

Admission Status Categories

An applicant who is admitted to a degree level and program can enroll only in the program of admission. Before registering for classes, the individual can subsequently apply to a different level and/or degree program. However, once the student enrolls in classes he/she must remain in that program for one semester before applying to another degree program. The decision to admit is valid for three terms with the admitting department's approval (including term of admission) to allow for the student's initial enrollment in classes. Students may defer enrollment for up to two semesters following an admission decision. Students must contact the Graduate School by email (gradapps@grad.msstate.edu) to change the enrollment term. If the student does not enroll for three semesters, however, the student must submit a new application, statement of purpose, application fee, and other program-required documentation. If the student attended another university in the interim, transcripts may also be required.

Regular Admission

Any person granted regular admission for graduate study must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution. However, an applicant with a bachelor's degree from a non-accredited institution may request consideration from the Dean of the appropriate college before applying for admission. In either case, the Graduate Coordinator of the academic program may prescribe specific undergraduate level courses as prerequisites to admission.

In addition to holding a bachelor's degree, an applicant who receives regular admission status must satisfy one of the following graduate admissions requirements based on the level of work completed at the time of the application.

1. 2.75 GPA on the last two years (approximately 60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) OR
2. 2.75 GPA on 30 or more semester hours of undergraduate credit attempted **after** earning a bachelor's degree OR
3. 3.00 GPA on 9 or more graded graduate credit hours (courses taken as Pass/Fail or for S/U grades do not apply). For students with less than 9 hours of graded graduate coursework, No. 1 or 2 would apply. OR
4. An earned master's or higher-level degree.

An applicant not satisfying the minimum grade point average for his/her level of work may be admitted to a degree program provisionally if recommended by the program's Graduate Coordinator. The minimum acceptable undergraduate GPA for admission as a provisional student is 2.50 (see Provisional Admission below).

Meeting minimum requirements for admission does not guarantee admission into a program. Each applicant competes with all other applicants for availability in each program. Exceptions to these requirements for either "regular" or "provisional" admission must be made by the appropriate Academic Dean who will notify the Office of the Graduate School in writing.

Graduate programs may have requirements for regular admission in addition to the University requirements described above. For this information, see the specific program section in this publication.

Provisional Admission

An applicant who has not fully met the GPA requirement stipulated by the University may be admitted on a provisional basis. A provisionally-admitted student is eligible for a change to regular status after receiving a 3.00 GPA on the first 9 hours of graduate courses at Mississippi State University (with no grade lower than a C, unless one course retake is approved per the Graduate Course Retake Policy). The first 9 hours of graduate courses must be within the student's Program of Study. Courses with an S grade or transfer credits cannot be used to satisfy this requirement. If a 3.00 is not attained, the provisional student shall be dismissed from the graduate program at the request of the program Graduate Coordinator and Academic Dean. *Academic departments may set higher standards for students to fulfill provisional requirements.* A student admitted with provisional status should contact the Graduate Coordinator for the program's specific requirements. While in provisional status, a student may not be funded through state sources but may hold an assistantship or be funded through non-state funded sources (e.g., extramural grants).

Contingent Admission

A student may be admitted with a contingency, meaning a requirement for admission is lacking (e.g., a bachelor's degree). Applicants currently earning their bachelor's degree are automatically admitted contingent. In this case, when the Office of the Graduate School receives the final transcript verifying the degree was awarded, the admission contingency is removed. University contingencies are monitored by the Graduate School and typically involve receipt of transcripts, confirmation of degree conference, and standardized test scores.

A prospective international applicant who:

- is sponsored by his/her government, is funded for one year of English language study, and has a low or no English language proficiency score (TOEFL/IELTS); OR
- a student meeting all programmatic admission requirements, has a low or no English language proficiency score (TOEFL/IELTS), and was admitted by a program at MSU

may be admitted contingently by the Graduate School. The student must meet all other requirements for admission to graduate study in an academic department at MSU. Once a student is contingently-admitted without the required English language proficiency score (TOFL/IELTS), the student cannot submit a new score and cannot be enrolled in any other classes by virtue of a hold placed on their account. Contingently-admitted students must complete one year of ESL study, satisfy all contingent admission requirements, and demonstrate English language proficiency to be eligible for regular admission status. Contingently-admitted students can be admitted only for a fall semester to ensure completion of the required ESL course(s) within one academic year.

