

Admission to the College of Graduate Studies

The University welcomes applications from individuals qualified for graduate study. Admission to graduate studies at Middle Tennessee State University is two-fold, entailing both admission to the College of Graduate Studies and, in the case of degree-seeking students, admission to an individual academic program. An applicant initially applies to the College of Graduate Studies. Upon receipt of all required materials and assuming the applicant meets the admission standards of the College of Graduate Studies, the application is then forwarded to the individual program for consideration. Applications for admission should be completed online (www.mtsu.edu/graduate). Paper applications are available from the College of Graduate Studies or from this catalog. In accepting admission to the College of Graduate Studies, a graduate student assumes responsibility for knowing and complying with the regulations and procedures set forth in this catalog, as well as any amendments or revisions which may ensue.

Graduate applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree although for some programs a master's degree is required for admission. Under certain conditions undergraduate seniors with 98 semester hours of credit may be eligible to take graduate coursework. (See the section on **Eligibility to Enroll in Graduate Courses** below.)

Applicants admitted to graduate programs as **degree-seeking students** are those working toward a graduate degree. Degree-seeking students must be recommended for admission by the graduate program/department and approved by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Students (with the exception of those interested in teaching licensure or master's + 30) not seeking a degree are classified as **non-degree students**. Non-degree-seeking students must be admitted to the College of Graduate Studies. They are not admitted into a specific program. Non-degree students may take classes not restricted to students admitted into specific programs. Non-degree seeking students may take courses for a reasonable period of time as determined by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

NOTE: *Non-degree-seeking students are not permitted to enroll in graduate courses in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business.*

Students interested in obtaining a teaching license or working on master's +30 hours should apply for admission to either the Initial Licensing Track or the Master's +30 Track.

All applicants to the College of Graduate Studies must have an overall undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 (on a 4.00 scale) to be **considered** for unconditional admission. (Also see conditional admission.) Applicants who attended graduate school at another institution must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 on all graduate work and a minimum of 2.75 on all undergraduate work to be considered for unconditional admission. International students on an F1 visa must meet requirements for unconditional admission.

Individual programs may have higher admission requirements than those of the College of Graduate Studies. Applicants should consult the departmental pages for individual program admission requirements.

The College of Graduate Studies notifies all students of formal admission to both the College of Graduate Studies and to individual graduate programs. Notification of admission to the College of Graduate Studies alone does not imply admission to a specific program.

Admission as a Degree-Seeking Student

All applicants wishing to pursue a graduate degree objective at MTSU **must** formally apply for admission to the College of Graduate Studies as degree-seeking students.

At least three months prior to the anticipated date of registration, all degree-seeking applicants must submit the following materials to the College of Graduate Studies:

1. an application for admission, preferably submitted online;
2. a nonrefundable application and processing fee (required of all applicants) should accompany the application; applications are NOT processed until the fee is paid;
3. official transcripts certifying coursework from each college or university attended. Official transcripts must be mailed directly from the institution to MTSU and must be received prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment except for the M.B.A., for which all transcripts must be received prior to enrollment. Unofficial transcripts

may be used for the initial registration in graduate courses as a demonstration of eligibility for graduate status.

- a. If the applicant obtained the bachelor's degree at MTSU, only transcripts of work not posted on the MTSU transcript will be required.
 - b. If the applicant obtained the bachelor's degree at another institution, that latter transcript is required. Transcripts of work not posted on the baccalaureate transcript are also required. All post-baccalaureate transcripts are also required.
 - c. If the applicant earned a graduate degree at another institution, that latter transcript is also required. Transcripts of all post-baccalaureate work not appearing on the graduate transcript are also required. For international applicants, official or attested university records, with certified translations if the records are not in English are required. Notarized copies are not acceptable.
 - d. Any applicant whose highest degree is from a university outside the United States may be required to have his or her credentials evaluated by an acceptable evaluation service. A course-by-course report is required. A list of acceptable evaluation services is listed on the College of Graduate Studies Web site.
4. letters of reference, resumes, and portfolios may be required by the graduate program. Please refer to the relevant graduate program information section of this catalog for additional information, including where these are to be submitted, if required.
 5. satisfactory scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Miller Analogies Test (MAT), or Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) tests. The GRE, MAT, or GMAT result is used in the evaluation of the academic qualifications of all graduate applicants. However, admission decisions will be based on the overall academic record of the applicant (particularly in comparison with other applicants being accepted into the program), as well as other relevant materials such as letters of recommendation.

NOTE: Both ETS and the GRE Board have advised that a combined GRE score should not be used as an absolute cutoff for admissions decisions but rather should be used as part of an overall evaluation of applicants. The GRE Board statement reads: **A cutoff score based only on GRE scores should never be used as a sole criterion for denial of admission.** The College of Graduate Studies subscribes to this principle.

All International applicants who will be attending the University on a visa and who are not native speakers of English or are not graduates of a United States undergraduate or graduate institution must supply a minimum score of 195 (computer-based), 525 (paper-based), or a 71 (Internet-based) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), taken within the last two years; 85 on the University of Michigan English Proficiency Exam (UMELI); 6 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); or have completed level 112 of E.L.S. instruction as a demonstration of English proficiency.

