

Graduate Admissions and Academic Policies

Dr. Barbara Moore, Director of Graduate Studies

GRADUATE PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Office of Graduate Studies assures that Mississippi University for Women provides high quality graduate programs that will enable students to have the resources, content knowledge, and skills in research, technology, and critical thinking necessary for intellectual growth and leadership in their profession.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

Graduate degree programs are offered in Alternative Teacher Licensure (MAT), Differentiated Instruction, Educational Leadership, Gifted Studies, Health Education, Nursing, Physical Theatre, Reading/Literacy, and Speech-Language Pathology. Graduate courses are numbered 500 or above. Students may enter these courses by applying for admission to Graduate Studies.

GRADUATE ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Admission packets and other information regarding graduate programs may be obtained from the MUW Office of Graduate Studies, 1100 College Street, MUW – 280, Columbus, MS 39701-5800 or by downloading forms from our website www.muw.edu/gradstud/. Applicants will be notified periodically by postcard (see below) of the status of their application. Official letters of notification will be sent to all with completed applications when a formal decision is made.

Applicants who have been admitted and choose not to enroll in coursework but wish to keep their records current should submit a written request to the Office of Graduate Studies, indicating that they want their application to be kept on file for one calendar year following the term of admission. Students who have not enrolled in coursework for a semester need to notify the Office of Graduate Studies in writing that they wish to continue in their program so that their files can be re-activated. They also need to provide the Office of Graduate Studies with any updated personal information, such as a change of address. Files of students who are admitted but not enrolled in coursework will be maintained by the Office of Graduate Studies for one year. At that time, students will be notified by letter that their files will be purged unless other arrangements are made.

An undergraduate student at MUW who has an overall 3.0 GPA and is within nine hours of graduation may receive written permission from the appropriate coordinator/director to take up to six hours of graduate courses. The student must maintain a 3.0 GPA while taking these courses.

GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for full admission to MUW Graduate Studies include the following:

- A completed Graduate Application form.
- Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work from each institution attended, including transcripts from MUW. These transcripts must include verification that the applicant has received a baccalaureate degree from an accredited four-year institution.
- A minimum 3.0 overall GPA (based on a four-point scale) for undergraduate studies.
- Official scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Test scores on the GRE may not be more than five years old at the time of application.
- Three letters of professional recommendation stating the applicant's qualifications for graduate work from persons (excluding graduate faculty) who have personal knowledge of the applicant's academic/work performance.
- An immunization form showing proof of two doses of measles vaccines and one of rubella. Both measles vaccines must have been given after the applicant's first birthday. There are exemptions from the measles vaccination which include the following: a birth date prior to January 1957, documentation from a physical that the applicant has had measles or has a tested immunity to the disease, documentation of life-threatening allergy to this particular vaccine, and/or entering a MS public or private secondary school since 1993. All students, regardless of age, must show proof of one rubeola vaccination or a blood test revealing immunity to the disease. MUW graduates may have already satisfied this requirement.
- A \$25.00 application fee (Checks should be made payable to MUW Graduate Studies).

All application materials are reviewed and considered in admission decisions. Individual programs may have additional program requirements, such as GPA, letters of recommendation, GRE scores, and admission deadlines.

Conditional Admission:

An applicant who has a GPA that is less than 3.0 or low GRE scores may be admitted conditionally. Criteria that are considered for conditional admission may include the GPA for their last 60 hours. Applicants admitted conditionally may remove the conditional status by maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA with no grade below a B during their first nine hours of graduate study. After successfully completing nine hours of graduate study, students who have been admitted conditionally may send a letter to the Office of Graduate Studies requesting that their application be reviewed for full admission to that program. Their request will be forwarded to the appropriate graduate program for consideration. Graduate credits earned while a student holds a conditional status may count toward the degree program. Students admitted conditionally must maintain a 3.0 GPA, with no grade below a B, or they will be dismissed from graduate studies and will not be allowed into any graduate program at MUW. Students admitted conditionally are not eligible for financial aid.

Non-Degree Admission:

Non-degree-seeking students are those who do not wish to pursue a graduate degree. Non-degree status is usually reserved for applicants who already are practicing professionals in the field but who wish to take one or two courses for professional development. Non-degree students may be permitted to take up to six hours of courses on a space-available basis and upon receipt of the following:

1. An application for admission.
2. A \$25.00 application fee.
3. Official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate work. These transcripts must include certification that the applicant has received a baccalaureate degree from an accredited four-year institution.
4. Certificate of immunization for measles and rubella. (See general admission requirements.)
5. Written permission from the coordinator/director of the graduate program which is offering the course. All courses at MUW will be blocked to non-degree-seeking applicants except for the course that has been approved.

