Policy Statement

Policy for Applicants for Graduate Admission: Degree and Non-Degree

The College of Charleston “seeks applicants capable of successfully completing degree requirements and pays particular attention to identifying and admitting students who excel academically. The College of Charleston serves a diverse student body from its geographical area and also attracts students from national and international communities.” This excerpt from the College’s mission statement embodies the overarching goals in graduate admissions processes and policies.

The Graduate School of the College of Charleston encourages applications from all academically qualified persons. Both quantitative and qualitative components guide each program in reaching their final decisions. The admissions committees for each program carefully weigh the applicant’s academic preparation (which includes grades, undergraduate coursework, and rigor of courses taken), GRE/MAT/LSAT/GMAT results, personal statements and essays, and academic writing samples. Special circumstances are considered and each application is reviewed and evaluated individually by admissions professionals within each program. There is no discrimination in the admission process based on the applicant’s gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, race, color, religion, national origin, veterans’ status, genetic information, or disability. Applicants who do not meet the individual program’s admission requirements may be considered for admission when there is sufficient evidence to suggest the ability to do satisfactory work at the graduate level at College of Charleston.

At the graduate level, “a candidate's acceptance into a graduate degree program is based primarily upon his or her previous academic record”. There are specific admission criteria for each graduate program that specify the minimum undergraduate GPA standards and other testing requirements. An at-a-glance spreadsheet of admission criteria is available to interested graduate applicants through the Graduate School website. Specific policies for each program are listed within that program’s section in the catalog.

Graduate Non-degree Admission:

Non-degree enrollment is also allowed for students who wish to enroll in graduate courses upon approval by individual graduate program directors. All students enrolling in graduate courses must
possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.

Graduate non-degree education admission (including professional development in education) requires a valid teaching certificate for admission.

**Graduate International Admissions:**

International applicants, being defined as anyone applying who is not a citizen of the United States, regardless of present residence, are required to provide documentation in addition to that required by each program. These documents include but are not limited to:

1) a copy of their current visa, when appropriate.
   a. An H-type or J-type visa
   b. A permanent residency card
   c. Documentation from the U.S. State Department regarding progress towards either a permanent residency card or naturalization proceedings.

2) an official copy of their transcripts.

3) an evaluation of all non-U.S. transcripts from an approved evaluation service. The list of approved services include:
   a. Global Credential Evaluators, Inc.
   b. Lisano International
   c. World Education Services, Inc.

4) an official copy of the applicant’s TOEFL or IELTS scores. This requirement may be waived for:
   a. applicants from countries where English is the first language, such as the U.K. or Australia
   b. applicants who received their degree from or have attended a U.S. university for at least one year. Grades received at the U.S. institution will have an impact on the decision to waive the TOEFL or IELTS score.

5) Applicants seeking an F-1 visa, must provide a certificate of finances that gives specific information on their ability to meet the financial demands of tuition, fees and cost of living at the College of Charleston. The documentation to be provided includes:
   a. the certificate itself, completed and signed appropriately by all involved parties.
   b. bank statements, wage statements, and/or letters from the bank confirming the ability of the applicant to pay.

**Graduate Transfer Credit:**

Master's candidates may transfer graduate credit taken from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association to The Graduate School of the College of Charleston. The course must carry a minimum grade of "B" and must have been taken within six years of when the degree is conferred. Up to 12 credit hours may be applied; candidates should consult with individual programs for program-specific details.

The acceptance of transfer credit ultimately resides with the program director or admissions committee. Courses with grades of "S" or "P" are not transferable unless the student or department provides written documentation from the instructor(s) of the course, a department administrator, or
the registrar at the transfer institution that the "S" or "P" graded course was equivalent to at least a B grade.

The student assumes responsibility for initiating the request for transfer graduate credit in developing their program of study. An official transcript containing the requested transfer work must be on file in the Graduate School Office. If such work is shown on the transcripts provided in support of the original admissions decision to the Graduate School, a new record is not needed.

**Leave of Absence – Non-military:**

Graduate students must officially request a leave of absence. Those who have requested a leave of absence may return without additional review, with the approval of the program director, within one year of requesting the LOA. Beyond one year, the student must write a formal letter of petition to the Graduate School Dean and their program director asking to be reinstated; the program director and Dean must take into consideration the amount of time lost to the student as regards the time-limit-to-degree requirements specific to their program. Those who do not apply for an official leave of absence, if absent for more than one semester, must reapply.