International applicants on F and J visas must provide verification of financial support prior to admission as required by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. An affidavit of support is not required for admission; however, international students (F1) requiring issuance of Form I-20 must supply sufficient evidence of financial support for the applicant and all members of his/her family requiring issuance of dependent Form I-20. Further information may be obtained from the International Programs and Services Office.

Undocumented aliens may be admitted to MTSU as out-of-state students and are not eligible for federal financial aid.

Each graduate program may have additional requirements including application deadlines. Applicants should refer to the section of this catalog entitled Graduate Program Information, peruse the graduate program description in this catalog, and/or contact the director of graduate studies in the relevant program for specific requirements. In general, applicants may not apply more than 6 credit hours taken while in non-degree seeking status toward any degree program. Upon notification of admission by the College of Graduate Studies to a specific graduate program, the admitted student should contact the director of graduate studies for information on any required prerequisite courses. It is advisable to speak with a departmental academic advisor before enrolling in any graduate course.

An applicant not meeting University or program requirements for admission as a degree-seeking student may appeal to the individual program for special consideration. If recommended for admission by the program, the dean of the College of Graduate Studies has final approval or denial authority.

If an applicant fails to meet the deadline for submitting all materials for admission, it will be necessary for the applicant to reapply for admission. All materials submitted will be retained for one year from the date of submission.

Admission as a Non-Degree Student

Non-degree student admission is available to qualified applicants who wish to enhance their post-baccalaureate education, yet who do not seek a graduate degree. International students on an F1 visa may not be admitted to graduate study as non-degree students. Applicants wishing to be admitted as non-degree graduate students must

1. complete an application for graduate admission to the College of Graduate Studies;
2. pay an application fee;

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3. submit an official transcript certifying receipt of the bachelor's or post-baccalaureate degree. Official transcripts must be mailed directly from the institution to MTSU and must be received prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment. Unofficial transcripts may be used for the initial registration in graduate courses as a demonstration of eligibility for graduate status.

Not all courses offered at the University are available for non-degree students. Enrollment in specific courses may be limited to degree seeking students only. Information concerning eligibility for specific graduate courses may be obtained from individual departments. It is advisable to speak with a departmental academic advisor before enrolling in any graduate course.

NOTE: *Non-degree-seeking students are not permitted to enroll in graduate courses in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business.*

Non-degree-seeking students who wish to change to degree-seeking status must meet College of Graduate Studies' admission requirements and specific graduate program admission requirements to be eligible for consideration.

If transfer to degree-seeking status is approved, appropriate semester hours earned while a non-degree student may be applied toward a degree program if approved by the director of graduate studies and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Conditional Admission

Occasionally degree-seeking applicants may not meet all the requirements necessary to be recommended for unconditional admission. For example, they may have a low undergraduate grade point average or have low test scores. However, the overall application materials may suggest there is substantial potential for academic success, thus making outright denial counterproductive. In these cases, conditional admission into the College of Graduate Studies may be granted by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the graduate program. Continuation as a degree-seeking student within an individual academic program is contingent upon fulfilling specific requirements stipulated in the conditional admission letter. Conditionally admitted students are not eligible to hold graduate assistantships until all conditions of admission are satisfied.

Admission of MTSU Faculty Members and/or Administrators

Members of the faculty and/or administration of MTSU are eligible for admission to the College of Graduate Studies just as any other applicant. They may not

take over 6 semester hours of coursework during any semester. Faculty at the rank of assistant professor or higher or administrators of equivalent ranks may not be admitted to any doctoral program. If instructors who are in a doctoral program are appointed to assistant professor rank, they must discontinue the doctoral program.

Misrepresentation of Academic Credentials

It is a Class A misdemeanor to misrepresent academic credentials. A person commits the offense of misrepresentation of academic credentials who, knowing that the statement is false and with the intent to gain admission to MTSU, represents orally or in writing that such person has

1. successfully completed the required work and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas from an accredited institution of higher education;
2. successfully completed the required coursework and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas from a particular institution of higher education; or
3. successfully completed the required coursework for and has been awarded one or more degrees or diplomas in a particular field or specialty from an accredited institution of higher education.

Any applicant who misrepresents his or her credentials will be subject to disciplinary action from the University which may include dismissal from the University.

Eligibility to Enroll in Graduate Courses

Ordinarily only graduate students should register for courses numbered 5000 or above. However, any MTSU undergraduate student having completed 98 semester hours of undergraduate credit is eligible to take graduate courses, except in Business Administration, Accounting, English, and Information Systems.

Undergraduate students wishing to take graduate courses must obtain permission from the graduate program and the College of Graduate Studies. Permission is not guaranteed. Not all graduate courses are offered to undergraduate students. If courses are taken for graduate credit while an undergraduate, they may be applied toward a graduate degree at the discretion of the individual graduate program if the earned credit is not used toward the granting of another degree.

Students may not enroll in 7000-level courses in the Departments of Elementary and Special Education and Educational Leadership unless they are seeking an Education Specialist or doctoral degree. Non-degree-seeking students are not permitted to enroll in 7000-level courses.

