



Graduate and Professional Student Senate
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**Graduate and Professional Student Senate
 GPSS Resolution 2021-22S
 Resolution to Abolish the Use of the GRE in Graduate Student Recruitment**

First Reading by GPSS:	Nov. 4th 2021
Second Reading by GPSS:	date
Staff Senate Review:	date
Faculty Senate Review:	date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	date
First Reading by University Council:	date
Approved by University Council:	date
Approval by University President:	date
Approved by Board of Visitors:	date
Effective:	upon approval

WHEREAS, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) has been shown to be a discriminatory and ineffective examination for selecting qualified graduate students, as shown in Appendix 1; and

WHEREAS, the GRE shrinks Virginia Tech’s talent pool for graduate students and perpetuates the marginalization of many graduate students who may not have access to the test for any number of reasons; and

WHEREAS, the GRE, as an expensive exam costing in excess of \$205 and an additional \$27 for each individual university to which scores are sent, creates an undue financial burden on many qualified, aspiring graduate students with little to no benefit in most cases; and

WHEREAS, this financial exclusion is particularly of note for international students, who often have exorbitantly expensive GRE testing facilities or lack access to the test all together; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, the GRE privileges english language skills and so potential candidates who are non-native english speakers are further discriminated against by the test. These discriminatory elements go against Virginia Tech’s global commitment as a land-grant institution and thus the GRE represents a threat to the institution’s values; and

WHEREAS, several peer institutions, such as Virginia State University, have removed the GRE altogether and many more individual programs across the country and within Virginia Tech (see

Appendix 2) have already recognized these problems and have elected to not require the GRE; and

WHEREAS, the graduate school of Virginia Tech does not require the GRE for its application process and as such there are no legal or institutional policy barriers to removing its requirement; and

WHEREAS, we worry that any attempt to preserve the GRE as an “optional” form of evaluation will de facto continue its role in the evaluation process and by extension lead to the discrimination we highlighted above, so we encourage the complete removal of the test in the admissions process rather than making it optional; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the use of the GRE or GRE subject test will be removed from the graduate admissions process across Virginia Tech by the time people begin applying for admission for academic year 2023-2024. The Graduate School will be responsible for maintaining compliance with this policy and *in extremely rare exceptions* where a department requires the use of a GRE subject specific test and can demonstrate sufficient equity procedures to offset its discriminatory tendencies, the graduate school will maintain an opt-in process for departments to utilize the GRE as an admissions metric (see Appendix 3).

Appendix 1: Article demonstrating evidence in support of the resolution

There has been a wealth of research on how standardized tests in general and the GRE specifically are discriminatory towards traditionally marginalized students. Below we submit one such article that demonstrates this fact for consideration because it is emblematic of the research as a whole. Additionally, it provides a nice, quick review of the literature on the topic.

Link: <https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7504-303a>

Citation: Miller, C., Stassun, K. A test that fails. *Nature* **510**, 303–304 (2014).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/nj7504-303a>

