Connecting Holistic Admissions, Diversity and Student Success

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Overview

• ETS Engagement with the Graduate Community
• The Search for Desired Evidence in Application Portfolios
• Graduate Admissions and Some Challenges
• Using a Holistic Admissions Process
• GRE Scores: Benefits and Limitations
ETS Engagement with the Graduate Community
About ETS

ETS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization

Mission is to help advance quality and equity in education

70+ years of experience in educational research and assessment

Develops, administers and scores 50 million tests annually in 180 countries, including programs for the U.S. and other governments

Significant annual investment in researching solutions focused on improving educational outcomes for all
Meet the Office for Graduate Education Engagement

**Terry Ackerman**
Distinguished Professor of Educational Measurement at University of Iowa, and Former Graduate Dean at University of North Carolina, Greensboro

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Associate Professor, Emeritus and Former Senior Associate Dean, Graduate School at Clemson University

**Maureen Grasso**
Professor of Textile Sciences and Former Graduate Dean at North Carolina State University and Former Graduate Dean at University of Georgia

**Carlos Grijalva**
Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and Former Graduate Associate Dean at the University of California, Los Angeles
The Search for Desired Evidence in Application Portfolios
Poll #1

What is currently *most* important to your graduate program(s)?

A. Increasing the number of applicants
B. Increasing diversity
C. Increasing retention
D. Increasing completion rates
E. Increasing funding opportunities
F. Other (Please write in the Chat)
The search for desired evidence

- Cognitive skills
- Academic Background
- Personal Attributes
- Work Experience
- Interests and Passions
- Fit with Program Goals/Mission
Poll #2

Have you mapped the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities needed to successfully navigate your graduate programs onto each element of your holistic admissions portfolio?

A. Yes
B. No
## Where is the desired evidence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Cognitive Skills</th>
<th>Academic Background</th>
<th>Personal Attributes</th>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Interests and Passions</th>
<th>Fit with Program Goals/Mission</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Transcript &amp; GPA</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE® Scores</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Purpose</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résumé &amp; Research Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Admissions and Some of the Challenges
Some of the challenges we are hearing from colleagues across the nation

“We are looking for the best students who match my research needs/interests and who will persevere and finish the program”

“We want to recruit and admit URM students, but we can’t get them in the pool of applicants”

“I have no training in how to evaluate applications”

“There is never enough money to fund the students I want to admit”

“There are just too many applications and not enough time to review them so we have to use a cut score so we can get through all of these”
Additional challenges

“We find the best students but they often decline our offer and go to University X because that University has a better ‘reputation’ and they always get all the good students”

“What do we do with or how do we evaluate Pass/Fail grades?”

“Biases – Conscious or Unconscious biases are a challenge we face”

“If only we could bring them here to meet our faculty and see our facilities, they would seriously consider us”

“COVID, COVID, COVID ... our practices have changed and we are not sure if that is a good thing.”
Using a Holistic Admissions Process
Foundational work for holistic admissions “promising practices” and subsequent materials

Campus visits
71 interviews with deans and faculty in the following disciplines:
- Life sciences
- Physical sciences
- Engineering
- Social sciences
- Arts & humanities
- Education
- Business

Literature review
Examined published works related to graduate admissions from early 1950s to present

Other sources
More than a dozen other sources, including Holistic Review in Graduate Admissions: A Report from the Council of Graduate Schools

See sources at www.holisticadmissions.org/navigate/more-information/
What are the benefits of a truly holistic process?

✓ Gain a clearer picture of an applicant’s potential fit
✓ Identify applicants most likely to be successful in your program
✓ Support fair review of all applicants

"Central to the concept of holistic application review is looking at everything a candidate has submitted, understanding unconscious biases and being aware of inequities in access to opportunities."

Mark J.T. Smith
Dean of the Graduate School and Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
Past GRE Board Chair
What is “holistic admissions”? 

- What Criteria Are Considered? 
- Who Is Considering the Criteria? 
- In What Order Are Criteria Considered? 
- How Are Criteria Weighted Based on Goals?
Holistic practices can be embedded within each step of the admissions process
Step 1. Preparing for the admissions process

- Set goals and guiding principles.
- Structure processes to achieve your goals.
- Consider committee composition and training.

“We must commit to holistic evaluation to get a true sense of who an applicant is and can become.”

Janet Rutledge
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), and GRE Board Past Chair
Step 1. Preparing for the admissions process:
Set goals and guiding principles

✓ Define success and evidence of success.

