

MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Advisors; Chairs, Graduate Studies Committees

FROM: Philip Cohen, Dean, Graduate School; Raymond L. Jackson, Associate Dean,
Graduate School

RE: Changes in Graduate School Processing of Applications from International Students

DATE: 22 February 2002

cc: Members, AADC; Graduate School staff

Recently, we implemented the Web-based applicant status page enabling advisors and applicants to obtain up-to-date information on the status of an application and automating other services that once were done manually. We now seek ways to improve the flow of admissions information into the Web and to departments. Clearly, the faster we can enter and update information on this applicant status page, the greater will be its functional value to all. To compete effectively with other institutions for highly qualified students and to cope with more complex admissions decision matrices demanded by House Bill 1641, we must also do everything possible to shorten the time between our receipt of admissions documents and our delivery of admissions files to departments.

Accordingly, we continue to scrutinize all of our admissions practices and compare them to how Graduate Schools at other public institutions in Texas handle applications. We have discovered that many of our practices are unique and less efficient than those followed by other universities such as UT-Austin, UT-Dallas and UNT. To compete with other schools and growing our graduate enrollments, we hope to make a number of changes over time.

The first such set of changes involves how we calculate the GPAs of international applicants only and mirrors procedures already used by many state institutions. We are implementing these changes immediately in order to reduce the time it now takes to get application materials from international students to departments and onto the applicant status page by at least 20%.

1. We will calculate GPA using the last two available years instead of using all of an applicant's undergraduate grades. A similar practice is presently used with U.S. applicants. For persons who have not graduated at the time of application, this will require the use of the third through sixth semesters. For persons who have graduated, calculations will be based on the sixth through eighth semesters.

2. Many universities in India list an overall percentage GPA calculation for each semester. This calculation will be used to determine a numerical GPA for applicants by adding the last 2 year overall calculations and dividing by 2. The result will be an overall GPA for the last two years of study, identical to that generated by converting course grades to a 4.0 system, summing the result, and dividing the sum by the number of courses taken.
3. We will accept either consolidated or unconsolidated marksheets, whichever the student supplies. Consolidated mark sheets do not show all attempts made to complete a course. They only show the final grade earned. If both types of marksheets are available, we will use consolidated marksheets to calculate GPAs.
4. Only the final grade reported in a repeated class will be used in GPA calculations for international students.

We will continue to study and refine our methods as time goes on and will notify you of any changes that may affect your admissions processes.