Non-degree students who decide to apply for a degree must notify the Office of Graduate Studies in writing and must meet all admission requirements for that program. With the approval of the program director/coordinator, students may be allowed to count their six credit hours toward a degree program, provided they have made a grade of A or B in the courses.

Provisional Admission:

Applicants may be admitted provisionally if they have not submitted documentation of all required materials by the deadline for admission into that program. Applicants who have been admitted provisionally may take up to nine credit hours during the semester in which they have been admitted. Students admitted provisionally must provide all necessary documentation during their first semester of graduate study to continue in the program. Students admitted provisionally are not eligible for financial aid.

Students Enrolled in Graduate Programs at Other Institutions:

Applicants who are unconditionally enrolled in graduate programs at other institutions may take a course in a graduate program at MUW with the following documentation:

1. A letter from an advisor at the institution in which the applicant is enrolled stating that the applicant is a student in good standing and that the applicant has permission to take the requested course.
2. Written permission from the appropriate program coordinator/director
3. Proof of Immunization
4. An official transcript
5. A check for \$25.00

Cross-Registered Students, who are enrolled fulltime at another institution that has a written joint-enrollment agreement with MUW, may take designated courses in a graduate program. These students must be admitted to graduate studies programs at both institutions. Students admitted fulltime at their home institution will pay fees at that institution. Students not admitted fulltime will pay fees at both institutions. Cross-registration is an option only for spring and fall semesters.

Post-Master's Admission

Students who are not pursuing a graduate degree but are enrolled in a post-master's program of study are required to complete the official admission process. Students who already possess a master's degree may exceed the six-hour limit for non-degree students.

Second Master's Degrees

Graduate students pursuing a second master's degree at MUW may use credit for courses earned from the first MUW degree if the credited course work is a requirement of both degrees and if the student earned a grade of B or better in the first attempt.

Continuous Enrollment

Students who wish to return to a graduate program within a year after withdrawing from classes will not need to re-apply for graduate study or pay another fee. However, the student will have to complete a new application form to update personal data and provide transcripts for any classes that were taken at another institution in the interim.

Students who wish to return to a graduate program a year or more after withdrawing from classes will have to re-apply for admission to that program. Re-admission will not be automatic.

Students who have not been continuously enrolled and wish to change from conditional admission to full admission need to submit another application and pay another fee.

Fees

Fees for undergraduate and graduate courses are based on the level of the student, not the level of the course. A graduate student taking a course would pay graduate tuition.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Program in Master of Arts in Teaching must fulfill the following:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Receive passing scores on Praxis I and Praxis II (Content Area Only),
- C. Have 21 hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in the content area of licensure (must have grades of C or above).
- D. Earned minimum score on the admission rubric.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN GIFTED STUDIES

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Program in Gifted Studies must fulfill the following:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Have a current Teaching License.
- C. Earned minimum score on the admission rubric.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Program in Differentiated Instruction must fulfill the following:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Have a current Teaching License.
- C. Earned minimum score on the admission rubric.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN READING/LITERACY

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Program in Reading/Literacy must fulfill the following:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Have a current Teaching License.
- C. Earned minimum score on the admission rubric.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH EDUCATION

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Program in Health Education must fulfill the following:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Possess a Baccalaureate degree, preferably in a health related area, from an accredited four-year institution,
- C. Interview with the Program Coordinator,

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Students applying for admission to the Graduate Program in Speech-Language Pathology must satisfy the following requirements:

- A. Meet all criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Complete prerequisite undergraduate content courses if entering without an undergraduate major in Speech-Language Pathology.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN NURSING

Students requesting admission to the Graduate Nursing Program must meet the following requirements:

- A. Meet criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Hold a BSN degree from an academic institution with national and/or regional accreditation,
- C. Hold an unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse (RN) in Mississippi or a Compact State,
- D. Have practiced a minimum of two (2) years as a registered nurse,
- E. Have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale,
- F. Show evidence of professional leadership and foundational research skills (transcript, publication, or documented experience),
- G. Have credit in an undergraduate statistics course with a minimum grade of C,

- H. Complete a personal interview with Graduate Nursing faculty,
- I. Meet clinical prerequisites:
 - 1. Physical exam,
 - 2. All immunizations required by the University,
 - 3. Hepatitis immunization or signed waiver statement,
 - 4. Current CPR Certification,
 - 5. Criminal background check (passed),
 - 6. Malpractice insurance as a nurse practitioner student,
 - 7. Completion of MUW workshop: OSHA Universal Precautions (offered at orientation).