✓ Set goals that align with the mission of the program.

✓ Establish guiding principles so all parties understand how the goals will be achieved. Specifics help clarify expectations.

✓ Once established, goals and guiding principles can inform every step of the process.

Setting Goals
A discussion guide to facilitate a conversation on your campus

Download here.
Poll #3

Is there any formal training for new people added to the admissions committee prior to beginning admissions deliberations?

A. Yes
B. No
Step 1. Preparing for the admissions process:
Consider committee composition and training

- Consider whether there is a balance of influence among team members.

- Ensure a variety of perspectives and experiences are reflected.

- Provide faculty opportunities to:
  - Learn about less familiar undergraduate schools.
  - Work with undergraduate students from underrepresented groups.

- Discuss or offer training about the role of implicit (unconscious) bias and how to avoid it.

Training the Committee
Cornell Graduate School provides an excellent faculty resource

Implicit Bias Resources
Webpage
Shares curated videos and links to other training materials

Visit here.
Step 2. Collecting applicant information

- Determine evidence needed to evaluate applicants.
- Ensure application explicitly requests it.
- Collect comparable information from all applicants.

“A complete assessment of each applicant is important to identifying the best graduate students for your program. Using GRE scores is essential in having a full understanding of the potential of each applicant.”

Maureen Grasso
Professor of Textile Sciences and Former Dean of the Graduate School, North Carolina State University, former Dean of the University of Georgia Graduate School, and Graduate Education Advisor with ETS
International students and admissions considerations

Degrees from Foreign Institutions

✓ Degrees considered acceptable by authoritative references such as *The International Handbook of Universities Yearbook* and other reputable publications.

✓ Transcript evaluation

Evaluating English Language Proficiency

✓ Use a standardized test that measures all four skills
  • Quality is key
  • Some provide speech samples

✓ Conduct in-person or video interviews

✓ Collect and review essays
Step 2. Collecting applicant information: Determine the evidence needed

Evidence should be broad in scope, drawing from:

✓ Personal Statement, Statement of Purpose, and résumé/CV

✓ Undergraduate GPA, major GPA and transcript

✓ Standardized assessments, such as the GRE® General Test.

✓ Personal attributes documentation, such as the personal statement and letters of recommendation.
## Application criteria purpose, benefits, drawbacks and mitigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UGPA and Transcript</th>
<th>GRE® Scores</th>
<th>Personal Statement</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Résumé/Research Exp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • specialized experience  
  • academic ability  
  • growth over time  
  • challenging coursework  
  • passion for subject  
  • well-roundedness  
  • cross-discipline interests | • cognitive skills  
  • graduate-level readiness  
  • objective benchmark  
  • equal opportunity  
  • research-based  
  • fairness reviews  
  • professional standards  
  • Board of grad deans | • passions  
  • personality  
  • potential | • third-party endorsement  
  • attributes  
  • ability to succeed | • practical application of classroom concepts  
  • specialized experience |
| **Purpose** | | **Benefits** | | **Drawbacks** | **Mitigation** |
| | | • humanizes objective, quantifiable info  
  • unique experiences, backgrounds, POVs  
  • intent and suitability | • positive bias  
  • courtesy v sincerity  
  • some student authored  
  • reviewer bias | • influenced by socioeconomic factors  
  • can be incomplete due to relevancy questions |
| | | • perceptions dependent on reviewer factors  
  • subject to explicitness of instructions | • overweight / cut scores  
  • prep investments vary  
  • group score differences | • consider relevant scores  
  • go holistic  
  • use scorecard or rubric  
  • use alternate processes |
| | | • perceptions dependent on reviewer factors  
  • subject to explicitness of instructions | • prep investments vary  
  • group score differences  | • gather input on application directions  
  • have multiple reviewers  
  • use descriptive rubric  |
| | | • positive bias  
  • courtesy v sincerity  
  • some student authored | • overweight / cut scores  
  • prep investments vary  
  • group score differences | • pay special attention to language, examples  
  • articulate dispositions  
  • provide a standard form  |
| | | • overweight / cut scores  
  • prep investments vary  
  • group score differences  | • pre-job investments vary  
  • group score differences  | • understand impact of privilege  
  • use explicit directions  
  • use consistent format |

- **Mitigation:**
  - examine in context  
  - read between the lines  
  - look for evidence of excellence, growth  
  - consider relevant scores  
  - go holistic  
  - use scorecard or rubric  
  - use alternate processes  
  - gather input on application directions  
  - have multiple reviewers  
  - use descriptive rubric  
  - pay special attention to language, examples  
  - articulate dispositions  
  - provide a standard form  
  - understand impact of privilege  
  - use explicit directions  
  - use consistent format
What is a Personal Statement and what is it used for? The Personal Statement is an opportunity for you to provide additional information that may aid the selection committee in evaluating your preparation and aptitude for graduate study. Here are some example prompts used at UCLA:

- Are there educational, personal, cultural, economic, or social experiences, not described in your Statement of Purpose, that have shaped your academic journey? If so, how? Have any of these experiences provided unique perspective(s) that you would contribute to your program, field or profession?

