

# ADMISSION POLICIES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

## Criteria for Full Admission

All graduate applicants receive a holistic application review by the admissions committee in the program for which the application is received. Committees base their decision on the student's potential for attaining a graduate degree at Western. Applicants are evaluated according to criteria established by the specific graduate program. Evidence to demonstrate eligibility for acceptance may include previous academic achievement, rigor of academic history as shown by undergraduate grade-point average (recommended 3.0 on a 4.0 scale), graduate grade-point average (minimum 3.0 on a 4.0 scale), letters of recommendation, leadership potential, diversity of experience, supporting materials, and the depth of engagement in related professional activities. Details, including application deadlines, are listed on each program's website: Link to Graduate Programs page (<https://www.western.edu/school-graduate-studies/>).

## Criteria for International Admission

All international applicants seeking admission into a graduate program must follow the published guidelines for admission to their target program. Link to International Graduate Applicants page (<https://www.western.edu/international-graduate-students/>). Evidence to prove eligibility for acceptance includes official undergraduate and/or graduate college transcripts (translated into English by approved agency), a credential evaluation, and other supporting documentation as determined by the specific program. International students must demonstrate English language proficiency by submitting official TOEFL or IELTS results. Minimum scores on the TOEFL paper tests must demonstrate equivalency to the TOEFL iBT (internet based test). Minimum required iBT scores are: 20 for each of the four sub-tests (Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing), for a minimum total of 80. Minimum scores on the IELTS are: 6 for each of the four sub-tests (Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing), for a minimum total of 6.5 overall. Applicants from countries where English is the SOLE OFFICIAL language of instruction (Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Canada-except Quebec, England, The Gambia, Ghana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Scotland, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, Uganda, and Wales) are typically not required to submit TOEFL or IELTS results. For more information on TOEFL, please visit <http://www.ets.org/toefl> (<http://www.ets.org/toefl/>); and for IELTS, visit: <https://www.ielts.org/>. Applicants must demonstrate by a letter of financial support and bank affidavit (English translation) that a total sum in U.S. currency adequate to cover the first year of study is available.

## Criteria for Provisional Admission

An applicant who does not meet the requirements for full admission as a graduate student may be considered for provisional admission upon the recommendation of the respective program director and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Applications are evaluated according to criteria established by the specific graduate program. Requirements for admitting students provisionally, as well as tracking their progress and consequences for not maintaining adequate progress, are available on the website and in the catalog section for each program. A provisionally admitted student will have a maximum of one calendar year to complete any pre-requisite academic coursework. Each graduate program may

set additional timeline requirements. Link to Graduate Programs page (<https://www.western.edu/school-graduate-studies/>).

## Deferred Matriculation

A student who is admitted into a graduate program may defer matriculation for a twelve-month period from the start of the academic year of original admission. A student is allowed one such deferral, after which the student will have to reapply to the program. In order to hold a place in a graduate program for which a student has been accepted, the student must pay the non-refundable deposit as required by the specific program, which will be held by Western as a matriculation fee for one year. In the event that the student does not matriculate, this fee will not be refunded. If the student chooses to matriculate within one year of the original application, the original acceptance decision will stand except in extraordinary circumstances, such as criminal activity or academic dishonesty. A deferred student must submit any new transcribed coursework that has been completed within the deferral year before gaining full admittance into the program. Any exceptions to the deferred matriculation policy must be approved by the respective program director and Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Non-Degree Seeking Students

A qualified student may take 600-level graduate coursework as a non-degree seeking student without being fully and officially admitted to a degree granting graduate program. A non-degree seeking student must hold a conferred bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, gain written permission from the specific graduate program director, and approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies before taking any courses. An approved student must register for graduate courses through the Office of Graduate Studies. Enrollment in 600-level courses does not constitute or imply admission into a degree granting graduate program. To be formally accepted into a graduate program, the candidate must meet the program admission requirements and complete the full graduate program admissions process. It is not possible to take 600 level coursework for no credit or to audit the class for lower tuition rate. Non-degree students may take any number of credits, subject to approval by the specific program director, but, if subsequently admitted to a degree or certificate program, may only use up nine credits towards their graduate degree in that program.

## Transfer Credits

Western offers graduate level certificate programs and professional development coursework which may not be transferred into a program resulting in a degree. Courses in these programs are numbered at the 500-level.

