

ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Admission to Graduate School (p. 1)

Responsibility for admitting applicants to graduate programs rests with the Dean of the Graduate School. Academic department and program offices review admissions applications and credentials and make admissions recommendations to the Graduate Dean. In cases where credentials were earned abroad, the Graduate School admissions staff will evaluate to ensure that the applicant has the equivalent of an accredited 4 year U.S. baccalaureate degree. The standards maintained by the Graduate School and individual departments and programs are applied to ensure that applicants admitted to the University are well qualified and trained to study at this institution and have a reasonable expectation of successfully completing a graduate program. Standards for admission to doctoral degree programs are frequently higher than those for admission to master's degree programs. In many degree programs, the number of applications received from individuals qualified for graduate study regularly exceeds the number of applicants who can be accommodated. In such cases, only the most highly qualified are offered admission. The number of spaces available in various departments is limited according to the availability of faculty, special resources, and funds for students requiring financial assistance.

Criteria for Admission (p. 1)

Those applicants who have earned or will earn a bachelor's degree at a regionally accredited college or university in the United States (or the equivalent of a baccalaureate degree from a nationally recognized institution in another country) are eligible to be considered for admission to the Graduate School at the University of Maryland. With the exception of established dual-degree programs, an applicant can matriculate in only one graduate program at a time.

Admission to graduate programs is highly competitive, and space is limited. The decision to admit an applicant to a program is based primarily on a combination of the following criteria, evaluated from a complete application:

- **Quality of previous undergraduate and graduate work.** The Graduate School requires as a minimum standard an average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all undergraduate courses taken at a regionally accredited college or university, as calculated by the institution that conferred the bachelor's degree. Adequate performance in prerequisite courses is required. Applicants with international credentials must submit in the original language those academic records that are not written in English. Such credentials must be accompanied by a literal English translation. Both must be submitted by the published international application submission deadline for the degree or certificate program. Original copies must be submitted to the Graduate School before the completion of the first term (semester or 12-week term) of enrollment.
- **Strength of letters of recommendation from persons competent to judge the applicant's probable success in graduate school.** These letters are usually from the applicant's former professors who are able to give an in-depth evaluation of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses with respect to academic work. Additional recommendations may come from employers or supervisors who are familiar with the applicant's work experience.
- **Scores on a nationally standardized examination.** The three most widely used standardized examinations are the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) and the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). Because the predictive

utility of these test scores may vary from one group of applicants to another, a discriminating use of all relevant materials will be made in each applicant's case. The TOEFL, IELTS Academic, or PTE Academic are required of international applicants who are not native speakers of English. More information on English Proficiency requirements can be found on our Graduate School website (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>).

- **Applicant's statement of his or her academic career objectives and their relation to the intended program of study.** These statements help the program to identify students whose goals are consonant with the program's objectives and expertise.
- **Other evidence of potential success in graduate studies.** Some programs require other evidence of potential for success in graduate study, such as a portfolio of creative work, completion of specialized examinations, personal interviews, or an example of scholarly work.
- **Availability of an advisor in the applicant's specific field, available space in the program, and competitive rating within the applicant pool for the given term of entry.**

Prospective students may apply for admission to the University of Maryland during or after their final year of undergraduate study but must furnish proof of graduation before the end of their first term (semester or 12-week term) of enrollment at the University. Students applying for admission to a graduate degree program in a field of specialization in which they already hold that same degree or its equivalent may do so only if the previous degree program was of substantially different character or was not accredited. Summer-only students applying for entrance in either of the two summer sessions should visit the Office of Extended Studies website (<https://oes.umd.edu/incoming-current-visiting-students/summer-session/>) for more information. In exceptional cases, programs may make a request to their collegiate dean for an exception to the requirement that students hold a U.S. Bachelor's or comparable degree. Such requests must then be submitted from the collegiate dean to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.

The Admission Process (p. 1)

To be considered for admission to the Graduate School, each applicant must follow the Graduate School application procedures (<http://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/application-process/step-step-guide-applying/>). The process requires the following:

- Completion of the University of Maryland Graduate Application (online);
- Payment of the non-refundable application fee;
- Submission of all relevant transcripts and supplementary application materials;
- Fulfillment of all graduate program admissions requirements;
- Adherence to published application deadlines.

Admissions Records and Disposition (p. 1)

All records, including both standardized test scores and academic records from other institutions, become part of the official file and can neither be returned nor duplicated for any purpose. Students should retain an additional copy of their official credentials to keep in their possession for advisory purposes and for other personal requirements.