An applicant may also be admitted with one or more departmental contingencies, requirements the department expects the student to fulfill by a certain deadline. Programmatic admission contingencies are monitored by the program and typically involve prerequisite courses or another similar requirement.

Contingencies are expected to be cleared within one academic year. Students may request additional time to clear their contingencies in writing to their Graduate Coordinator with approvals from the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head if applicable, and Academic Dean. The request is then submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. Students that fail to clear their contingencies by the deadlines stated by the program of the University shall be dismissed.

Unclassified Admission

An applicant wishing to take graduate-level courses may be admitted as an unclassified graduate student. This process requires submission of the unclassified graduate application, a statement of purpose, an official transcript verifying the applicant's bachelor's degree, and a \$60.00 application fee. International students must also submit an English language proficiency score for admission. Current and retired Mississippi State University faculty are not required to submit a transcript in order to enroll in a graduate course as an unclassified graduate student.

Once admitted unclassified, the student may not apply for a graduate degree program for the same semester. Up to 9 hours of graduate work earned while unclassified may be transferred to a degree program with the approval of the graduate program. The College of Business does not allow unclassified graduate students to take courses in their college. Students must be accepted to a business degree program prior to registering for courses in that college.

There are limitations to financial aid for students in unclassified status. Applicants seeking financial aid should contact the Student Financial Aid Office (<https://www.sfa.msstate.edu>).

Once admitted, an unclassified graduate student must request permission from the instructors of each course or the Graduate Coordinator of the program offering the course(s). The instructors or Graduate Coordinator will notify the appropriate departmental representative(s) to enter a major override for each approved course, and the department will release the student for registration. The student can then register online.

Military Deferment of Admission

A military student who has been admitted to a degree program but has not yet registered and who subsequently receives deployment orders may request deferment of admission. The new date of admission may be up to two years from the date of release from active duty.

Faculty Admission

An MSU faculty member may elect to earn an advanced degree while employed at MSU. These individuals should discuss their plans with their supervisor prior to applying for admission. Admission will follow the same processes and review procedures described above.

Senior Citizen Admission

Legal residents of the State of Mississippi age 60 or older may enroll tuition-free in a maximum of 6 hours per semester (fall, spring, or combined summer term) with a maximum of 18 credit hours per calendar year. Course registration is available to senior citizens on a first-come, first-served basis, space permitting. Enrollment in courses offered for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree is not permitted. The non-refundable application fee is required with the graduate application.

Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Courses

An undergraduate student at Mississippi State University, or any university with which MSU has an agreement, may take up to 15 graduate credit hours. Programs may have limits for the maximum number of combined credit hours (graduate and undergraduate) a student may enroll in during a given semester. The student should meet the GPA requirement for regular admission to graduate study at MSU. The Provost must approve any exceptions to these requirements.

In order to register for the course(s), the student must submit the Undergraduate Request to Enroll in Graduate Courses form for approval to the instructor(s) of the graduate course(s), the student's undergraduate Department Head and Academic Dean, and the Department Head and Academic Dean of the graduate program offering the course(s). If approved, the department offering the coursework will issue a level override. The completed form is provided to the Office of the Graduate School.

Accelerated Program

A number of academic departments offer an Accelerated Program. These programs permit highly qualified undergraduate students to earn graduate credit during the final year of undergraduate studies. Upon completion of the credits, the students also earn undergraduate credit for the same course(s). University minimum requirements for students to be accepted into an Accelerated Program are a GPA of 3.00 or higher on all undergraduate work and a minimum of 60 hours toward a Bachelor's degree. The academic department may have additional requirements such as the completion of specific courses or a statement of professional interests and goals. See Accelerated Programs (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/2019-20/graduate/colleges-degree-programs>) for a list of these departments and more complete information.