- Describe challenge(s) or barriers that you have faced in your pursuit of higher education. What motivated you to persist, and how did you overcome them? What is the evidence of your persistence, progress or success?
Socioeconomic advantages extend to virtually all admissions measures:

- Undergraduate institution attended
- Undergraduate grades
- Letters of recommendation
- GRE scores
- Admissions essays

Don’t let misconceptions impact your judgment

- A recent study from the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford analyzed the content of admissions essays and concluded “Results show that essays have a stronger correlation to reported household income than SAT scores”

Make decisions based on the data you need to be informed, but understand how socioeconomic status impacts application criteria used to evaluate applicants.
Step 3. Reviewing applicant files

✓ Adopt a truly holistic review process.
✓ Consider multiple criteria.
✓ Explore alternate processes.

“A holistic process inclusive of both objective and subjective measures is inherently fairer and more respectful to applicants, while also helping programs better meet their needs.”

Michael Cunningham
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research and Professor of Psychology and Africana Studies at Tulane University, and Chair of the GRE Board Services Committee
Step 3. Reviewing applicant files: Explore alternate processes

- Determine alternate review processes to avoid the framing bias.
- Consider withholding information about UGPA and GRE scores until personal statements are reviewed or interviews are conducted.
- Ensure all participants review application materials in the same order and completely independently.

Alternate Methods
Georgetown University School of Medicine on mitigating bias.

Unconscious Bias in Interviewing and Letters of Recommendation

View here.
Step 4. Selecting applicants

- Balance quantitative and qualitative measures.
- Consider composition of the class as a whole.
- Use a scorecard or rubric for consistency.

"Making admissions decisions is an art and a science. Information about personal attributes and passions, found in personal statements and recommendations, serves as the art. Information about applicants' critical thinking skills, provided through GRE scores, serves as the science. Both are important."

JoAnn Canales
Dean Emeritus of Graduate Studies, College of Graduate Studies, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Senior Scholar-in-Residence Emerita, Council of Graduate Schools, and former GRE Board member
Poll #4

Do you have meetings prior to your admissions deliberations to discuss your rubrics and decide how the different pieces of the admissions portfolio will be weighted?

A. Yes
B. No
Step 4. Selecting applicants:
Use a rubric

✓ Use tools to help ensure that reviewers evaluate applicants consistently and in alignment with program goals.

✓ Give more points to information the program values more and fewer points to less important information.

✓ Recommend actions based on total score ranges.

Rubric Example
A sample scorecard with links to more examples

Download here.
Sample rubric for illustrative purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component &amp; Max Points</th>
<th>Points values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3 – 1 yr UG + work/internship research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 1 year of UG research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–1 – less than a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1–2 extra for publications, posters, awards, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>3 – very strong letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – moderately strong letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – below average letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – red flag in letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work exp./CV</td>
<td>2 – 2+ years related work exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 1–2 years related work exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 extra for volunteer work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG curriculum</td>
<td>1 – extensive science coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 extra for high UG challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGPA</td>
<td>4 – 3.7 to 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 – 3.4 to 3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 3.2 to 3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3.0 to 3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component &amp; Max Points</th>
<th>Points values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal statement</td>
<td>2 – suggests strong fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – suggests good fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 – unclear fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – poor fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 extra for hardship, disadvantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>2 – 164–170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 160–163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – less than 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Analytical Writing</td>
<td>2 – 5.0–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 4.0–4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – less than 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Verbal Reasoning</td>
<td>1 – 150–170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 – &lt;150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score:</td>
<td>20–25 – Strong admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17–19 – Admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14–16 – Probable admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10–13 – Probable deny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–9 – Deny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Find several more examples [here](#).
Step 5. Evaluating the admissions process

✓ Evaluate outcomes data against inputs.
✓ Reflect on past students to gain insight.
✓ Understand typical reasons for dropping out.

