**Proposed Catalog Change:** [**http://catalog.uark.edu/graduatecatalog/admissions/#text**](http://catalog.uark.edu/graduatecatalog/admissions/#text)

**Standardized Examination Scores:**

There is no requirement of a standardized examination score for admission to the Graduate School. Individual degree and non-degree programs may require applicants to submit standardized examination scores as part of their application for admission. However, programs who require standardized examination scores must consider them as one factor in a holistic review of applicants. Programs may not use cutoff or minimum scores as the sole screening tool as part of their admission process.

**Standardized Test Score Requirement Proposal, University of Arkansas Graduate School**

**Proposal:** The uniform campus requirement of GRE test scores for a completed graduate admission be removed and the requirement be left to the discretion of individual graduate programs. The GRE or GMAT scores would be required for application to campus DDF and DAF Fellowships.

**Background:** Since Fall 2013, all degree-seeking applicants to the University of Arkansas Graduate School have been required to submit two items to be considered for admission:

1. A minimum of a 3.0GPA on the last 60 hours of an undergraduate degree, an earned masters’ degree, scores on a standardized exam that is acceptable to the degree program, unless exempted by the degree program or the Graduate School.
2. A score on a standardized examination (e.g., Graduate Record Examination, Miller Analogies Test, Praxis, Graduate Management Admission Test) that is acceptable to the degree program, unless exempted by the degree program or the Graduate School.

It is important to note, the requirement in (2) above is for a score showing completion of the exam but not a minimum score. The score is evaluated by the program/department as part of a holistic review. This test requirement has led some programs in the humanities to instruct their students to not complete the quantitative section of the GRE while STEM programs have similarly done so for the verbal section. Further, some departments do not utilize the score in their evaluation while only requiring applicants take the exam to meet the Graduate School requirement. Some programs use minimum scores or cutoff scores scores against the advice of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as well as the Graduate School. The best practice is a holistic review and not the use of cutoff scores.

Over the past nine years, most professional/practitioner-based masters programs, professional doctoral programs (OTD and DNP), and MFA programs have applied for and been granted exemptions by the Graduate Council for relief of the test requirement. To date, no PhD program has received an exemption of this requirement.

Compared to our twelve peer institutions, the University of Arkansas is an outlier. No other institution on our comparator list has a Graduate School wide requirement. Each institution leaves the decision of requiring a standardized test score up to the individual graduate program.

The Graduate School proposes to **eliminate the requirement** of a standardized test score for admission to all graduate programs to come in line with these benchmarks and be more competitive for applicants. However, individual programs may require a standardized test score. The Graduate School proposes to adopt Clemson’s requirement that “where standardized test scores are considered as one factor in the admissions process, programs may not use cutoff or minimum scores as an initial screening tool or as a requirement.” This is in keeping with guidance from ETS for use of standardized test scores and best practices for holistic review of applications.

The Graduate School will **maintain the requirement** of a standardized test score for all doctoral DDF, and DAF fellowships administered by the Graduate School. However, as they have done for the past several years, those awards will not have cutoff or minimum scores for verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE. The award committees will be instructed to engage in a holistic review of those applications. A low-test score in one or both areas of the GRE should not eliminate the applicant from contention for those awards.

**Expected Outcomes** Removing the uniform standardized test requirement will have a minimal effect to national institutional rankings as most national rankings no longer use standardized test scores in their calculations. US News rankings for education doctoral programs and engineering programs still utilize GRE scores (about 6% of total weighting) in their calculations and Business programs use GMAT scores. Those programs or the Colleges they belong to can choose to require those scores while other programs on campus whose rankings do not utilize GRE scores can choose to exempt themselves and rely on other forms of evaluation.

The Graduate School anticipates that the majority of masters programs will choose to discontinue the standardized testing requirement, but the majority of doctoral programs will continue to utilize the GRE.

It is anticipated that this will increase applications and admissions to and increased diversity in graduate programs. This change will have the positive effect of enhancing DEI efforts on campus as it will require programs to train themselves in best practices in the use of test scores while eliminating minimum or cutoff scores.