

# Faculty Senate

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## Graduate Admissions Committee

### 2011-2012 Annual Report

DATE: August 7, 2012  
 TO: Executive Committee, Faculty Senate  
 FROM: Leah Minc, GAC Chair  
 SUBJECT: 2011-2012 Annual Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee  
 ATTACHMENT: Annual Activity Audit Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee (2010-2011)

Committee members: Elaine Pedersen, Mark Needham, Ricardo Mata-Gonzalez, Wade Marcum, Michael Vardaro  
 Ex-Officio: Rosemary Garagnani, For Director of Admissions

The Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) operates under the Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate and under the policies and procedures formulated by the Graduate Council. The role of the GAC is to review files of Graduate School applicants who do not meet the minimum admission requirements. In the case of domestic applicants, the requirement is a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in the last 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours of the first undergraduate degree. For international students a similar GPA requirement applies, plus either a TOEFL score of 550 (213 on the computer version of the test) or a degree completed at an accredited institution that offers all course work in English.

Cases not meeting these minimum requirements may be appealed to the GAC for review, with one of the following outcomes: admit regular, admit conditionally, admit provisionally, or deny admittance. For a conditional admit, the standard condition used is that students must earn a 3.0 (B) or better in each course of the first 18 hours of graded graduate credits; provisional acceptance usually involves additional coursework as imposed by the department. If students are denied admittance, they may still complete 24 hours of upper division or graduate work, earning a 3.0 or better to be accepted if the department approves the acceptance. Students who use this avenue are not reconsidered by the GAC unless they wish to petition based on less than 24 hours of completed work.

In 2006, the Faculty Senate voted to streamline the appeals process for those applications not meeting the minimum requirements. This policy change established that, if a department petitions for conditional admission for an applicant with a GPA of 2.75 or above, the admissions office will automatically grant the conditional admission as requested. If regular or provisional admission is requested, the file will go to the GAC for review. Similarly, if a department petitions for any form of admission for an applicant with a GPA below 2.75, the file will be reviewed by the GAC and a final admission decision will be made.

In reviewing appealed cases, the GAC considers a range of predictors for success in graduate school, including standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, and academic performance or work experience since the applicant earned a bachelor's degree. Each file is reviewed by at least two members, and all files are then discussed by the entire committee. In evaluating the file materials, the Committee looks for substantive and compelling evidence indicating that the applicant will succeed at the graduate level to justify waiving the admission requirements.

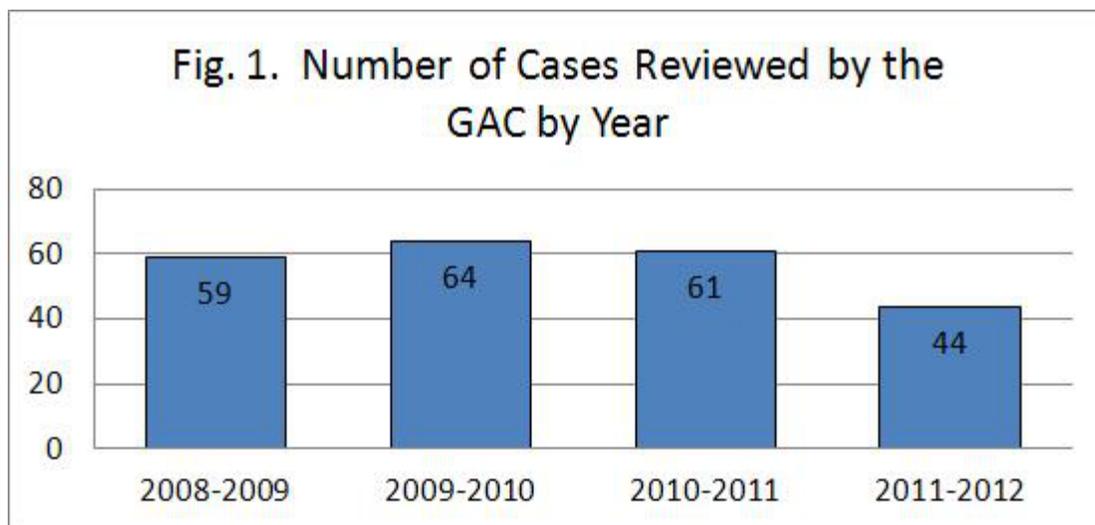
During the period 11 August 2011 through 20 June 2012, the Committee met 17 times on essentially a biweekly basis (see [Committee annual audit](#) prepared by the Graduate School Admissions). The GAC considered 44 cases (see Table 1). Of these, 32 (73%) were domestic and 12 (27%) were international. Seven cases (16%) were admitted with no conditions, 28 cases (64%) were admitted with conditions, 3 cases (7%) were admitted provisionally, and 9 cases (20%) were denied admission. Three applicants were granted simultaneous conditional and provisional status.