“Be careful about placing blame for low completion rates on inputs considered during admissions. Completion is more often caused by what happens after enrollment, and programs and institutions can often influence outcomes by developing strong mentorship programs and a culture of inclusion.”

Carlos Grijalva
Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and Former Graduate Associate Dean at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Graduate Education Advisor with ETS
Step 5. Evaluating the admissions process: Measure outcomes

- Evaluate outcomes against admissions data to ensure desired goals are achieved.

- Look for patterns that can help refine admissions practices in subsequent cycles.

- If goals haven’t been met, review your strategies for recruiting and nurturing relationships.

- Consider doing a regression analysis using an appropriate sample size. This can help determine how well the various components can predict student success, however your program defines success.
Exercise care when comparing outcomes with inputs as many factors contribute toward whether a student is successful in a particular program.

Conduct exit surveys and/or interviews to consider changes the program or institution can make to avoid dissatisfaction.

Note that while GRE® scores cannot predict which students will drop out due to life circumstances, they are helpful in determining who has the reasoning, critical thinking and analytical writing skills needed for graduate-level study, and who is likely to struggle.
Why is dropout/completion so hard to predict?

Most students who drop out of graduate school do so for personal reasons, not because of weakness in the cognitive skills that the GRE® General Test can assess.
Holistic admissions best practices in a nutshell

Preparing for the Admissions Process
Set goals and guiding principles. Structure processes to achieve your goals. Consider committee composition and training.

Download: Discussion Guide

Selecting Applicants
Balance quantitative and qualitative measures. Consider composition of the class as a whole. Use a scorecard or rubric for consistency.

Download: Sample Holistic Admissions Scorecard/Rubric

Evaluating the Admissions Process
Evaluate outcomes data against admissions inputs. Reflect on past students to gain insight. Understand typical reasons for dropping out.

Download: Understanding and Improving Retention Rates

Collecting Applicant Information
Determine evidence needed to evaluate applicants. Ensure application explicitly requests desired information. Collect comparable information from all applicants.

Download: Benefits and Drawbacks of Application Components

Reviewing Applicant Files
Adopt a holistic review process. Consider multiple criteria and explore alternate processes. Ensure applications are evaluated consistently.

Download: Getting the Greatest Value Out of Test Scores

Access this infographic here.
“Navigating Holistic Admissions” digital guide

This robust resource provides research-based guidance, examples from programs, and downloadable content that can be emailed, printed and shared. The entire guide is also available as a PDF and a PowerPoint deck.

Resource: Navigating Holistic Admissions Digital Guide
Poll #5

Which, if any, of these skills/abilities are important for students to do well in your program? (Mark all that apply)

A. Critical thinking
B. Ability to clearly articulate a well-developed argument
C. Ability to analyze an argument by assessing its claims and logical soundness
D. Reading comprehension
E. Ability to analyze and draw conclusions from discourse
F. Data analysis
G. Ability to understand information from charts, tables, graphs, etc.
H. All of the above
GRE® Scores: Benefits and Limitations
What are the benefits of using GRE® scores?

✓ Helps identify which applicants are graduate-ready
✓ Enables applicants from different backgrounds to be compared fairly
✓ Balances out more subjective information
✓ Levels the playing field for applicants who aren’t as well resourced as their peers

See: Four Facts about the GRE® General Test.

“GRE Analytical Writing scores provide information about applicants’ ability to construct and evaluate arguments and articulate complex ideas. Programs can access applicants’ actual essay responses through ETS Data Manager. These responses are more authentic than personal statements, which are often coached and refined before submitting as part of the application.”

Steve Matson
Professor of Biology and Former Dean of the Graduate School, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Graduate Education Advisor with ETS
What are the limitations of using GRE® scores?

✔ Test scores can’t offer insight about all qualities or factors that may predict academic or career success.

✔ No single measure can represent a person’s potential, yet many programs use GRE scores as cutoff scores, thus disadvantaging some students.

✔ On average, members of different groups perform differently on the test, which can be addressed through holistic review.

See: www.holisticadmissions.org/be-informed/

“GRE scores are complex measures that are frequently used inappropriately. It is important for review committees to obtain training to better unlock the value of GRE scores.”

