
Admission to Graduate Programs

Admission Requirements

All applicants to individual graduate programs at JMU must first satisfy the general application requirements of The Graduate School. These are

- Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university.
- Satisfactory grade point average.
- Satisfactory test scores from a recognized standardized test, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or Miller Analogy Test (MAT). Consult the individual programs for specific entry test requirements.
- Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended. NOTE: Students may not substitute experiential learning for required academic credit.

An application is not considered complete until all required credentials and supporting documents have been received by The Graduate School. Prospective students must submit their applications and supplemental materials online. Applications that are not completed within 90 days of initial receipt will not be processed.

In accordance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools guidelines, graduate programs must establish both qualitative and quantitative requirements that result in the admission of students whose educational preparation indicates the potential for a high level of performance. Admission procedures include the requirement that an applicant submit, as part of the formal application process, evaluations by professionals in the field as to the readiness of an applicant for graduate work and, if appropriate, credential evaluations. Standardized test admission criteria for each graduate program are established by the faculty responsible for instruction in that program. Contact the program directly or see the Web site for specific requirements.

General Application Procedures

Prospective students must submit their applications online through The Graduate School Web site at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/prospective/>. Students who need a paper format due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services to determine their eligibility for accommodations in the application process.

JMU does not allow students to apply to more than one graduate program per application form. Information regarding financial aid may be accessed online at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/finassist.shtml> or <http://www.jmu.edu/finaid>. Class schedules are available online at <http://www.jmu.edu/registrar>.

The current graduate catalog may be purchased from the JMU Bookstore or accessed online through The Graduate School Web site at <http://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/08>.

The following information must be submitted online:

- Official graduate application form
- \$55 nonrefundable fee¹

¹ Paper applications require a \$65 fee. Graduate applications will not be processed without application fees. Application fees cannot be waived, except for McNair Scholars. Payment must be made online.

The following information must be sent to The Graduate School:

- Official transcripts sent directly from all previously attended institutions.
- The official standardized tests scores (GRE, GMAT, etc.), sent directly from the testing center.

Application Deadlines

The Graduate School has a rolling admission policy. However, individual graduate programs may have different deadlines. Refer to specific academic programs for details. If no deadlines are given by academic units, applications should be submitted by the following dates for the best opportunity of admission:

Summer session – February 1

Spring semester – September 1

Fall semester – May 1

International Student Applications

JMU encourages applications for graduate study from qualified international students. To assure that the university qualifies with the U.S. government as an educational institution serving international students, certain criteria must be met.

Initial inquiries for international admissions must be directed to The Graduate School. Correspondence with particular departments or program coordinators is strongly discouraged. Applicants residing outside the United States are encouraged to allow 12 months between application for admission and the requested enrollment semester.

In addition to the general application requirements of The Graduate School, all international applicants applying for admission to a graduate program must:

- Have the necessary ability and educational background to benefit from experiences in this institution.
- Demonstrate proficiency in English sufficient to carry a full program of graduate study through submission of a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Examples of acceptable scores include 570 on the paper-based version and 88 on the internet-based version. For more information, visit <http://www.toefl.org>.

- Have all funds necessary for expenses during the entire period of the student's stay without resorting to employment while in the United States. The Financial Declaration form is accessible at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/prospective/international.shtml>. See Page 27 for more information. The university has no financial assistance reserved exclusively for international students. International students are permitted to compete for assistantships with other graduate students.
- Submit a credential evaluation of the academic record to ensure that it is comparable to a U.S. baccalaureate degree. External evaluators are listed online at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/prospective/international.shtml>.
- An International Student Adviser's Report form must be completed if the applicant is currently in the US on a student (F-1 or J-1) visa and wishes to transfer his or her visa to JMU. This form is available online at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/international/>.
- Enter the United States on a valid student or other visa.

For further information regarding international student applications, contact:

International Graduate Admissions
The Graduate School, MSC 6702
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
(540) 568-5160
kilbywc@jmu.edu

<http://www.jmu.edu/grad/international/>

Requests for information concerning federal regulations, visa and health insurance should be directed to:

Director, Office of International Student and Scholar Services,
James Madison University
MSC 5731
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

<http://www.jmu.edu/international/intlstudents/>

Offer of Admission to The Graduate School

The Graduate School will send official written offers of admission to applicants who have been accepted. This letter specifies the effective date of admission (which normally coincides with the semester requested on the application) and the classification of admission being offered (unconditional, conditional or provisional). After being accepted into a graduate program, students can defer enrollment only with the written approval of the graduate coordinator of their academic program and The Graduate School. Under no circumstances may the deferral be for more than one calendar year.

The applicant must notify The Graduate School regarding accepting or declining the admissions offer at least two weeks prior to the start date of the semester in which he or she has been admitted. This allows the specific program to invite other candidates. A student who enrolls at another institution is considered to have declined the university's offer of admission. An applicant who has received an offer of admission but who has not responded by the deadline is considered to have declined the university's offer of admission and must submit a new application and fee to be reconsidered for admission at a later date.

