HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS
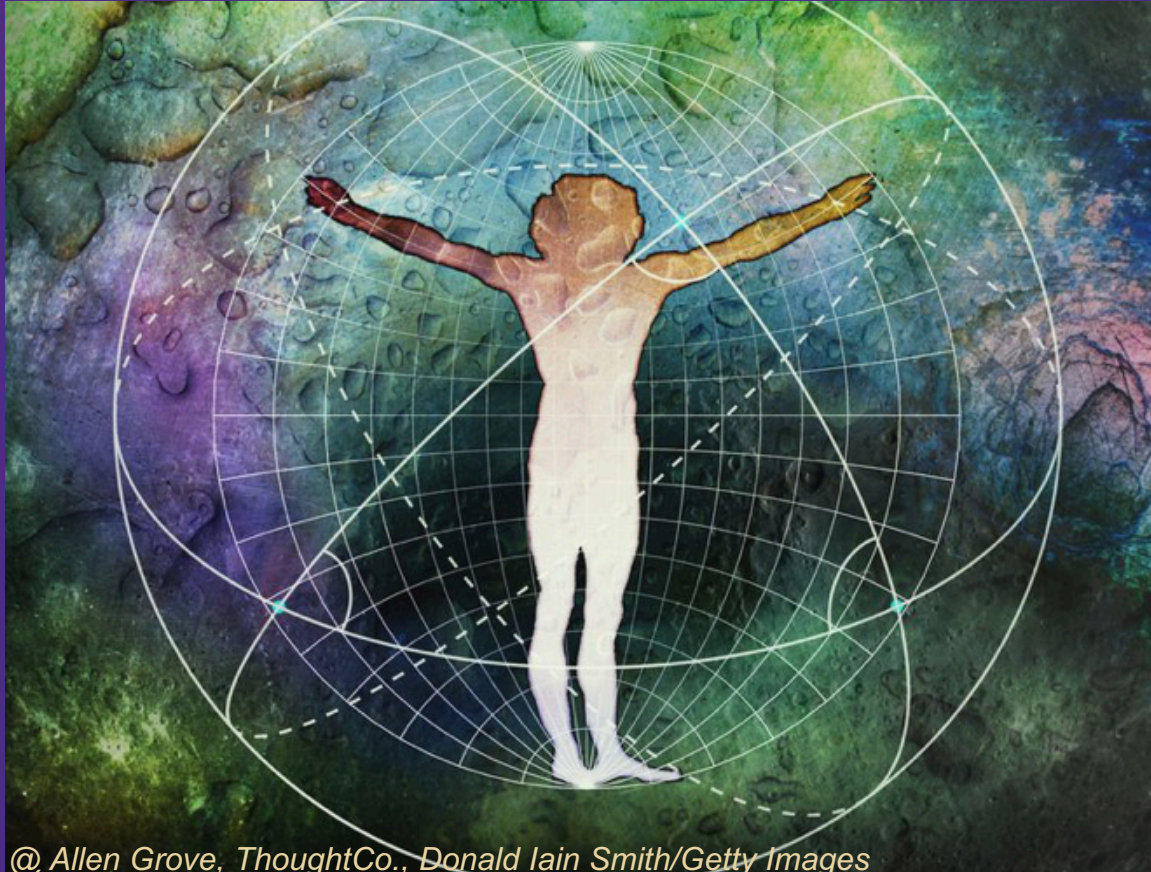
@ Allen Grove, ThoughtCo., Donald Iain Smith/Getty Images