Bill Andrefsky
Edward R. Meyer Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Former Graduate Dean, Washington State University, and former graduate education advisor with ETS
Measurement nonprofit addresses misconceptions

Misconceptions about Group Differences in Average Test Scores

Posted: November 22, 2019

The recent request to the Regents of the University of California to stop using college admissions test scores pointed out the troubling reality that there are large score differences across racial/ethnic groups on college admissions tests. However, the letter reinforced two misconceptions about tests that need to be corrected. First, the letter claimed that differences across racial/ethnic groups in test performance signify test bias. Second, the letter claimed that the typical finding that students from high-income families obtain higher test scores, on average, than students from low-income families constitutes proof of test bias. These erroneous claims confuse correlation with causality.

Differences in socioeconomic status and quality of education exist across racial/ethnic groups in this country. Criticizing test results for reflecting these inequities is like blaming a thermometer for global warming.

For this reason, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014) explicitly point out that test fairness does not require equality of outcomes. As the Standards state “…group differences in testing outcomes should trigger heightened scrutiny for possible sources of test bias … However, group differences in outcomes do not in themselves indicate that a testing application is biased or unfair” (p. 54). Some examples of factors that may contribute to average score differences across racial/ethnic groups are disparities in school and community resources, teacher quality, course offerings, and access to cultural activities. The National Council on Measurement in Education is troubled by these inequities and would like to see educational assessments be part of the solution in resolving them. However, we note the disparities in test performance are caused by disparities in educational opportunities, and that group differences in college admissions tests do not equate to test bias. Rather than limiting the types of information college admissions officers can use, we encourage proper use and interpretation of all data associated with college readiness, and we acknowledge the importance of the information provided by college admissions test scores.

See NCME Statements
All components of the application have imperfections

Educational opportunities and life circumstances can have a substantial influence on all components of an application, including:

- Letters of recommendation
- Reputation of the undergraduate institution
- Personal statements
- Undergraduate GPA

Only GRE® Test Scores:

- Are backed by ongoing research
- Are overseen by a Board of your peers
- Meet and exceed industry psychometric standards
- Have processes to ensure they are as free from bias as possible

See: ETS Fairness

Source: gradeinflation.com
New research provides a blueprint for holistic review using GRE® scores

A 2019 study at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences concluded that:

1. It is the practice of using cut scores, not the GRE test itself, that disproportionately affects doctoral applicants from underrepresented groups

2. An admissions committee can mitigate GRE score variances between demographic groups

3. A multi-tiered holistic applicant review process can increase the diversity of the applicant pool without increasing the workload of the admissions committee

The report also provides a blueprint for institutions that want to implement a data-driven approach to assess applicants in a manner that uses GRE scores as part of the process.

Source: A Model for Holistic Review in Graduate Admissions That Decouples the GRE from Race, Ethnicity, and Gender
The GRE® General Test can identify students most likely to academically struggle

- Grades are ONE indicator of graduate school readiness
- You may not care if students have an A or a B average at the end of the first year
- But you might like to identify students likely to struggle so that you could provide extra services for them
- How might you select a test to identify potentially struggling students?

Source: Klieger et al 2014
What are the risks of eliminating the GRE® test from the admissions process?

• You are removing the only standardized, directly comparable measure of preparedness for graduate school from the admissions evaluation process.

• Applicants lose an opportunity to highlight strong scores and present themselves in the best possible light.

• Admissions committees are left completely reliant on trying to equate GPAs to compare across institutions and over time, coupled with the issue of grade inflation.

See: Eliminating the GRE® Test in Graduate Admissions Increases Barriers for Students
Diversity resources from schools and ETS

www.holisticadmissions.org/diversity-inclusion
## Your questions answered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the GRE tests valid and reliable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do some people say the tests are biased?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can an admissions committee mitigate GRE score variances between demographic groups?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will dropping use of the tests help remove barriers for people from underrepresented groups?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can dropping the tests help increase student diversity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What <strong>would</strong> help increase campus diversity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What exactly is holistic admissions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can using GRE scores as part of a holistic process help increase diversity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discover more at [www.holisticadmissions.org/be-informed](http://www.holisticadmissions.org/be-informed)
Video addresses how ETS reduces barriers for applicants, giving an overview of our:

- GRE® Fee Reduction Program
- Free GRE Test Prep
- Accommodations

Fairness 360 shares an overview of 19 ways that ETS lives out its commitment to fairness in six key areas

www.holisticadmissions.org/diversity-inclusion/breaking-barriers/
To get more information

