

From: Julio Vergara and Robin Garrell

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Subject: Revised Minimum GPA for Graduate Admission & Gender Questions on Graduate Application



Graduate Council
Graduate Division

August 16, 2018

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

From: Julio Vergara, Chair, Graduate Council
Robin L. Garrell, Vice Provost for Graduate Education & Dean, Graduate Division

Please forward this information to faculty and staff involved in graduate admissions. Thank you.

Dear Colleagues,

In Spring 2018, the Graduate Council approved two policy changes related to graduate admissions that will become effective Fall 2018 and impact applicants applying for Fall 2019.

1. A minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA will be required for admission to graduate programs at UCLA. The revised standard now reads: **A minimum grade point average of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale), or its equivalent, in undergraduate study or in graduate level study, if any, is required for graduate admission.**

For reference, the current standard, published in the *Guidelines for the Graduate Admissions Process and Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions* Section 500.4, states, "By Graduate Council action a minimum grade point average of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale), or its equivalent, in upper division undergraduate study *and* in graduate level study, if any, is required for graduate admission. Upper division undergraduate study includes the last 60 semester units or the last 90 quarter units." If an applicant does not meet this standard but has completed at least one year of a master's or doctoral program at an accredited university, earning an average grade of B or better (3.0 on 4.0 scale), or if the candidate has been awarded a master's or doctoral degree by a regionally or internationally accredited university, the DSA process for admitting the student by exception is waived.

The revised policy removes the distinction between upper division and lower division coursework, and instead use a 3.0 cumulative (overall) GPA as the minimum standard for graduate admission. Additionally, the word *or* is substituted for *and* to accurately reflect how graduate work is currently considered in determining eligibility for admission.

This change will not impact programs whose GPA requirement is already higher than the university-wide minimum. We expect the change to provide multiple benefits, among them:

- *Improve the applicant experience and streamline the admissions process*, as applicants and staff will no longer need to manually calculate the upper-division GPA.
- *Make the admission standard consistent for graduates of non-US and US-based institutions.* Because most international universities do not distinguish between lower and upper division coursework, and because their grading scales vary widely, UCLA currently uses the overall GPA to determine eligibility for graduate study at UCLA for applicants who earned their degrees abroad, but the upper division GPA for those who earned degrees in the U.S. A consistent standard will now apply to all applicants.

- *Align UCLA's standard with that of 8 other UC campuses.* All but UC Santa Cruz will now have the same minimum GPA requirement.

We will continue to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to apply and urge departments to consider their applications thoughtfully. As a reminder, the overall GPA is just one component of a holistic process for evaluating applications. There may be applicants who have stronger academic records later in their undergraduate career or who have strong records from community colleges. To gain a more complete picture of who our applicants are and facilitate faculty review, we will continue to ask applicants for information about their community college experience, and will also invite them to indicate their major GPA and upper division GPA if available. These data are provided on some transcripts and may be particularly valuable for assessing preparation for graduate study. In cases where the overall GPA does not meet the university standard, but the program would like to recommend admission based on other evidence of aptitude for graduate study, the Dean's Special Action (DSA) process can still be used to request admission by exception. Students who performed better in upper division and major-field courses, but whose overall GPA falls short of 3.0, may be excellent candidates for graduate study at UCLA.

2. The gender identity questions on the application for graduate admissions have been revised. The University of California Office of the President recently provided guidance on a set of four gender-related questions that they had asked UC campuses to include on their application for graduate admission. In light of that guidance, the UCLA Graduate Council has approved removing a poorly worded question that asked about gender expression. The Council also approved adding "decline to report" as a response option for the remaining three questions.

The following three questions will remain on the application. Answering these questions is optional.

1. How do you describe yourself?
Response options: female; male; trans female/trans woman; trans male/trans man; genderqueer/gender non-conforming; different identity; not applicable; *decline to report*
2. What sex were you assigned at birth, such as on an original birth certificate?
Response options: female; male; not applicable; *decline to report*
3. Sexual Orientation: Do you consider yourself to be:
Response options: bisexual; gay or lesbian; heterosexual or straight; not listed above (please specify); not applicable; *decline to report*

Applicants' responses to these questions will not appear in the application materials available for faculty review. Any information that applicants provide will be used only for institutional research and reporting purposes.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact your admissions representative in the Graduate Division at (310) 206-3411.

With best regards,

Julio Vergara
Chair, Graduate Council

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Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Dean, Graduate Division