

Best Practices for Graduate Enrollment Management Professionals

This statement serves as a guideline to ensure that high standards are applied in the development of Graduate/Professional school enrollment management policies and practices.

Value systems, human resources, and belief in intellectual potential are integral to the fabric of higher learning. Graduate Enrollment Management professionals serve academic institutions in developing programs and activities related to the various areas within enrollment management, including recruitment, admissions, student services, financial aid and alumni relations. Fairness and non-discrimination are essential components of Graduate Enrollment Management. Therefore, the following best practices are recommended for professionals within enrollment management.

Graduate Enrollment Management

All Graduate Enrollment Management professionals should strive to:

1. Ensure that all policies are implemented fairly.
2. Ensure that all persons who are involved in any area within Graduate Enrollment Management receive proper training and current information regarding institutional policies and practices.
3. Treat each student as an individual in developing a fundamental educational plan.
4. Represent their academic institutions ethically and professionally in all interactions with prospective and current students, alumni, and colleagues.
5. Maintain prospective and current students' information in confidence and respect the private nature of these data consistent with federal, state, or local statutes.
6. Refuse unethical or unprofessional requests from agencies or organizations related to recruitment, program promotion, or acceptance of students. Refuse any remuneration from such groups or their clients.

I. Recruitment

It is suggested that professionals strive to:

Present their institutions accurately and comprehensively in all areas of communications including: written materials, social media, website materials, correspondence, presentations, and discussions with candidates, the public, media, and other interested persons. To the greatest extent possible, a professional's responsibilities are to:

1. State clearly and accurately the requirements for graduate/professional school admission, including any necessary forms, academic records, letters of reference, and standardized tests.
2. Share correct information about the admissions calendar, including application deadlines, decision and notification dates, deposit/refund policies, required candidate reply dates, and waiting list placement, as applicable.
3. Offer precise information about institutional costs, academically related opportunities for financial assistance, and general financial packages, including appropriate deadlines.
4. Use pictures and descriptions of the campus and surrounding areas that are current and realistic.
5. Provide accurate information about graduate student housing options, if available; and inform students of any special programs or support services.
6. Avoid any subjective or disparaging comparisons of graduate/professional school programs with similar offerings at other schools.
7. Establish appropriate policies which address the prospective student's rights to privacy during any pre-admission period.

8. Avoid making any guarantee of program placement to prospective students or any other person making an inquiry on behalf of a prospective student during any pre-admission period.
9. Periodically review all recruitment and promotional materials to ensure their accuracy, efficiency, and objectivity.
10. Define and publish policies and procedures for awarding credit and/or advanced standing in the institution's pre-admission information.
11. Seek to alleviate a prospective students' test-related anxiety through careful advising and by expressing concern for the whole student. Inform students about test preparation programs and discuss alternative approaches and available materials for assistance.
12. Publicize clearly any policies (such as admission, placement, or credit transfer) which relate to test results.
13. If requested, provide accurate information for previously enrolled classes of students only. A minimum to maximum score range of those accepted may be used as a reporting guidelines.

II. Admissions Procedures

Professionals whose responsibilities include or affect the acceptance of graduate/professional school students should strive to:

1. Appropriately carry out any assigned tasks related to admissions decisions, including proper notification to students about the outcome of such decisions, as applicable.
2. Accept and consider official only those transcripts issued by the registrar's office of the institution(s) or other agencies the student attends or has attended.
3. Inform prospective students promptly and in writing if they are clearly inadmissible.
4. Withhold any offers of admission if a prospective student has not submitted an application to the graduate/professional school program, submitted required credentials, or met admission standards established by the institution.
5. Establish waiting lists, when choosing to do so, which are: reasonable in length; maintained for the shortest possible periods of time; and not dependent upon a deposit being received nor an enrollment commitment being made until an official offer of admission is issued.
6. Inform students promptly about new or changed admission requirements, especially those which may adversely affect applicants who have complied with all necessary deadlines, made deposits, and met commitments according to the original information they received from the institution.
7. Encourage prospective students to expedite their responsibilities in the admission process, including: complying with requests for information in a timely way; and responding to institutional deadlines when required to do so, including housing reservations, financial aid arrangements, submission of health records, and course scheduling, as applicable.

III. Use of Standardized Tests in Graduate/Professional Admission

It is advisable to consider implementation of additional practices that eliminate discrimination, provide equal access, and treat tests as a single component of the admission procedure since test scores are not the sole measure of potential success. Professionals whose admission portfolios require consideration of standardized tests are advised to:

1. Use test scores and related data as discrete items and in accordance with the examiner's published and validated recommendations for their interpretation.
2. Provide prospective students with accurate and complete information about required standardized tests and their use in the admission process.
3. Use test scores along with other materials such as academic records, references, personal interviews, and any additional data when making acceptance decisions.
4. Ensure the periodic review of standardized tests used in the admission process at your institution.

5. Educate those involved with the acceptance of students as to the interpretation and use of test results.
6. Maintain the confidentiality of test scores.

IV. Financial Aid Policies and Procedures

Members will strive to:

1. Provide prospective students with factual information about their institution's costs and financial aid opportunities, programs, and practices.
2. Inform financial aid candidates about required forms and supplemental documents needed by the institution before a decision will be made.
3. Ensure that prospective students will not receive a financial aid offer unless the student has been admitted to the institution.
4. Make sure that each student receives notice of the financial aid decision prior to the admission deposit deadline.
5. State clearly any policies concerning the renewal of financial aid.

Revisited and approved by NAGAP governing board, 10/2009