Best practices and adapting during a pandemic

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W

1) Overview of Holistic Admissions and recommendations for virtual applicant review
2) Advice shared by panelists
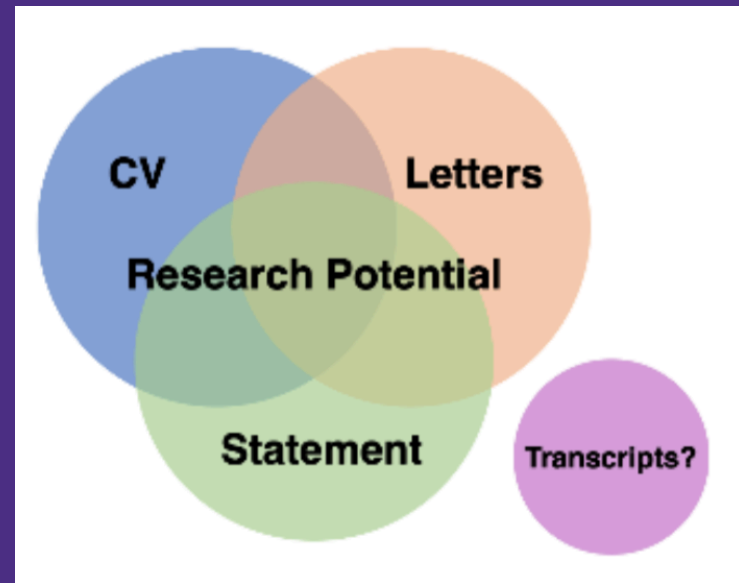3) Deeper discussions in the breakout groups
4) Sharing from the breakout groups

All slides will be shared (including embedded links). You are free to use this information within your unit, with attribution to the Graduate School.

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Holistic Admissions at UW

What is holistic review?

➢ No numerical cutoffs

➢ Greater weight placed on applicant's relevant experiences (CV, statement, references)

➢ Evidence of applicant's performance within the context of their background, academic institution, life situation, etc. are considered

➢ Intentional care is taken by admissions committee members to limit bias (implicit or explicit) and to promote inclusion of people from historically underrepresented groups

Modified from AAMC/GREAT webinar (08.25.20)
Joshua Hall, PhD, UNC Biological & Biomedical Sciences Program

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Holistic Admissions at UW

The UW Graduate School recommends graduate programs enact a holistic process for reviewing and selecting applicants

➤ Selection criteria linked to a program/department's mission and goals
➤ Promote and support diversity (backgrounds, experiences, etc.) as an essential element in achieving institutional excellence
➤ Evaluation metrics should be transparent

Main issue:
➤ Traditional evaluation measures fail to predict graduate school success

gradbunker.com

Holistic Admissions at UW: GRE Requirement Overview

By Campus	No	Yes	Opt.
By Campus			
	No	**Yes**	**Opt.**
UW Tacoma	61%	39%	0%
UW Bothel	50%	36%	14%
UW Seattle	34%	60%	6%
By Program Type			
Masters	39%	54%	7%
Doctorate	25%	73%	3%
By College			
School of Medicine	60%	40%	0%
Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs	55%	36%	9%
School of Pharmacy	43%	57%	0%
Interschool or Intercollege Programs	36%	55%	9%
College of Education	33%	68%	0%
The Information School	33%	50%	17%
College of Arts and Sciences	30%	66%	5%
College of Engineering	28%	63%	9%
School of Dentistry	25%	75%	0%
College of Built Environments	23%	77%	0%
College of the Environment	19%	75%	6%
Foster School of Business	13%	87%	0%
Evans School of Public Policy & Governance	11%	89%	0%
School of Public Health	8%	71%	21%

<u>Since 2018:</u>
- Programs requiring the GRE ↓ 8%:
  - College of Arts & Sciences
  - School of Medicine
  - College of the Environment

- 55% of programs with 400 or more applicants are not requiring the GRE

- 41% of 2020 applicants were not required to submit GRE scores for admission

**UW Graduate School, CAIR: full analysis in progress

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Holistic Admissions Recommendations:

Recruitment & Prior to Admissions

1. Attend institutional, regional, or national conferences or recruitment fairs to recruit diverse potential applicants

2. Conduct a simple study on past trends of applicants, students, and alumni, and pay attention to any underrepresented populations

3. Clearly state, on the admission webpage and recruitment information, details outlining how the program implements the holistic admission process

4. Form an admission review committee, representing diverse perspectives from across the department/program (consider asking student representatives and program alumni to serve on the committee)

Holistic Admissions Recommendations:

Recruitment & Prior to Admissions

5. Include narratives in required admission materials (e.g., essay, personal statement) to assess non-cognitive skills and past experiences, and provide clear instructions as to how these materials may impact admission decisions

6. Create and update an admission manual and guidelines for review committee members (to account for annual committee member turnover)

