predictor than standardized exam scores (e.g., Kuncel & Hezlett, 2010; Morrison & Morrison, 1995; Pacheco et al., 2015; Sternberg & Williams, 1997; Weiner, 2014). We recommend that

programs conduct and publish research on the impact of their selection process using data from their own departments to contribute to this growing and important literature. The data can also be used to develop admissions procedures as described below.

#### **4. Isn't "portfolio review" vague? Won't it lead to decisions that are not consistent across applications, causing complaints and lawsuits?**

Portfolio review requires the evaluation of *multiple* pieces of data to come to an admissions decision. Best practice is for programs to identify what the desired qualities and experiences are of ideal applicants before the process begins and to operationalize those qualities and experiences. We provide two rubrics in the accompanying materials to assist departments in making consistent decisions across applications and to document their decision-making process. It is essential that programs undertake an intentional and documentable approach to admission because research has shown that, even with the best of intentions, faculty are subject to biases that adversely affect their ability to make admissions decisions based on objective data (Posselt). We also recommend that programs conduct research on their admissions rubrics to determine the impact of such methods on their admissions process and make necessary improvements over time.

#### **5. We already do portfolio review of materials but why do we need to have rubrics?**

We commend programs that have already put in place portfolio review procedures and would love to learn of your processes so we can share best practices across campus. Keep in mind that portfolio review does not simply entail looking at the whole application but also involves operationalization of constructs and some standardization (e.g., consistent use of rubrics). As noted above, it is essential that programs undertake an intentional and documentable approach to admission because research has shown that, even with the best of intentions, faculty are subject to biases that adversely affect their ability to make admissions decisions based on objective data (Posselt, 2014).

#### **6. What do programs and individual faculty members get out of portfolio review?**

Portfolio review processes are expected to lead to more consistent and documentable review processes to ensure against biases (even well-meaning ones) and to enhance programmatic and student success consistent with the program goals and strategic goals of WSU. In addition, The Graduate School is offering recruiting funds for graduate programs that undertake a portfolio review process and provide evidence of their portfolio review activities. Contact Dean Ambika Mathur for more information: [ambika.mathur@wayne.edu](mailto:ambika.mathur@wayne.edu) .

#### **7. Won't portfolio review result in less qualified applicants gaining admission?**

Our first question would be to ask how "less qualified" is operationalized. Based on research evidence reviewed earlier, we reject the notion that the standardized test scores are the sole indicator of graduate student success. A second point is that the question presumes that efforts to achieve diversity are at odds with efforts to achieve excellence. As noted by Williams, Berger, and McClendon (2005), the perceived relationship between diversity and excellence varies from institution to institution. According to the Inclusive Excellence Change Model, diversity is a critical component for achieving excellence. Students and faculty attain excellence by working in diverse groups, which can stimulate creative and novel approaches to problem-solving and offer skills development to work in an increasingly culturally diverse society. WSU's strategic plan is aligned with this conceptualization of Inclusive Excellence. The plan includes objectives to "Celebrate and increase the understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion," "Design and implement recruitment strategies that result in increased

numbers of qualified and diverse underrepresented students, faculty, and staff,” and “Develop and enhance programs focused on understanding multiculturalism and building diversity and inclusion competencies and expertise.” Other institutions’ efforts to embrace portfolio review do not appear to have lessened excellence in student outcomes but we understand that this is an empirical question. WSU intends to conduct research to explore this question locally and will disseminate the results to the campus community.

#### **8. How can faculty and staff learn more?**

For consultation on portfolio review, contact Dean Ambika Mathur for more information:  
[ambika.mathur@wayne.edu](mailto:ambika.mathur@wayne.edu).

## References

Association of American Medical Colleges:

<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview/about/>

Council of Graduate Schools:

For an overview: <http://cgsnet.org/innovation-graduate-admissions-through-holistic-review>

Full report: [http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS\\_HolisticReview\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_HolisticReview_final_web.pdf)

ETS. 2015 [https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre\\_guide.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide.pdf)

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## Tips for Writing a Compelling Personal Statement for Admission to Wayne State University Graduate Programs

*Note that this is a general guide to assist you in preparing a personal statement. Applicants should also review the requirements of the degree program by visiting the program website and/or consulting with program staff to determine whether other information is required in the personal statement.*

### **What does this statement need to accomplish?**

The personal statement should convince readers—often the faculty on the department admissions committee—that you have experiences and solid achievements showing your promise for persistence and success in graduate studies. Admissions committee members may use a rubric to evaluate your personal statement.

### **What information should I include in my personal statement?**

Include information that gives reviewers a sense of you as a person and a scholar. Display your communication skills and discuss your ability to maximize effective collaboration with the broader academic community. If you have faced any obstacles or barriers in your education or have seized upon unique opportunities for research, sharing those experiences serves both for the selection process, and for your nomination for assistantships and fellowships. If one part of your academic record is not ideal due to challenges you faced in that particular area, this is where you can explain any issues and direct reviewers' attention to the evidence of your promise for success in higher education. This is also where you can communicate your potential to bring to your academic career a critical perspective rooted in your experiences.