The admission credentials and the application data of applicants are retained from the date of receipt for 12 months only and then destroyed in the following cases:

- 1) Applicants who do not register for courses at the time for which they have been admitted;
- 2) Applicants whose applications have been disapproved;
- 3) Applicants who do not respond to graduate program requests for additional information; and
- 4) Applicants whose applications are not complete with respect to the inclusion of all transcripts or test results.

Admission to Degree Programs (p. 2)

Graduate students are admitted to a particular program for a specific degree objective (M.A., Ph.D., Ed.D, etc.). With the exception of established dual degree programs, joint-degree programs, and certificate programs, graduate students are permitted to matriculate into only one graduate degree program at a time. Graduate students are admitted to either full or conditional status as outlined below:

Full Graduate Student Status (p. 2)

Students may be admitted to full graduate status if they have submitted official documents indicating a completed baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution or have earned a degree equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from another country, and are fully qualified in the judgment of the individual program and the Graduate School.

Conditional Graduate Student Status (p. 2)

Students may be admitted to conditional status if:

- The previous academic record is not outstanding; **or**
- The prerequisite coursework in the chosen field is insufficient; **or**
- The applicant has majored in another field with a creditable record but has not yet clearly demonstrated abilities in the proposed new field; **or**
- The applicant needs to fulfill an English remediation requirement; **or**
- The applicant has not provided official verification of information required by the graduate program or the Graduate School, such as the last semester's work or receipt of a degree.

Official transcripts indicating receipt of the degree must be submitted before the end of the first term of enrollment (semester or 12-week term). Registration for a second term (semester or 12-week) will not be permitted unless these documents are received by the Graduate School.

Offer of Admission (p. 2)

All completed applications will be reviewed by the Graduate School and the graduate program to which the applicant applied. Applicants may receive correspondence from each of these offices requesting clarification or additional information or documents. Responses should be directed to the inquiring office directly.

Formal admission to The University of Maryland is offered only by the Graduate School. Applicants admitted to the Graduate School will receive a written offer of admission from the Dean of the Graduate School. To

accept or decline the offer, applicants must notify the Graduate School by the first day of classes of the term (semester or 12-week term) for which the applicant was accepted or the offer becomes void. Immediately following written acceptance, applicants should contact the graduate program for registration information. Applicants are allowed a one-time only deferral of the admission of up to one year, subject to approval by the graduate program. Students admitted to a combined Bachelor's-Master's Program may not defer the start of their Master's program, but may request a Leave of Absence in their first year in the Master's program. Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining admission to a graduate program are also notified in writing by the Graduate School.

Admission Term Changes (p. 2)

The Offer of Admission is extended to the applicant only for a specified term (semester or 12-week term). If an admitted student or a Graduate Program wishes to change the term of entry (semester or 12-week term), they must petition the Graduate School in writing. The Graduate School will allow one (1) term (semester or 12-week term) change requested by the program, and one (1) requested by the admitted student, contingent upon the approval of the program's Director of Graduate Studies. Any further changes will require a new application to the Graduate School.

Non-Degree Admission: Non-Degree Seeking Student Status (p. 2)

Although the primary mission of the Graduate School is to conduct programs of graduate instruction leading to advanced degrees, the Graduate Faculty will admit qualified students without degree objectives as Non-Degree Seeking Students, to the extent that resources allow. Unofficial transcripts or photocopies of diplomas will be accepted with the application for evaluation purposes, but the student must submit official copies of all required documents before the end of the first term of enrollment (semester or 12-week term). Official transcripts must be submitted from all institutions except the University of Maryland, College Park.

The Non-Degree Seeking Student status is not available to international students who would require the University of Maryland to sponsor them on an F-1 student visa.

Applicants for admission to Non-Degree Seeking Student status must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution, with a cumulative 3.0 grade point average, and:

- Submit official transcripts covering all credits used in satisfying the baccalaureate degree requirements, **or**
- If the applicant holds a master's or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution, submit an official transcript showing the award of a master's or doctoral degree, **or**
- Achieve a score that places the applicant in the upper 50th percentile of appropriate national standardized aptitude examinations, including the Graduate Record Examination, the Miller Analogies Test, and the Graduate Management Admissions Test (where different percentiles are possible, the Graduate School will determine which score is acceptable), **or**
- Provide a strong letter of support from the Graduate Director of the program in which the applicant plans to take a course.

Admission to Non-Degree Seeking Student status will continue for five years. If there is no registration in two consecutive academic terms

(semesters -Fall and Spring or 12-week term), the admitted status will lapse and a new application will be required.