- Holistic Admissions Strategies
  - Visit www.holisticadmissions.org

- GRE® Tests and Services
  - Visit www.ets.org/gre/institutions

- If you have questions:
  - John Augusto, ETS Graduate Education Advisor: jaugusto@holisticadmissions.org
  - Frankie Felder, ETS Graduate Education Advisor: ffelder@holisticadmissions.org
  - Dale Turner, Academic Partnerships: daturner@ets.org
  - GRE Help Line: grehelpline@ets.org
Questions?
Additional Information
Increasing Access and Equity for Applicants
Reducing barriers for applicants

The GRE® Program works to increase access, affordability and equity through these offerings:

- GRE® General Test at home
- Excellent free test prep
- GRE® Fee Reduction Program
- Industry-leading accommodations
- Feedback on test performance
Stay on course with the GRE® General Test at Home

The GRE General Test at home is offered 24/7. It’s identical to the usual testing experience in:

- Content
- Format
- On-screen experience
- Cost

And offers dozens of accommodations for people with disabilities and health-related needs.

“Students want to submit their GRE® scores in a timely manner to graduate programs seeking this source of objective and reliable information. The GRE General Test at home meets their needs.”

Fred Oswald
Professor and Herbert S. Autrey Chair in Social Sciences, Rice University, and Ad Hoc Member, GRE Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Learn more here.
Three ways applicants pay less — or nothing — to take a GRE® test

1. Apply
   for a 50% GRE® fee reduction voucher, which is available for individuals who can demonstrate financial need and for those who are unemployed and receiving unemployment compensation.

2. Receive
   a 50% GRE® fee reduction voucher, which ETS gifts to a dozen programs that serve students from underrepresented groups, first-generation college students, and students with financial need.

3. Receive
   a full or partial pre-paid voucher from any sponsoring program, organization or individual.

See GRE® Fee Reduction Program and GRE® Prepaid Voucher Service.
**GRE® Fee Reduction Program**

- Program began in 1971. In the past six years, 31,000+ GRE® Fee Reduction Vouchers were used.
- Year-over-year usage has increased as ETS has made vouchers available to more programs.
- Those who qualify also get free access to additional test prep ($100 value).

See [www.ets.org/gre/grefeereduction](http://www.ets.org/gre/grefeereduction)

**Programs that receive fee reduction vouchers annually from ETS**

- Admit.me Fellows – Added in 2022
- Charles B. Rangel Fellowship Program
- EducationUSA Opportunity Fund Program
- Gates Millennium Scholars Program
- i-Scholar Initiative – Added in 2022
- Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT)
- Management Leaders of Tomorrow
- Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research (U-STAR) Program
- National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science Program (GEM)
- NSF Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Program
- Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP)
- Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) Program
- Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
- The Beinecke Scholarship Program
- TheDream.US
- Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship Program
- TRIO Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
- TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program
Excellent, free test prep

POWERPREP® Online simulates the GRE® General Test. Two practice tests help test takers understand what's being tested, gain familiarity with question types and test functionality, and practice taking the test under timed conditions.

All Skills

Extra Math

• Math Review – 100-page refresher, including definitions, properties, examples and exercises with answers.
• Khan Academy® – For each Math Review topic, find links to instructional videos at Khan Academy.
• Math Conventions – Notations, symbols, terminology and guidelines.

Writing

The entire pool of GRE Analytical Writing tasks are available on ets.org/gre. The website also includes sample questions, scored sample essay responses, rater commentary, tips and more.

Subject Test practice books contain a complete test and answer key, plus test-taking strategies.
Advanced accessibility

- The GRE® Program offers the most advanced accessibility features and support of any testing program worldwide.
- ETS staff participate in the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) initiative that sets accessibility standards for use by the international community.
- The GRE® General Test includes accessibility features that enable test takers to use JAWS® and refreshable braille.
- Accommodations are also available for the GRE General Test at home and POWERPREP Online practice tests.

“When you’re blind, it’s like taking a test while looking through a pinhole... We needed to build an infrastructure that allows [test takers] to quickly understand what is on screen, and easily navigate between parts of a test question. When a blind test taker can come out of a room and say this was the best test experience they’ve ever had, that means we’ve accomplished something.”

Cary Supalo
Research Developer, Accessibility Standards & Inclusive Technology, ETS

Learn more
Test performance feedback – *GRE®* Diagnostic Service

- Insight into the test taker’s performance on the test questions in the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of the *GRE®* General Test, whether taken at a test center or at home.

- The service is free and includes:
  - A description of the types of questions the test taker answered right and wrong
  - The difficulty level of each question
  - The time spent on each question

See GRE Diagnostic Service