**Table 1. Outcomes of GAC Meetings Over the Past Four Years**

GAC Decision	2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Admit Regular	7	11.9%	6	9.4%	8	13.1%	7	15.9%
Admit Conditional	40	67.8%	50	78.1%	39	63.9%	28	63.6%
Admit Provisional	10	16.9%	6	9.4%	10	16.4%	3	6.8%
Deny Admittance	2	3.4%	4	6.3%	8	13.1%	9	20.5%
Defer Case	0	0.0%	2	3.1%	2	3.3%	0	0.0%
Total Files Reviewed*	59		64		61		44	

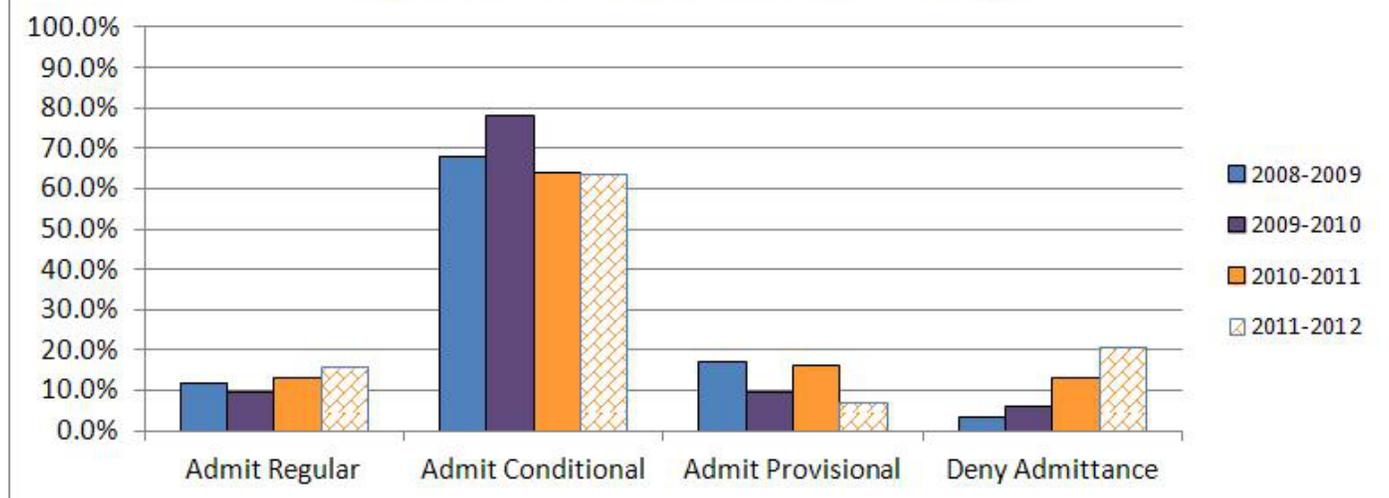
\*Some applicants were granted simultaneous conditional and provisional admittance, such that percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Overall, the number of cases reviewed by the GAC was down significantly this past year, to roughly 70% of the prior two academic years (Fig. 1). Anecdotally, the decline may reflect something of a "buyer's market" in graduate admissions currently. Committee members felt that, in their own departments and schools, fewer marginal or questionable cases were referred to the GAC because of the large numbers of well-qualified students applying to the Graduate School.



