

Graduate Degree Admissions

Subject:	Graduate Degree Admissions
Sections:	General ; Proficiency in English
Approving Authority:	Senate
Responsible Committee:	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
Related Procedures:	Procedure for Admission Application
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
Related Policies:	*
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1. General

The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) grants admission to graduate students, only on the recommendation of the program in which the applicant intends to pursue studies. Admission to graduate programs at Western University is competitive. Thus, applicants meeting or even exceeding minimum admission standards, as described below, are not guaranteed admission to any of Western's Graduate Programs. Admission decisions are not subject to appeal.

For purposes of admission, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) determines accreditation, degree, and standing equivalencies for all non-Western degrees.

For students undertaking a thesis as part of their degree requirements, the Graduate Chair must determine that an appropriate thesis Supervisor is available for the student's declared field of research before offering the student admission.

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For admission to Master's programs, applicants must possess a four-year degree from a recognized university or college. SGPS requires at least a 70% average in senior level academic courses, as determined by SGPS taken in the last two full-time years of the undergraduate degree. Equivalent qualifications may be considered based on the standards of the discipline or profession.

For admission to most Doctoral programs, applicants must possess a Master's degree or equivalent from a recognized university or college, and provide evidence of research potential. SGPS requires at least a 70% average in the Master's degree, as determined by SGPS. Some Western programs provide transfers from Master's to Doctoral degree status without achieving a Master's degree. Some Western programs offer direct entry to begin a doctoral degree without having a completed Master's degree. Consult the program's regulations for details.

For admission to an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD program, applicants must meet the entrance requirements of both the Home Program and Partnering Program and must be admitted by both the Home Program and Partnering Program. Applicants must contact the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) and complete the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Agreement form prior to the first term of registration but no later than two terms into the student's registration in the Home Program.

Individual programs commonly have higher admission standards than the minimum. Applicants should contact their program of choice to get information on its admission requirements.

2. Proficiency in English

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their proficiency in the use of the English language by a satisfactory* achievement within the last two years in one of the following:

- The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). iBT (internet-Based Test): The minimum acceptable score is 86, with no individual score below 20.
- The International English Language Testing Service (IELTS Academic). The minimum acceptable score is 6.5 out of 9.
- The Duolingo English Test. The minimum acceptable score is 115.
- The Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL Assessment). The minimum acceptable score is 60.
- Western English Language Centre. The requirement is successful completion of the High-Advanced level.
- Fanshawe College's EAP Program. The requirement is graduation from Level 10, English for Academic Purposes, with a minimum 80% in all components.

*Programs at Western may require a higher minimum score than those listed above.

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Applicants who are required to present evidence of proficiency in English must make their own arrangements to complete one of the above tests or programs and to have the official results sent directly to SGPS by the testing agency.

Exemptions:

Applicants may request an exemption by contacting their graduate program(s) of interest.

For the French Studies program only, evidence of proficiency in English is a degree requirement but not a requirement for admission.

Last Reviewed: June 6, 2025