7. Provide and update an annual orientation session for admission review committee members, which should include implicit bias training

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Holistic Admissions Recommendations:
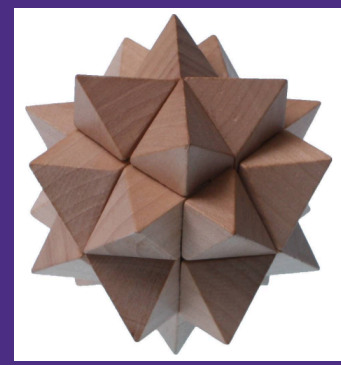
Admission Review Process

8. Assign at least two reviewers for each applicant to provide an accurate assessment of the applicant

9. Decide whether the GRE score should be a required component of the admission review process (and if so, define how it is used and what weight it carries in the final decision)

10. Be clear of the desired qualifications of candidates, and make them transparent to potential applicants

11. Develop an admission review rubric that reflects departmental values, and discuss the rubric with review committee members to achieve a shared understanding of department/program mission, focus, and diversity, inclusion, and equity

12. Record the scores, rank the candidates, and schedule at least one admission committee meeting to discuss the merit of the committee's rankings and decisions

Holistic Admissions Recommendations:

Additional Practices

13. Prior to the admission review process, consider organizing an implicit bias training with reviewers to help reviewers identify any potential biases

14. When pre-screening is required (due to a large number of applicants), clearly define the process and do not use a single indicator for excluding an applicant (e.g., GRE score, GPA, undergraduate institution)

15. Developing evidence-based practices, such as collecting data on applicants' experiences to capture changes before and after implementing a particular practice

16. Matching student services to the diverse needs of admitted students, so they are fully and comprehensively supported as UW students

Consider instituting a evaluation rubric:

Candidate:		College/Univ. (Year)		
Quality	High (5)	Medium (3)	Low (1)	Notes
Research Potential	2+ years in the lab with increasing responsibility; presented at a national conference; author on a manuscript; great understanding of research and how it's done	<2 years in a lab; presented at a local conference, sufficient understanding of research methods	Course-related lab experience, minimal understanding of research methods	
Fit with your PhD Program	In addition to Medium qualifications, used specific examples of faculty and program opportunities	Interested in translational and/or mechanistic research; commitment to a career in STEM, wants to help others	Broad, undefined research interests and goals	
Realistic Self-Appraisal	Clearly delineates own strengths & weaknesses; works on self-development; curious	Trouble identifying strengths & weaknesses but seeks both positive and negative feedback	Over or underestimates abilities; little self assessment; doesn't appear to learn from experiences	
Long-term goals	Clearly communicates long-range goals beyond the PhD, or history of engagement in long-term projects	Primary goal is PhD completion, lacking articulation of long-term goals	Goals are short range, such as coursework; little history of engagement in long-term projects	
Diversity Assessment	Active advocate for diversity	Advocate for diversity, or contributes to another type of diversity the department seeks	Contributions to diversity are unclear from application	
Academic Preparation	Excelled in STEM courses, high overall GPA and GRE scores	Decent GRE (60-80%) and GPA, especially in STEM courses	Less than stellar STEM academic experiences; GRE<50%; GPA<3.0	
Decision:	Interview/Discuss/Reject	Additional Notes:		

Holistic Admissions at UW ... the impact of I-200

www.experienceolympia.com

Official UW Grad School guidance:

"I-200 prohibits granting preferential treatment based on identified categories such as race. Utilizing a holistic admissions approach precludes prioritizing or giving preferential consideration of any single factor such as GRE score, GPA, gender or race. In utilizing a holistic approach, however, race/ethnicity and its impact may be considered among a host of factors in the admissions review of a candidate's application."
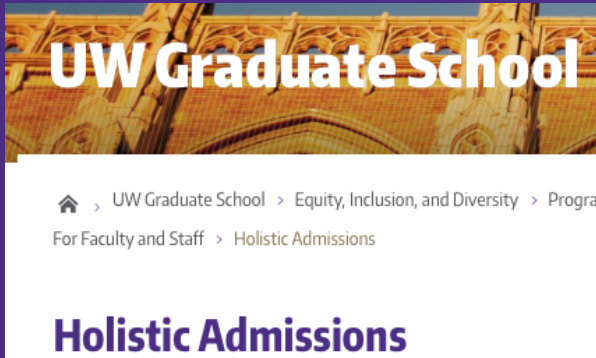
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Holistic Admissions at UW ... the impact of I-200