**Leave of Absence – Military:**

The Graduate School Office will assist students who are members of the National Guard or Reserves ordered to serve in active military service, as well as military personnel currently on duty who are ordered away for an extended tour. (The Graduate School will extend this policy to students who may need to withdraw from classes or from the College because their spouse is called for active military duty. A statement regarding the necessity of such an action by the spouse will be required for the enrolled student’s record.) The College wants to offer every opportunity to these students to resume their academic pursuits. If courses were underway at the time of the call-up, then the College would like students to be able to complete them if enough of the coursework has been completed to make this feasible. Our sincere intention is to ensure that active military duty in no way impedes the student's academic record or costs the student financially.

Students who are called for active military service must provide a copy of their orders to the Graduate School Office, Suite 310 Randolph Hall, and complete a Leave of Absence form (attached). Once a copy of the orders is received, the Graduate School Office will:

1) Process an immediate withdrawal from all classes for the current semester if the student indicates this course of action on the LOA form
2) Grant an automatic Leave of Absence (LOA) for the student.
   a. Students who are in good academic standing will automatically be granted a Leave of Absence for up to three years – the time spent in military service will not count toward the student’s time-limit-to-degree requirement.
   b. Students who are on probation will automatically be granted a Leave of Absence for up to one year, but must meet with their program directors about their academic status and their academic plans upon return from active duty.
3) Notify Business Affairs of withdrawal because of military service. Business Affairs, based on the LOA and supporting documents, will credit the student account for the full amount of tuition and fees if the student withdraws from coursework. This may result in a credit balance, or for those students who have not paid the account in full, it may result in an
offset to the balance owed. Any credit balance will be refunded in accordance with financial aid policies where applicable.

4) Notify the Office of Financial Assistance of withdrawal because of military service.

Student Responsibilities:

1) Students must contact the Office of Financial Assistance immediately for clarification of their status if they have received financial assistance of any kind (loans, grants, scholarships, etc).

2) Students are expected to return to graduate school as soon as circumstances allow after release from duty, and they are encouraged to meet with their program director immediately upon returning to school.

Academic Dismissal – Re-admission Process:

Students who have been academically dismissed may apply for readmission after one calendar year, with the following conditions:

1) The student will provide a new statement of goals, which will address the issues that led to the dismissal, and the student’s plan to avoid further academic issues.

2) The program director and admissions committee, after approving the application for re-admission, will provide the student with an acceptance letter that provides specific parameters that must be met for successful completion of the student’s program:
   a. The specific courses required by the student to finish
   b. The specific grades that must be achieved in order to maintain a 3.0 GPA.
   c. A timeline for the completion of the program.

3) If the student is re-admitted to the program, he/she must meet with the program director and the associate dean of the Graduate School to review their acceptance letter, which must then be signed by all three participants in the meeting.

4) If a re-admitted student fails to meet the parameters of their re-admission, it is at the discretion of the program director to remove the student permanently from the program.

Financial Aid

Federal financial aid is only available to students in a degree-seeking status.

Distance Education

Students, who take courses via mixed modalities, including distance education and online courses, must meet all appropriate admission requirements. Admissions applications may be accessed and filed online or by mail, email or fax.

Risk Management Assessment

All applicants are required to answer questions relating to their criminal and disciplinary history, as outlined in College of Charleston, Policy 8.1.5 “Policy on admitting applicants for enrollment with a criminal or disciplinary history.”

Personal Information Protection

Online applications are managed online by CollegeNET, Inc. in Portland Oregon. A list of the firm’s Security FAQ and their security certification are attached (CollegeNET Security FAQ.pdf).
Privacy and Security Policies


Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Graduate School of the College of Charleston;

Purpose/Reason for the Policy

To obtain approval of policy by appropriate authorizing authority. This policy reflects procedures and processes already in place and listed in the current catalog.

Departments/Offices Affected by the Policy

Graduate School of the College of Charleston

Procedures Related to the Policy

These policies relate to the procedures for admitting graduate students to the College of Charleston.
Related Policies, Documents or Forms

Policy 8.1.5 Admitting Applicants for Enrollment with a Criminal or Disciplinary History.

Review Schedule

| Issue Date: 03/06/2013 | Next Review: 03/06/2018 |