Non-Degree Seeking Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. Non-Degree Seeking Students whose grade point average falls below 3.0 will not be permitted to register. Non-Degree Seeking Students must pay all standard graduate fees. Students in this status are not eligible to hold appointments as Graduate Teaching or Research Assistants or Fellows, or to receive other forms of financial aid. All other services available to them (e.g., parking, library privileges) are the same as those accorded to other graduate students.

Successful completion of courses taken as a Non-Degree Seeking Student does not guarantee admission to a graduate degree or certificate program. Each program may accept such courses in satisfaction of program requirements to a maximum of nine (9) credits, contingent on admission to the degree or certificate program and on the approval of the faculty in the program. For consideration of admission to a degree program at a later time, the student must submit a new application. (For those admitted as an Advanced Special Student prior to the Fall 2017 term, each program may accept such courses in satisfaction of program requirements to a maximum of twelve (12) credits, contingent on admission to the degree or certificate program and on the approval of the faculty in the program.)

Visiting Graduate Student Status (p. 3)

A graduate student matriculated in another graduate school who wishes to enroll in the Graduate School of the University of Maryland and who intends to return to the graduate school in which he or she is matriculated, may be admitted as a Visiting Graduate Student.

To apply, the applicant must submit a completed application (<http://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/application-process/step-step-guide-applying/>) and pay the current application fee. Transcripts, letters of recommendation, and test scores are not required. In lieu of transcripts, the applicant must submit a letter from the Graduate Dean at the applicant's institution confirming that the applicant is in good academic standing and that courses taken at the University of Maryland will be transferred to the home institution.

Golden Identification Card for Senior Citizens of Maryland (p. 3)

The University's services and courses are available without charge to citizens who are residents of the State of Maryland, 60 years of age or older, and retired (retired persons will be considered those who affirm that they are not engaged in gainful employment for more than 20 hours per week). Individuals who meet these requirements may apply for graduate admission, either as degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking students, and must meet all admissions criteria. Once admitted and issued the Golden Identification Card, senior citizens may register for courses in any session on a space-available basis, and may use the library and other University facilities during the time they are enrolled in courses. Tuition will be waived for Golden Identification Card holders, but mandatory fees must be paid. Golden ID Card holders may register during the first week of classes for up to 3 courses; they may not pre-register. Please refer to the *Registration Guide* for more information on the Golden ID registration procedures.

Change of Status or Program (p. 3)

Students are admitted with a particular status to a specified program for a specified objective. If a student wishes to change to a different program within the same school or college and the degree objective will remain the same or will change to a lower-level objective (e.g., PhD to M.A.), a Program/Degree Objective Change Form (https://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/Forms/umd_grad_school_program-degree_objective_change_may_2021.pdf) may be submitted to the Graduate School. This form may also be used if a student wants to remain in the same program, but change to a lower-level degree objective.

A new application will be required if:

- The student wishes to change a program outside of their current school or college (students may be admitted to only one graduate program at any one time); or
- The student wishes to change status (from non-degree to degree); or
- The student wishes to pursue a higher-level degree objective (e.g., change from master's to doctoral degree).

Programs may request an exception to these rules. For example, a college or department may wish to allow students in a particular master's of professional studies program to be eligible to change their degree objective to a particular master's program without requiring a new application.

Admission to a new program and/or status is not granted automatically. Each application is reviewed and must meet the following criteria:

- Eligible students can submit a petition during any term, but can only petition to change their program and/or degree objective once during their University of Maryland graduate school career. Any subsequent requests to change a program and/or degree objective will require a new application and will be handled through the normal admissions process.
- To submit a petition, eligible students must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher or obtain Graduate School approval to waive this requirement. The process to waive this requirement is detailed in the petition process below.
- If a student changes their program and/or degree objective, they are responsible for adhering to the policies of their new degree program. Students should be aware that a change in program and/or degree objective may result in a change in, or loss of, fellowship and/or assistantship funding.

Petition Process

To submit a petition, students will:

- Secure permission for the program and/or degree objective change from the requested program. Each program designs their own review process and approval criteria, which is applied to all students who wish to change their program and/or degree objective. Each program must provide a path for students to change their degree objective from a higher to a lower level within the same program if such a master's degree exists (e.g., a doctoral student has met the degree requirements for a master's degree in the same program and desires to exit with the master's degree). Each program must also

provide reasonable options to meet any remaining master's degree requirements within one year after the student elects to change their degree objective to a lower level within the same graduate program.