POST-MASTER'S (MSN-RN) CERTIFICATE

- A. Meet criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Hold a MSN degree from an academic institution with national and/or regional accreditation,
- C. Hold an unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse (RN) in Mississippi or a Compact State,
- D. Complete a personal interview with Graduate Nursing faculty,
- E. Complete clinical prerequisites:
 - 1. Physical exam,
 - 2. All immunizations required by the University,
 - 3. Hepatitis immunization or signed waiver statement,
 - 4. Current CPR Certification,
 - 5. Criminal background check (passed),
 - 6. Malpractice insurance as a nurse practitioner student,
 - 7. Completion of MUW workshop: OSHA Universal Precautions (offered at orientation).

POST-MASTER'S (MSN-NP) CERTIFICATE

- A. Meet criteria for admission to Graduate Studies,
- B. Hold a MSN degree from an academic institution with national and/or regional accreditation,
- C. Hold an unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse (RN) in Mississippi or a Compact State,
- D. Complete a personal interview with Graduate Nursing faculty,
- E. Hold current national board certification as a nurse practitioner in a specialty other than the intended plan of study,

F. Meet clinical prerequisites:

1. Physical exam,
2. All immunizations required by the University,
3. Hepatitis immunization or signed waiver statement,
4. Current CPR Certification,
5. Criminal background check (passed),
6. Malpractice insurance as a nurse practitioner student,
7. Completion of MUW workshop: OSHA Universal Precautions (offered at orientation).

**MASTER'S DEGREE IN NURSING ADMISSION
DATES/PROCEDURES**

Admission to the Graduate Nursing Program is competitive. Decisions regarding admission are made during the months of April and May. In order to be considered for admission at this time, candidates must have completed the application process by April 1, including the submission of official transcripts from all colleges attended verifying completion of all prerequisites, three written letters of recommendation, an official copy of the GRE score, and a \$25 application fee. The student must also complete a scheduled interview with Graduate Nursing faculty. Transfer students are considered for admission only as seats become available (See Graduate Nursing Program Student Handbook).

ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students must meet the same admission standards required of other applicants. All transcripts, diplomas, and certificates of work must be certified and translated in English. In addition, each international applicant must be proficient in the English language at the time of admission. An official test score of at least 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) must be received from the Educational Testing Service. The Test of Written English may also be required. Applicants must submit an official letter of financial backing. International students interested in applying for Graduate Studies should contact the Office of Admissions, International Programs Office, MUW Box 1613, Columbus, MS 39701 USA.

APPLICATION TO CANDIDACY

All graduate students must apply for candidacy upon completion of nine semester hours of graduate coursework. To initiate the application to candidacy, students should meet with their faculty advisor. Admission to Graduate Studies does not qualify a student as a candidate for an advanced degree. Candidacy depends upon approval of a written request for admission. All students desiring admission to candidacy must meet the following conditions:

1. Completion of all requirements for full admission status to Graduate Studies and to a specific program,
2. Completion of a minimum of nine semester hours of graduate credit at MUW with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on coursework,
3. Submission of the completed application for admission to candidacy to the Graduate Program Coordinator/Director in which the student is enrolled,

Admission to candidacy must also be approved by the Program Coordinator/Director, the Department Chair, the College Dean, and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students will receive written notification of admission to candidacy.

GENERAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

To complete a program of study in Graduate Studies, the requirements listed below must be followed:

Hour Requirements

All semester hours in a student's program of studies for the Master's Degree must be completed in courses numbered 500 or above.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit may be accepted for transfer. However, at the time the coursework was completed, the transfer institution must have been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or a regional accrediting association. No course will be accepted for transfer in which the student has received less than a B.

Residence Requirements

All coursework except the six hours of transfer credit must be completed at MUW.

Correspondence Study

No Master's Degree credit may be earned by correspondence study.

Workshop Credit

Credit for coursework completed in a workshop may or may not be accepted.