A maximum of nine 600-level credits earned at Western as a non-degree seeking student may be applied toward a graduate degree at Western upon approval by the graduate program director and Dean of Graduate Studies. Each course must be completed with a grade of a B or above to apply toward graduate degree requirements.

A maximum of nine 600-level credits taken at Western as part of a master's degree program may be used to meet the academic requirements for a second master's degree in a related discipline with the approval of the graduate program director. This limit does not apply to courses completed for a Master of Arts in Creative Writing that are later applied toward the academic requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

Coursework completed more than five years prior to being admitted into the graduate program shall be evaluated by the graduate program director as to current relevance and applicability to the degree requirements.

Graduate credits taken from other accredited institutions may be transferred to the respective Western graduate studies program upon approval from the graduate program director and Dean of Graduate Studies. Transfer credits must be listed and approved by the student's academic advisor, approved by graduate program director and then submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Official transcripts showing successful completion of these credits each at a minimum of 3.0 GPA or equivalent, must be submitted to Western before the graduate degree will be conferred.

Graduate credits transferred must meet the following criteria:

- Earned at a regionally-accredited institution;
- Numbered at the graduate level and accepted as part of a graduate degree program at the sending institution;
- Earned at a minimum of 3.0 GPA or equivalent, as defined by the sending institution's official transcript;
- Earned within the past five years unless a department specifies otherwise;
- May not exceed nine credits.

## Auditing Courses

Students in good academic standing may broaden and deepen their educational experience by auditing courses. Auditing permits the student to attend a course without being required to complete exams and assignments. An audited course is not graded and does not carry academic credit, nor does it satisfy any degree or program requirement. Students auditing a course will receive a "No Credit (NC)" on their transcript. Audited courses are treated as part of a student's course load for the purposes of determining Western Colorado University course load limits only. Regular tuition and fees apply for audited courses, but audited courses are not eligible for financial aid. A student may audit no more than 6 credit hours per semester.

It is highly recommended that students considering auditing a course discuss this decision with their academic advisor and ensure that it will not disrupt the student's progress towards a degree or negatively impact their financial aid. Some courses are not conducive to auditing, and auditing a graduate course is on a space-available basis and requires approval from both the course instructor and the graduate program director prior to registration. The decision to audit a course must be made at the time of registration, and students may not change from audit to credit or from credit to audit after a class has begun.

## General Admission and Recruitment Policy

Western Colorado treats students ethically, respectfully and professionally in the marketing, recruiting, admissions and financial aid process so that students can make informed enrollment decisions about matters such as enrollment and financial aid without being subjected to high-pressure tactics from the institution or a related contractor, including but not limited to:

- a. Falsely claiming that enrollment spots are limited or taking advantage of students' lack of understanding to pressure students to enroll;

- b. Pressuring students to make an immediate financial aid decision;
- c. Engaging in repeated unsolicited contact.

Western Colorado University promptly honors any request from a student to remove that student's name from phone, email or other contact lists. Student information collected through any aspect of the institution's enrollment processes is maintained and protected as outlined in the institution's data privacy policy, which must be prominently posted on the institution's website.

Western Colorado University shall not induce or pressure a student to enroll by a specific deadline outside of the regular process of scholarship monies, institutional discounting, fee waivers, financial aid, other assistance or institution-branded gifts of nominal value.

In addition to a policy related to return of Title IV funds, the institution has a refund policy to assure that students receive a refund where appropriate if they withdraw from an academic term or from an institution according to policies set forth by the institution.

Western Colorado University does not otherwise engage in aggressive or deceptive recruitment tactics or conduct, such as may be defined and prohibited by federal regulations. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the following institutional acts or omissions:

- a. Obtaining students' contact information through websites that falsely claim to provide assistance with finding employment or obtaining government benefits;
- b. Discouraging students from consulting with parties unrelated to the institution prior to finalizing their decisions or commitments;
- c. Failing to timely respond in a timely way to students' requests for additional substantive information related to enrollment or loan obligations.

Western Colorado University will not use threatening, abusive, or manipulative language to influence a student's decision.

### Service Member Recruitment Policy

Western Colorado University will refrain from using high-pressure recruitment tactics such as making multiple unsolicited contacts (3 or more), including contacts by phone, email, or in-person, and engaging in same-day recruitment and registration for the purposes of securing Service member enrollments. Western will not reach out to Service members with non-essential communications more frequently than once a week. Western Colorado University prohibits high-pressure or aggressive recruitment of service members.