### **Part 1: Introduce yourself, your interests and motivations**

Tell readers what you're interested in, and perhaps, what sparked your desire for graduate study. This should be short and to the point; don't spend a great deal of time on autobiography.

### **Part 2: Summarize your undergraduate and, if applicable, previous graduate research and scholarly pursuits**

Describe the research you conducted. Indicate with whom, the title of the project, what your responsibilities were, and the outcome. Write in the style of your discipline. Describe any important papers or thesis projects, as well as anything scholarly beyond your curricular requirements such as involvement in an Honors program. Also address any work experience that might be applicable, especially if you had any kind of responsibility for testing, designing, researching or interning in an area similar to what you wish to study in graduate school. What did you learn from these experiences? How did these experiences prepare you for graduate studies?

**Part 3: Your academic achievement in context** (note that this section may be placed anywhere in your statement. Consider the flow of the other sections and where the following information best fits for you).

It is especially helpful if you discuss circumstances or activities that may have affected your academic and professional development. Admissions committee members want to know if you have what it takes to persist and succeed in graduate studies. This is your chance to

contextualize your application (e.g., GPA, standardized test scores, research experience) for the committee members. The following list is not an exhaustive list of contextual factors but will give you an idea of the kinds of activities that may be evaluated by the admissions committee:

- Demonstrated initiative to seize opportunities for advanced academic work or research and/or clinical experiences;
- Demonstrated persistence and significant academic achievement by overcoming barriers including but not limited to economic, health, social, or educational disadvantages, including first-generation college student status;
- Potential to contribute diverse perspectives to enhance the higher education enterprise (e.g., research, scholarly work, classroom dialogue) as evidenced by life experiences and educational background. For example:
  - Ability to articulate the barriers facing women and minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields;
  - Participation in higher education pipeline programs such as BUILD, IMSD, McNair Scholars, or summer research and internship programs;
  - Military service
  - Service in Peace Corps, Teach for America, Americorps, City Year, Summer in the City
  - Service in campus life organizations and groups
  - Varsity Athletics
  - Significant travel experiences including Study Abroad
  - Research, scholarly, and artistic experiences, if not already mentioned
  - Other community and volunteer experiences

#### **Part 4: Discuss the relevance of your recent and current activities**

If you graduated and worked prior to returning to grad school, indicate what you've been doing: company or non-profit, your work/design team, responsibilities, what you learned. You can also indicate how this helped you focus your interest in graduate studies.

#### **Part 5: Elaborate on your academic interests**

Here you indicate what you would like to study in graduate school in enough detail to convince the faculty that you understand the scope of research in their discipline, are aware of resources in the department, and are engaged with current research themes.

a) Indicate the area of your interests. Ideally, pose a question, define a problem, or indicate a theme that you would like to address in your graduate studies. This should be an ample paragraph!

b) Look on the web for information about the department you're interested in, including professors and their research. Are there professors whose research interests parallel yours? If so, indicate their names. Check the specific program; many require you to name a professor or professors with whom you might work.

c) End your statement in a positive manner, indicating your excitement and readiness for the challenges ahead of you.

## **Essential Tips**

1. Emphasize everything from a positive perspective and write in an active, not a passive voice.
2. Demonstrate everything by example; don't just say that you're a persistent or motivated person. Provide evidence.
3. If there is something important that happened to you that affected your grades, such as economic hardship, illness, or excessive work, state it. Write it affirmatively, showing your perseverance despite obstacles.
4. Make sure everything in the statement is linked with continuity and focus.
5. Unless the specific program says otherwise, be concise; an ideal essay should say everything it needs to with brevity. Often 500 to 1000 well-selected words (1-2 single spaced pages in 12 point font) is ideal, but specific instructions for the degree program should be followed.
6. As noted above, check the program website and/or contact program staff to learn about specific information that must be included in your statement to be considered for admission.