Course Load

The minimum load for a full-time graduate student is nine semester hours; the normal full-time load is twelve semester hours. Students must have written permission from the appropriate program coordinator/director to exceed thirteen semester hours in the regular sessions or six semester hours in a single summer session.

Time Limitation

A student must complete his or her Master's Degree within six years from the date of his/her first enrollment in the program.

Thesis Option

Information about the thesis option can be obtained from the coordinator/director of the program in which the student is enrolled.

Comprehensive Examination

Each student must pass a comprehensive examination covering his or her major field as a requirement for the Master's Degree. The comprehensive examination may be written and/or oral and must be completed at least ten days before the date of graduation.

Participation in Graduation

Students planning to complete their degree requirements in August may participate in graduation if they have no more the thirteen hours to complete.

SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS**Grading System and Grade Requirements**

Graduate degree credit is granted only for graduate level courses in which the student earned an A, B, or C. To remain in good standing, the student must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA on all graduate courses attempted. No more than six semester hours of graduate credit evaluated as C may be applied toward a Masters degree.

Grade of I

For credit in a graduate course, the work must be completed by the end of the following term (including summer), or the Incomplete (I) automatically converts to an F. Thesis research is the only exception to the incomplete policy.

Dismissal from Graduate Programs

Unsafe, unethical, illegal, or unprofessional conduct is cause for dismissal. Students dismissed for these causes will not be eligible for readmission to any graduate program at MUW.

Academic Expulsion from Graduate Programs

A student who does not maintain a 3.0 overall GPA will be placed on probation. If the student on probation fails to get a 3.0 in the probationary semester, the student will be removed from the graduate program and will not be allowed to enroll in any graduate program at MUW.

A student excluded from the program for academic reasons may request a review of his/her status through the Director of Graduate Studies.

Withdrawal from Graduate Programs

Students choosing to leave a Graduate Program and enroll as an undergraduate must submit a letter to the Graduate Office stating their intentions.

Withdrawal from the University

A student may withdraw from the University by completing the appropriate paperwork with the Dean of the appropriate College. The designation of W or WP/WF is made according to the academic calendar.

Readmission to Graduate Programs

Application for readmission may be made only once, and the student will be held to the requirements effective at the time of readmission.

GRADUATE GUIDELINES: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Mississippi University for Women is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Students enrolled in Graduate Programs at MUW agree to uphold the highest standards of honesty. Violation of the Honor Code (Current Student Handbook) is subject to disciplinary action. The Graduate Council will serve as the reviewing body. For a full account of MUW's Academic Dishonesty policies please see Academic Policies and Procedures in this Bulletin.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Mississippi University for Women offers a comprehensive program of financial aid to assist Graduate students. The following federal and institutional programs are available.

1. Federal Perkins Loans (formerly NDSL),
2. Federal Stafford Student Loans (formerly GSL),
3. Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans,
4. Federal Work Study,
5. Graduate Assistantships,
6. Graduate Scholarships.

SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

Graduate Studies currently offers financial aid/scholarship assistance in the following forms:

1. Graduate Assistantships,

2. Scholarships may be awarded for up to one-half tuition but are not guaranteed. A new application must be submitted each semester. Scholarship assistance shall be limited to fees for courses numbered 500 and above and for no more than the total hours required for completion of the designated degree. Scholarships cannot be awarded until a student has completed all requirements for admission to Graduate Studies. Students who are currently on academic probation are not eligible to apply. If the student withdraws from classes after receiving graduate scholarship assistance, that financial aid assistance will be automatically terminated for those classes and must be repaid by the student before reapplying for further Graduate assistance. The student must submit the form at least two months prior to the registration day of that semester for which he/she is seeking financial assistance.

Graduate students who wish to apply for graduate assistantships and/or graduate scholarships must contact Graduate Studies Office for applications and information.

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

Mississippi University for Women accepts the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as application for all types of federal Title IV financial aid. This packet is available through MUW Financial Aid Office. This application can also be accessed and completed on the World Wide Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Graduate students must list MUW (002422) on the application to insure that the MUW Financial Aid Office receives notification of their interest in attending.

Deadlines

Graduate students who wish to apply for federal assistance are encouraged to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) early to insure the availability of funds at registration. The MUW financial aid office deadline to receive notification of a Graduate student's application for federal assistance is April 1 if applying for Fall admission and October 1 if applying for the Spring.