Admissions Classifications

Applicants may be admitted to The Graduate School under three classifications: unconditional, conditional or provisional admission.

Unconditional Admission

Unconditional admission indicates that an applicant has met all the entry criteria of The Graduate School and the specific graduate program.

Conditional Admission

Conditional admission indicates that the graduate program has identified specific conditions that must be met before the applicant attains unconditional admission status.

Individual graduate programs determine the conditions of a conditional acceptance and decide when the conditions can be modified or removed. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her adviser when the conditions of acceptance have been met. The adviser or graduate coordinator then contacts The Graduate School indicating the change of status. While applicants are encouraged to attain unconditional acceptance as soon as possible, some graduate programs' conditions often cannot be completed until just before graduation, e.g., teacher licensure or competency in a foreign language(s). Master's and Educational Specialist students have a maximum of six years and doctoral students have a maximum of eight years to complete their graduate programs. All students must attain unconditional status prior to program completion.

Provisional Admission

Provisional admission indicates a probationary status; applicants who have not met all of the requirements of the graduate program to which they are applying may be granted admission under a provisional status as prospective candidates for a degree. Such students must have the removal of provisional conditions as a primary objective. An applicant may be admitted to a graduate program under provisional status if

- the previous academic record is weak,
- prerequisite course work is insufficient, or
- the applicant has majored in another field and has not yet clearly demonstrated abilities in the proposed new field.

The requirements for advancement to unconditional status are specified in each applicant's provisional admission letter. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her adviser when the conditions of acceptance have been met. The adviser or graduate coordinator then contacts The Graduate School indicating the change of status.

The Graduate School determines if graduate credit earned while enrolled in a provisional status is acceptable based on the recommendation of the academic unit head. A student is limited to nine hours of graduate credit in this status. Regulations concerning unsatisfactory progress apply to this classification. (See Unsatisfactory Progress, Page 22.)

Appeal of Admission Decision

Although the official letter indicating an applicant's admission classification or denial of admission into a program emanates from The Graduate School, all admission decisions, including the denial of admission to a program, are made by the reviewing faculty of the program to which the student applies. As such, any appeal of an admission decision, including denial of admission, must be directed to the individual graduate program.

Change of Program

Admission to The Graduate School and a graduate program does not entitle a student to transfer to a program in another academic unit, as defined by The Graduate School.

Any student wishing to change graduate programs must submit a new application for admission, application fee and any updated standardized test scores to The Graduate School. The student is responsible for meeting all academic unit requirements for the desired program.

Criminal Background Check

Programs may require a criminal history check as part of the final admissions process. The applicant should consult the program to which he or she is applying for more detailed information. Applicants are responsible for any fees associated with background checks.

Continuous Enrollment

All students enrolled in graduate degree programs must enroll each regular semester for a minimum of one graduate credit hour. This registration must continue with no breaks from enrollment in the first graduate program course to graduation. This policy does not include summer sessions.

Students should enroll in courses relevant to their graduate program to facilitate timely completion. If it is not possible to do so, however, The Graduate School has established a one-credit Continuous Enrollment course, GRAD 597. The tuition for this course is \$50.00. No grade will be assigned for this course. For more information, refer to Page 15.

Time Limitations

Master's and Educational Specialist Students

Master's and educational specialist students must complete all degree requirements within six years. Academic credit, including transfer credits taken before enrollment in the graduate program, completed more than six years before the date at which the master's or educational specialist degree is awarded may not be used to satisfy the degree requirements. Students may submit a written petition through their adviser, graduate program coordinator and academic unit head to The Graduate School to receive extensions of time in the event of extenuating circumstances. Such requests must be received at least one month prior to the end of the student's original six-year time limit.

A student whose status is deactivated, but later is reactivated through reapplication to The Graduate School, may not count the six-year time limit as beginning on the date of reactivation.

Doctoral Students

Doctoral students must complete all degree requirements within eight years. Academic work, including transfer credits taken before enrollment in the graduate program, that was completed more than eight years before the date at which the doctoral degree is awarded may not be used to satisfy the degree requirements. Students may submit a written petition through their adviser, graduate program coordinator and academic unit head to The Graduate School to receive extensions of time in the event of extenuating circumstances. Such requests must be received at least one month prior to the end of the student's original eight-year time limit.

A student whose status is deactivated but later is reactivated through reapplication to The Graduate School may not count the eight-year time limit as beginning on the date of reactivation.

University Residency

Graduate students must register a local address with The Graduate School office prior to initial registration for classes. All changes in local address must be registered with the Office of the Registrar. This can be done through e-campus, online at <http://www.jmu.edu/registrar>.

Admission of Veterans

The Graduate School encourages veterans to apply for admission as full- or part-time students. For information, contact:

Veterans Coordinator
Office of the Registrar, MSC 3528
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
(540) 568-6569
<http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/>

Foreign Language

Passing a third year foreign language course, a reading knowledge of a foreign language or successful completion of a foreign language exam is required in those academic units which so specify. Consult the degree requirements of the academic programs for individual requirements.