- Submit a petition for a change of program or change of degree objective to the Graduate School. The petition asks students to identify: (a) their current graduate program and degree objective, (b) the new graduate program, if different from the current program, and (c) their new degree objective. In some cases, graduate students may change their degree objective within the same program (e.g., change from a doctoral degree objective to a master's degree objective).
- Before submitting the petition to the Graduate School, students must obtain approval and signatures from the Director of Graduate Studies of their current program and their new program, if different from the current program.
- Once the program/degree objective is changed, the new Director of Graduate Studies will submit any/all relevant inclusion of credit requests, including any/all relevant course conversions (e.g., 899 to 799).
- International students on F-1/J-1 status must meet with the International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) and obtain approval for the requested change via a signature on the petition.
- For students with a GPA of 3.0 or lower, the Director of Graduate Studies must submit a letter to the Graduate School to justify why the petition should be approved. The letter must include a plan for meeting the University's graduation requirement of a 3.0 or higher for all graduate students.

Deadlines

- Students must submit a completed petition to the Graduate School prior to the last day of final exams. Petitions for changes in program and/or degree objective received after final exams will be considered for the following term. A student must be enrolled during the term in which a degree is conferred, per the continuous registration requirement (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/registration-policies/#continuous-registration-requirements>).
- For approved petitions, the student's Graduate School program termination date will be reset for those that change programs. For approved petitions for students who change a degree objective within the same program, the termination date does not restart. Program termination dates are separate from the termination dates for other requirements such as for the I-20 or for fellowship funding.

Admission of Members of the Faculty (p. 4)

No member of the faculty who is employed by the University of Maryland with the position of assistant professor or higher is permitted to enroll in a program leading to an advanced degree in his or her academic college or school. A faculty member who wishes to take course work for personal enrichment in his or her academic college or school may choose to investigate the Non-Degree Seeking Student status. A faculty member who wishes to pursue an advanced degree in a graduate program outside his or her academic college or school may do so by obtaining written consent from the Deans of both the academic college/school in which

he or she is employed and that from which he or she seeks a degree, and, subsequently, from the Dean of the Graduate School.

Admission to An Institute (p. 4)

Application for admission to an institute should be made directly to the director of the institute. If admission to the Graduate School is also necessary, the decision will be based on the same criteria for admitting other degree applicants. Admission to an institute does not imply that the individual will be automatically admitted in any other status at the University of Maryland at a later date. The status terminates upon completion of the institute in which the student is enrolled. A new application and fee must be submitted for admission to any other graduate status or program.

Students already admitted to a regular graduate degree or non-degree status may also qualify for participation in an institute.

Immunization (p. 4)

The University of Maryland requires all freshmen, new graduate students, and transfer students to provide documentation of measles, mumps, rubella, and tetanus / diphtheria immunizations. It is a student's responsibility to provide this information to the Health Center before school begins. This requirement will not be waived.

Residency Classification (p. 4)

Petitions, related documents and questions concerning the Board of Regents Policy on Student Classification for Admission and Tuition Purposes should be directed to the Residency Reclassification Services (<http://www.registrar.umd.edu/resreclass.html>) in the Office of the Registrar.

Determination of In-State Status for Admission and Tuition

Purposes: See www.usmh.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVIII/VIII270.html (<http://www.usmh.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVIII/VIII270.html>) **for the complete text of this policy.**

An initial determination of in-state status will be made by the Graduate School at the time a student's application for admission is considered. The determination made at that time, and any determination made thereafter, shall prevail in each term (semester or 12-week term) until the determination is successfully challenged. Students may challenge their classification by submitting a timely petition to the Residency Reclassification Services. Determinations are based on the residency policy and requirements. The deadline for submitting a complete petition along with all supporting documents, is the first day of the term (semester or 12-week) in which the student wishes to be classified as in-state.

The volume of requests for reclassification may necessitate a delay in completing the review process. A decision in each case will be made within 60 days of receipt of a complete petition and all required documentation. During this period of time, or any further period of time required by the university, any fees and charges based on the previous determination must be paid. The student is solely responsible for any late charges incurred by the residency process. If the determination is changed, any excess fees and charges will be refunded.

Students classified as in-state for admission and tuition purposes are responsible for notifying the Residency Reclassification Services in writing within 15 days of any change in their circumstances that might in any way affect their classification at the University of Maryland.

For more information, refer to the Residency Classification Services (<http://www.registrar.umd.edu/resreclass.html>) web page.