Readmission (Reenrollment)

The College of Graduate Studies should be contacted for all matters concerning readmission. A previously enrolled student may reapply online on our Web site (www.mtsu.edu/graduate). A readmission application is required from any student who missed more than one semester (excluding summers), regardless of the reason. For non-degree-seeking post-baccalaureate students, readmission is granted at the discretion of the graduate dean and is subject to space limitations with degree seeking students given preference for enrollment.

For degree-seeking students, each graduate program may have a specific readmission policy and should be contacted for information. Readmission requires the recommendation of the graduate program and approval by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Some graduate programs regularly allow readmission for individuals who have missed no more than one semester or if the “stop-out” period is less than one year; others are more restrictive due to program capacity, curriculum, and ongoing quality improvement. Students seeking to be readmitted must meet the requirements of new applicants.

Reenrollment Following Suspension

Suspended graduate students who wish to resume graduate studies after the period of suspension must reapply to the program. Readmission of a suspended graduate student is not guaranteed. If readmission is granted to a suspended student, reenrollment cannot occur until at least one term (exclusive of Summer) has elapsed following suspension. In other words, if students suspended in the Fall apply to reenroll, they are not eligible for reenrollment prior to Summer. Students suspended in the Spring or Summer may apply for reenrollment in Spring of the following academic year.

Auditing Courses

A student who chooses to audit a course is one who enrolls and participates in a course without expecting to receive academic credit. The same registration procedure is followed and the same fees charged as for courses taken for credit. An audited course is not applicable to any degree or certificate.

Regular class attendance is expected of an auditor. Students interested in auditing a course should discuss course requirements with the instructor prior to enrolling. Failure to meet course requirements may result in an auditor being removed from the course at the request of the instructor. A successful audit will be

recorded on the transcript with the designation NC. Any petition to change from audit to credit or credit to audit must be processed by the last day in the semester in which a class may be added to the student’s schedule of classes. Requests to change from credit to audit after the deadlines must be approved by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Hours before and after the Master’s Degree for Teachers

The Tennessee Board of Education has ruled that teachers may count graduate work received toward the next pay raise, per current guidelines. No credit will be given for repeated work. The student must request the Office of Teacher Licensure to send proper credentials to the State Department of Education and/or to the applicable local officials. The student is responsible for maintaining current knowledge of which graduate courses and hours are acceptable for licensure.

Registration

The registration guide contains information concerning registration procedures. The most current information regarding registration and availability of courses will be found online on RaiderNet.

Student Identification Cards

All students must have a permanent ID card with a magnetic strip on the back. The card is required for a variety of services on campus including cashing checks, admission to athletic and special events, admittance to the Recreation Center, checking out library materials, obtaining meal tickets, and using RAIDER FUND\$. The ID card will be validated automatically when all fees are paid.

The first card is issued at no charge; however, there is a \$10 charge for replacing lost or stolen IDs. If the card breaks or is damaged, it should be returned to the ID office and a new card will be issued at no charge.

Immunizations and Health Certificates

There are requirements related to health concerns for all students wishing to study at MTSU. The State of Tennessee requires full-time students entering colleges, universities, and technical institutes with enrollment of greater than 200 students to provide proof of two (2) doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine on or after the first birthday, or proof of immunity to measles

if date of birth is 1957 or after, prior to the first day of classes of the students' initial attendance. The state of Tennessee also mandates that MTSU provide information concerning Hepatitis B infection and Meningococcal disease to all students entering MTSU for the first time. All new graduate students will need to electronically sign a waiver form before they can register. This form is located within PipelineMT. For further information concerning these Tennessee Immunization laws, and exemptions from compliance and forms, please contact Student Health Services.

Students will not be allowed to register for classes until acceptable forms are on file in the Student Health Services Office. More information may be obtained by calling 615-898-2988.

International students are also required to file a certificate from a licensed U.S. physician or other qualified medical authority, verifying freedom from tuberculosis, within 30 days from the first day of classes. Failure to do so will result in denial of enrollment. In the event that a student either has tuberculosis or has potential tuberculosis requiring treatment, continued enrollment will be conditional upon the determination by a licensed U.S. physician that such enrollment does not present a risk to others and upon the student's compliance with any medical

treatment program. International students should be aware that they must purchase health insurance before they are allowed to enroll.

Catalog

This catalog is produced for the convenience and benefit of graduate applicants and enrollees and is revised every two years. In the interim period, changes in University and/or graduate program requirements may be approved which apply to new applicants or admittees (see page 8 for additional information). Thus the information contained herein should not be construed as binding or inferred as an academic contract. New graduate students should request a copy of graduate program requirements in existence at the time of matriculation. These will be the requirements which must be fulfilled to obtain the degree. Notwithstanding, should graduate requirements change while a student is still enrolled, he/she will have the choice of opting for the new requirements or following the original plan in existence at matriculation, subject to any necessary substitutions. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment will need to meet current standards for readmission. Students are also encouraged to consult the departmental/program graduate student handbook in the specific program of study.