## Sample Wayne State University Personal Statement Rubric

The purpose of the rubric is to provide a standardized assessment of the personal statement across applications. Admissions committees reach final admissions decisions through discussion and consensus and in accordance with Wayne State University's recommendations.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Score:</b>
<b>1. Writing Style/Mechanics</b>	<i>Incomplete or run-on sentences, little and/or poor punctuation</i>	<i>Sentence structure and punctuation needs editing</i>	<i>Sentences varied, some awkward. Punctuation appropriate for the most part, no major errors</i>	<i>Excellent sentence structure, varied in composition and length. Punctuation appropriate, error-free reflecting thorough proofreading</i>	
<b>2. Quality of Research or Scholarly Experience</b>	<i>No research experience, including no relevant research coursework</i>	<i>Research experience limited to coursework; no additional research experience</i>	<i>Research experience outside the field of interest with transferrable skills to proposed area of study OR Some basic research experience beyond coursework (e.g., data entry, scheduling appointments)</i>	<i>Excellent research experience in the field of interest (e.g., meaningful and extensive contributions and/or research skills, perhaps evidenced by honor's thesis, publications, presentations, or other scholarly products;)</i>	
<b>3. Persistence and Motivation</b>	<i>No evidence of persistence in achieving long-term goals or motivation for the field of study</i>	<i>Some evidence of persistence and motivation but not explicitly stated</i>	<i>Evidence of persistence and motivation provided with no accompanying information about relevance for the field of study</i>	<i>Evidence of persistence and motivation including initiative in seeking out opportunities and/or explanation of how the evidence is relevant to the field of study</i>	
<b>4. Other qualities specified by program admissions committee (e.g., ability to contribute a unique perspective; leadership skills; applied skills relevant to the degree program)</b>	<b>USING "Unique Perspective" as an example:</b> <i>No evidence of ability to share unique perspectives to enhance learning or contribute to the program needs/goals.</i>	<i>Some evidence ability to share unique perspectives but not explicitly stated</i>	<i>Evidence of ability to share unique perspectives with no accompanying information about relevance for the field of study</i>	<i>Evidence of ability to share unique perspectives and an explanation of how the evidence is relevant to the field of study</i>	
<b>Average Score*</b>					<u>    </u> = <b>Total/ # of Items</b>

\*Insert Average into Full Application Rubric.

## Graduate Application Rubric Template

The purpose of this rubric is to provide a standardized assessment of admissions materials across applications. Admissions committees reach final admissions decisions through discussion and consensus and in accordance with Wayne State University's recommendations.

### Weighting Criteria\*:

20% Written Communication Skills

20% Academic Preparation

20% Research/Scholarly/Technical Skills

20% Persistence and Motivation

20% Ability to Contribute a Unique Perspective to Research and/or Training

(Other criteria that program may include oral presentation skills, clinical or applied experiences, community engagement or involvement, ability to take the perspectives of other people, or other experiences that are deemed necessary for student and programmatic success)

Application Item and Evidence	1	2	3	4	SCORE
<p><b>1. Written Communication Skills</b></p> <p>Evidence obtained from: Personal statement, writing sample, feedback from letters of recommendation</p>	<i>Incomplete or run-on sentences, little and/or poor punctuation</i>	<i>Sentence structure and punctuation needs editing</i>	<i>Sentences varied, some awkward. Punctuation appropriate for the most part, no major errors</i>	<i>Excellent sentence structure, varied in composition and length. Punctuation appropriate, error-free reflecting thorough proofreading</i>	
<p><b>2. Academic Preparation**</b></p> <p>Evidence obtained from: Transcripts, standardized test scores, personal statement, feedback from letters of recommendation</p>	<i>GPA less than 3.0 (exception request must be made to the Graduate School) and/or Total Q + V less than XXX; AW less than xxx</i>	<i>GPA 3.0-3.5 and/or total Q + V between XXX and XXX; AW between xxx and xxx</i>	<i>GPA 3.51-3.74 and/or total Q + V between XXX and XXX; AW between xxx and xxx</i>	<i>GPA 3.75-4.0 and/or total Q + V of at least between XXX and XXX; AW between xxx and xxx</i>	
<p><b>3. Research/Scholarly /Technical Skills</b></p> <p>Evidence obtained from: Transcripts, personal statement, feedback from letters of recommendation</p>	<i>No research experience, including no relevant research coursework</i>	<i>Research experience limited to coursework; no additional research experience</i>	<i>Research experience outside the field of interest with transferrable skills to proposed area of study OR Some basic research experience beyond coursework (e.g., data entry, scheduling appointments)</i>	<i>Excellent research experience in the field of interest (e.g., meaningful and extensive contributions and/or research skills, evidenced by honor's thesis, publications, presentations, or other scholarly products)</i>	
<p><b>4. Persistence and Motivation</b></p> <p>Evidence obtained from:</p>	<i>No evidence of persistence in achieving long-term goals or</i>	<i>Some evidence of persistence and motivation but not explicitly</i>	<i>Evidence of persistence and motivation provided with no accompanying</i>	<i>Evidence of persistence and motivation including initiative in seeking out</i>	

Personal statement, feedback from letters of recommendation	<i>motivation for the field of study</i>	<i>stated</i>	<i>information about relevance for the field of study</i>	<i>opportunities and/or explanation of how the evidence is relevant to the field of study</i>	
<b>5. Ability to Contribute a Unique Perspective</b>  Evidence obtained from: personal statement, feedback from letters of recommendation	<i>No evidence of ability to share unique perspectives to enhance learning or contribute to the program needs/goals.</i>	<i>Some evidence ability to share unique perspectives but not explicitly stated</i>	<i>Evidence of ability to share unique perspectives with no accompanying information about relevance for the field of study</i>	<i>Evidence of ability to share unique perspectives and an explanation of how the evidence is relevant to the field of study</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>____ = Total/# of items</b>

\* Number of items and weighting of items to be identified by the program.

\*\*Programs are encouraged to define rubric scores (Scores of 1-4) for academic preparation based on research, their program needs, and requirements as well as University requirements.