Appendix 2: list of graduate programs and their GRE requirements

Academic Program	Contact Email	GRE Waived?	Contingency
Aerospace Engineering	gradadvise_g@vt.edu	Yes	**will increase chances of admission and funding
Agricultural and Life Science	jeppone1@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Architecture	vaughan@vt.edu	Yes	School of Architecture + Design's Alexandria campus do not require GREs for MA or PhD
Architecture and Design Research	kedje@vt.edu	Yes/considering	Blacksburg campus reviewing on a case-by-case basis
Bio-Inspired Building	apearce@vt.edu	Yes/considering	Pending requirements of "parent" degree program
Biological Science	biologygrad@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Biological Systems Engineering	lizaa14@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Biomedical Engineering	antume3@vt.edu	Yes	Also waiving GRE for all accelerated UG/GR students applying starting Fall 2020 and from here on out
Building Construction Science and Management	jerro@vt.edu	No	includes MS-BCSM and PHD-EDP students.
Business Administration	mha@vt.edu	Yes/Considering	for the GMAT/GRE exams for 2021 applicants.
Business, Accounting and Information Technology	acis@vt.edu	No	GMAT is preferred
Business, Finance, Insurance, Business Law	crystalawan@vt.edu	Yes	*2021-2022 at this time
Business, Finance PhD	edelenr@vt.edu	Considering	
Business, Management	segiles@vt.edu	Yes	Only if requested directly by the applicant
Chemical Engineering	daneec@vt.edu	Yes	Fall 2021 applicants only
Civil Engineering	shmartin@vt.edu	Yes	**2021-2022 at this time only
Computational Tissue Engineering	dennie@vt.edu	Yes	
Computer Science Engineering	samanthap@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Creative Technologies	rcallah@vt.edu	Yes	including MA in Material Culture and Public Humanities
Dairy Science	bcort@vt.edu	Yes	
Education, Counselor Education	glawson@vt.edu	Yes	for PhD applicants for the upcoming cycle. This includes degrees in EDCL, EDCO, EDHE, ELPS, and EDRE.
Education, Curriculum and Instruction	nanaboden@vt.edu	Yes	PhD only
Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	nanaboden@vt.edu	Yes	PhD only
Education, Educational Research, Evaluation	bev@exchange.vt.edu	Yes	PhD only
Electrical Engineering	vlaura@vt.edu	No	
Engineering Mechanics	jetaylor2@vt.edu	Yes	
Entomology	ksheleor@vt.edu	Yes	**not a requirement
Environmental Engineering	shmartin@vt.edu	Yes	**only 2021-2022 at this time
Fisheries and Wildlife Science	rhmeyers@vt.edu	Yes	**No longer required
Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation	masmath5@vt.edu	Yes	
Genetics, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology	dennie@vt.edu	Yes	
Geosciences	aprinl@vt.edu	Yes	
Higher Education	nanaboden@vt.edu	Yes	PhD applicants only
Human Centered Design	ico@vt.edu	Yes	
Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise	infgrads@vt.edu	Yes	
Infectious Disease	ams@vt.edu	Yes	
Information Technology	vtmat@vt.edu	Yes	for 100% on-line graduate program only
Macromolecular Science and Engineering	msi@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Mechanical Engineering	megrad@vt.edu	Yes	Applicants cannot be considered for GTA funding without GRE scores.
Molecular and Cellular Biology	moborn1@vt.edu / silke@vt.edu	Yes	
Philosophy	tzagata@vt.edu	Yes	
Physics	gradphys@vt.edu	Yes	Both General and subject scores included
Political Science	jenkin04@vt.edu	Yes	GPA above 3.5 and students who already have a graduate degree and based on discretion
Public Administration and Public Policy	slsmith1@vt.edu	Yes/No	Not required for MPA, PHD program is NOT waived
Science and Technology Studies	slussere@vt.edu	Yes	
Sociology	sbel13@vt.edu	Yes	
Theatre Arts	theatreandscinema@vt.edu	Yes	Not required
Translational Biology, Medicine and Health	gunya@vt.edu/ingtyee@vt.edu	Yes	Waiving it for applicants
Translational Plant Science	dennie@vt.edu	Yes	
Urban and Regional Planning	ralphbu@vt.edu	Yes	Waiving for domestic and international applicants (application fee waiver included click here for more info)

Link:

https://graduateschool.vt.edu/content/dam/graduateschool_vt.edu/covid-faqs/120420-updated-gre-list.pdf

Appendix 3: Process for submitting justification for rare use of GRE in screening potential graduate students

The process for submitting justification for the GRE in rare exceptions will be decided by the Director of Admissions for the Graduate School in conjunction with their Northern Virginia counterpart. They will develop a form that departments can fill out as well as the criterion by

which the GRE is an acceptable entry document. The Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) will work under the director to develop these documents and procedures as well as establish best practices. The goal of this process is to develop best practices for departments to justify their use of the test if they choose to use it and to make the university norm not requiring the GRE and instead taking a more holistic approach to graduate admissions.

These guidelines should be developed by academic year 2022-2023 and implemented prior to the start of academic year 2023-2024. This resolution should be treated as the first step in reevaluating the graduate admissions process for its racial, class, gender, and disability politics to make it as inclusive and just as possible. Further, we should begin to examine undergraduate admissions processes and the discriminatory nature of other standardized admissions tests, such as the SAT, to become a more equitable institution.