Eligibility

Graduate students who wish to apply for assistance under the federal programs listed in this section must meet the following criteria to become and remain eligible:

- Be fully admitted to a degree granting program,
- Be enrolled at least half-time (six graduate hours) per semester*,
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen,
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress,
- Be free of encumbrances resulting from the overpayment of any SFA grant or loan,

- Be free of defaults on education loan,
- Avoid exceeding annual or aggregate loan limits,
- Agree to use federal student funds solely for educational purposes,
- Apply for financial assistance each year.

**Note: Nine graduate hours are considered full-time for graduate students; however, graduate students must enroll in at least six graduate hours to be considered half-time and receive federal aid. Only graduate level courses will count toward financial aid eligibility.*

Award Notification

As soon as each student is awarded student aid funds, the financial aid office will mail an Award Notification. Please review the Award Notification carefully. To ensure the processing of the loan applications, all students must complete, sign, and return the Acceptance Form that is enclosed with the Award Notification. Additional documents may be required. The student must also read, sign, and return a copy of the Conditions for Receiving Financial Aid Notice that is also enclosed with the Award Notification.

Written correspondence will be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service to the student's mailing address on file in the Financial Aid Office. The student is responsible for updating address information.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Mississippi University for Women, as required by federal regulations, monitors minimum standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (S.A.P.) as it relates to each student's eligibility to receive federal student aid funds, including grants, loans, and work-study.

In general, MUW must measure each student's progress by using the criteria listed below:

Qualitative Standard:

Graduate students enrolled in a Graduate Program must maintain a cumulative MUW grade point average of 3.0. The MUW GPA requirements are determined by the university registrar and are subject to change. The MUW GPA calculation does not include coursework transferred from another institution.

If all other criteria have been met, students can regain eligibility for student aid funds once the MUW GPA requirements have been met. However, a successful academic appeal in which a student, who is otherwise suspended or dismissed, is allowed to register for classes does not imply the automatic reinstatement of student aid eligibility. Please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Process listed below.

Quantitative Standards:

1. Students working on a graduate degree at MUW must complete the degree within the timeframe allowed by the Graduate Studies program.
2. Excessive withdrawals and/or dropped courses indicate a lack of progression toward a degree. The student may not receive a W in more than 15 hours of coursework after admission into a graduate program.
3. Federal regulations require a student to enroll in a minimum number of credit hours per term in order to receive a federal aid disbursement. Federal student aid recipients attending MUW must enroll for at least six credit hours per term. Students who enroll in the minimum number of hours and receive a federal student aid disbursement must not drop below the six credit hour minimum prior to the last day to register (during the add/drop period) for both the Fall and Spring terms.

The qualitative and quantitative S.A.P. (Satisfactory Academic Progress) standards will be checked once per year, at the end of the spring semester, for students who enroll in any term during the previous summer, fall, and/or spring. Students who fail to meet any standard at that time will be suspended from receiving federal student aid funds beginning with the fall semester of the following academic year. However, the summer term immediately following the suspension will be a probationary period. If all other eligibility criteria have been met, students in this status may be eligible to receive student aid funds during the summer probationary term. Students who enroll for the summer school term and believe, as a result of the summer academic performance, that the S.A.P. standards have been met should contact the Financial Aid Office to appeal a suspension of their fall/spring eligibility.

All students who have been suspended from receiving student aid funds have the right to appeal. Please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Process listed below.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Process

Appeals of suspension of financial aid may be made on the basis of mitigating circumstances. Mitigating circumstances are those that have an effect upon the student's academic performance, that lie outside of the student's control, and that would not be likely to recur. Illness or injury of the student or death in the student's immediate family are examples of situations which could constitute mitigating circumstances. However, there is no circumstance that automatically qualifies a student for reinstatement of financial aid eligibility.

All appeals must be in writing and include the student's name, address, social security number (or Banner ID), telephone number, and all facts and documentation pertinent to the basis of the appeal. All appeals must be addressed to the Financial Aid Committee and received by the Financial Aid Office in Room 200 of Welty Hall, 1100 College Street MUW-1614, Columbus, MS 39701-5800 at least ten (10) class days prior to the last day to register during the applicable fall or spring semester and prior to registration day for each summer term. The Financial Aid Committee has authority over all appeals, and its decisions are final.

DISCLAIMER

The University reserves the right to change degree requirements as necessary without prior notice.