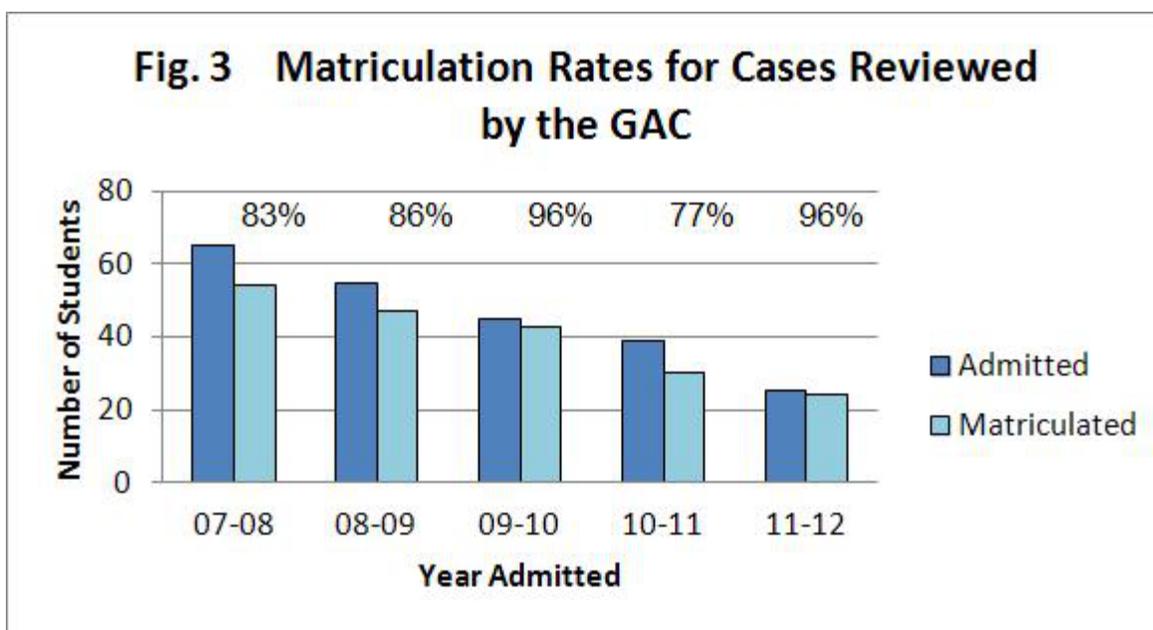
Among the cases reviewed by the GAC, the relative percentage of admission decisions has varied slightly from year to year (Table 1 and Fig. 2). Most applicants are accepted conditionally, but there has been an increasing rate of rejection over the past four years, from 3% in 2008/09, to 20% in 2011/12 (Fig. 2). The net result is a significant decline in the number of students admitted through the GAC review, from 65 in 2007-2008, to only 25 in 2011-2012 (Fig. 3).

**Fig. 2 GAC Decisions 2008/09 - 2011/12**



The matriculation and success rate of applicants admitted through the GAC review process is tracked by the Graduate School. Based on data from the past five academic years (2008-2009 through the present), at least three-quarters of students admitted through the GAC review process do enroll for graduate study; in four of the last five years the matriculation rate was significantly higher (83-96%). Matriculation rates do not appear to differ strongly by admission status; overall, 76% of regular-admit students and 80% of conditional-admit students enrolled in graduate programs at OSU.

**Fig. 3 Matriculation Rates for Cases Reviewed by the GAC**



As a group, applicants reviewed by the GAC do well in graduate school. Of the 192 students enrolled over the past five years following GAC review, only nine (< 5%) did not maintain a cumulative GPA above the required 3.0. Of these failures, eight had been conditionally admitted, suggesting that this group may be academically at risk. However, the mean GPA of conditional-admit students is actually somewhat higher than of regular-admit cases (3.60 vs. 3.43; see Table 2), suggesting that the majority of these students do make good on the opportunity offered to them by OSU.

**Table 2. Mean GPA by Admission Status and Year**

Year Admitted	Mean GPA	
	Regular	Conditional
2008	2.95	3.67
2009	3.46	3.60
2010	3.63	3.59
2011	3.10	3.48
2012	3.09	3.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.60</b>

Of final note is that this past academic year was a trial period for a policy change approved by the Graduate Council in May, 2011 regarding students holding international professional degrees. Foreign students who followed a professional track in lieu of a four-year baccalaureate degree had been automatically disqualified by the Graduate School. The Graduate Council therefore put into place an appeals process for these students:

*"Graduate programs with an international applicant who does not have a four-year bachelor's or an appropriate alternative degree, e.g. a professional degree of at least four years duration, but who meets all other requirements for admission as a graduate student at OSU, may appeal the admissions denial to the Graduate Admissions Committee. The Graduate Admissions Committee, based on evidence presented by the graduate program, will determine if the student has sufficiently demonstrated preparedness to enter a graduate program and may provide an exception to allow admissions. The Graduate Council will review this policy in one year with input from the Graduate Admissions Committee."*

It had been anticipated that this policy would significantly expand the scope of cases reviewed by the GAC, with a concomitant increase in workload, but this was not the case. Only four files in this category were reviewed in 2011-2012; all four were admitted as regular students. Two students were foreign professionals applying to the MS program in Veterinary Science, one applied to the MPH program, and one to the PhD program in Chemistry. Although these four cases were relatively clear-cut, the GAC would like to strongly encourage referring departments to more fully document these cases in the future. Specifically, we ask that departments provide the data necessary to substantiate "the student's ability to communicate proficiently in writing, their preparation to conduct research, and their development of critical thinking", as required by the Graduate Council.

No procedural changes to the way the Committee operates were implemented this past year.

The committee would like to thank Assistant Dean Rosemary Garagnani for her technical expertise and assistance, particularly in the area of international applications, and for facilitating the GAC meeting schedule.

cc: Rosemary Garagnani, Assistant Dean, Graduate School  
Dr. Brenda McComb, Dean, Graduate School

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