Using the UW Diversity Blueprint as a guide:

www.experienceolympia.com

OFFICE OF MINORITY AFFAIRS & DIVERSITY
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UW Diversity Blueprint 2017–2021

BE BOUNDLESS FOR WASHINGTON / FOR THE WORLD

1) Cultivate an Inclusive Campus Climate

2) Attract, Retain, and Graduate a Diverse and Excellent Student Body

3) Attract and Retain a Diverse Faculty

4) Attract and Retain a Diverse Staff

5) Assess Tri-Campus Diversity Needs

6) Improve Accountability & Transparency.

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Additional resources:
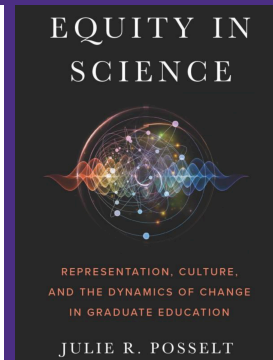
1. GREs don't predict grad school success.
2. A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Predictive Validity of the Quantitative and Verbal Components of the Graduate Record Examination with Graduate Grade Point Average Representing the Criterion of Graduate Success
3. A comprehensive meta-analysis of the predictive validity of the graduate record examinations: implications for graduate student selection and performance
4. The Validity of the Graduate Record Examination for Master's and Doctoral Programs: A Meta-Analytic Investigation
5. The reliability of GRE scores in predicting graduate school success: a meta-analytic, cross-functional, regressive, unilateral, post-kantian, hyper-empirical, quadruple blind, verbiage-intensive and hemorrhoid-inducing study
6. Factors that can influence performance on the GRE general test, 2006-2007.
7. A test that fails.
8. Bio/Biomedical graduate programs that do not require the GRE

Virtual Interviews: due to COVID … (and beyond?)

@advancio.com

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Virtual interviewing opportunities:

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Virtual Interview  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                 ┌─────────────┴─────────────┐
          ┌──────────────┐           ┌──────────────┐
          │ For Candidates│           │ For Programs │
          └──────────────┘           └──────────────┘
```

For Candidates
- Safer for all (especially at-risk individuals and families)
- Avoid inequity introduced by travel restrictions
- Decrease stressors related to COVID-19 exposure
- Maintains confidentiality of applicant's health status

For Programs
- Innovation for recruiting & interviewing
- Maintain physical distancing
- Saves time (scheduling interviews, no travel...)
- Saves money

Planning for virtual admissions and interviews

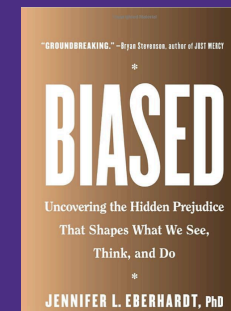
@ Christing Funk, bookboon.com

1. How many applicants do you want to interview?

2. Will timelines change?

3. Will offers and/or yield numbers change?

4. What are the technology needs in the virtual environment?

5. What's the budget?

6. Will you return to in-person interviews in the future?

7. Is it possible to expand recorded offerings that can be shared before the formal interview day.

8. Will interviews take place over 1-2 days, or will schedule be more flexible (and what do the faculty interviews think)?
   How will you incorporate current students into the process?

9. What are your backup options …. Plan for the inevitable glitch.

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Modified from AAMC/GREAT webinar (08.25.20)

Additional considerations during virtual interview and recruitment activities:

@ apasseducation.com/

1. Can virtual interviews even the playing field?
   - Removal of travel costs
   - Removal of need to purchase interview attire
2. Potential disparities during the virtual interview
   - Availability of quiet space for interview
   - Bandwidth & hardware/software issues
   - Training for interviewers to compensate for disparities ***

@ Implicit.harvard.edu

Addressing implicit bias during virtual interviews

3. Prepare applicants and provide assurances that if problems with the interview (beyond the applicant's control), they will not be judged.

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Modified from AAMC/GREAT webinar (08.25.20)

Additional resources:

- ➤ Conducting interviews during the coronavirus pandemic
- ➤ Prep for success in your virtual interview
- ➤ Virtual Interviews: Tips for interviewers

Videoconference Interviewing: Tips for Success

Kathryn Williams, MB, BCh, BAO
Juliana M. Kling, MD, MPH
Helene R. Labonte, DO
Janis E. Blair, MD

Journal of Graduate Medical Education (2015);
http://dx.doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-14-00507.1

How to Succeed in a Virtual Interview

October 1, 2020

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Panelists:

Noell Bernard-Kingsley
Director, Academic Services

College of the Environment,
Earth & Space Sciences

Erin Kirschner
Ast. Director, Graduate Admissions

School of Medicine,
Biochemistry & BPSD

Jennifer Maglalang
Director, Admissions

School of Social Work

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To breakout rooms:

1. Does your department utilize a holistic admissions process? Why/why not?

2. What is working in your department?

3. What challenges are you facing?

Please assign a group member to be the note-taker and to briefly report back to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion.

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Final thoughts a & Thank you!

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SCHOOL

W

Bill Mahoney, PhD
Associate Dean
Student & Postdoctoral Affairs

Ralina Joseph, PhD
Associate Dean
Diversity & Student Affairs

Patrycja Humienik
Resource Coordinator
Office of Equity, Inclusion &
Diversity

Questions, comments, and advice gleaned from the chat window:

GPA limits (info provided by Nicole Fernkes, Jennifer Simpson, Jennifer Maglalang):

The Graduate School has minimum admission requirements (degree, GPA, English language proficiency), which is why we require petitions. In Autumn 2019, the Graduate School Council reviewed data for low GPA admission petitions. Eliminating the GPA requirement was mentioned, but did not receive a lot of support at the time. Dean Williamson-Lott did not get a chance to continue this discussion in the 2019-2020 year, but it hasn't been forgotten.

For applicants who are below a 3.0 GPA, and the department petitions, GEMS looks at test results (along with careful review of *all* transcripts). If there are official test scores, we can consider those. It's a way to demonstrate recent academic ability despite (For example) a college transcript from ten years ago.

We do have on our "Understanding the Application Process" (a high hit-page), that the possibility of petition exists. We are trying not to close the door automatically: "Graduate programs may consider an applicant with a GPA below a 3.0. Graduate programs must submit an admission petition to the Dean of the Graduate School and receive approval before an offer is made."

We are thinking about re-designing our GPA petition as a form, so the process *is* easier. And I also want to call out that we've tried to encourage applicants to upload as many transcripts as possible (all degrees, credits after graduation, like community college). Often the student's GPA is higher than they and the department think!

From Social Work (https://socialwork.uw.edu/admissions/msw/apply-to-msw): While there is no minimum GPA requirement for these programs, applicants must meet the 3.0 grade point average (on a 4 point scale), set forth by the UW Graduate School, from a regionally accredited college or university or its equivalent from a foreign institution. However, the School of Social Work may consider an exceptional applicant with a GPA below a 3.0 – applicants with less than a 3.0 GPA are encouraged to provide additional information related to the context of their GPA in the supplemental application and/or their admissions essay. An admission petition to the Dean of the Graduate School, by the School of Social Work, must be submitted before an offer is made for any applicants that do not meet the GPA minimum and is subject to denial. Please see this document for suggested strategies to help strengthen your candidacy for admission.

Application Fee Waiver Process (info provided by Jennifer Simpson):
The fee waiver process is described here (https://grad.uw.edu/admission/apply-now/) and here (https://grad.uw.edu/admission/application-fee-waivers/).

On the department side, we introduced the ability for a department to pay an application fee on behalf of an applicant. https://webappssecure.grad.uw.edu/mgp-dept/instruct/pay_application_fee.asp.

Additional Implicit Bias Training resource: http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/

Finally, Drs. Joseph and Mahoney will be working on creating a a best-practices document with respect to identifying when I-200 should be considered … and more importantly, when I-200 does not have an impact on recruitment and admissions decisions. We will be sure to share this with all of you when it's available.