



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Graduate School Admissions Appeals Policy

Policy Name: Graduate School Admissions Appeals Policy

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the appeals process for a prospective student to the Graduate School who has been denied admission for not meeting the minimum GPA requirements or if the applicant has documentation to support an error in the decision.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to applicants to the Graduate School. This policy does not apply to students who are exclusively enrolled in Quillen College of Medicine for the M.D. degree or the Gatton College of Pharmacy for the Pharm.D. degree.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Dean of the Graduate School and Graduate Council are responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

Notice of Decision

The admissions decision available in the student application portal

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Policy

1. Denial of Admission.

There are three instances in which a prospective student who was denied admission to a graduate program at ETSU may be eligible to file an appeal:

- 1.1. the prospective student is a domestic applicant who has a cumulative GPA of 2.3/4.0 or higher and the reason provided in their Notice of Decision was that they did not meet the Graduate School's minimum requirements; or
- 1.2. the prospective student is an international applicant who has a converted cumulative GPA of 2.8/4.0 or higher and the reason provided in their Notice of Decision was that they did not meet the Graduate School's minimum requirements; or
- 1.3. the prospective student has documentation indicating that the admissions decision was made in error.

If one of the three instances above applies, the prospective student may file one (1) appeal per application.

A prospective student who is denied admission due to program capacity reasons (e.g., other applicants were better qualified, etc.), lack of professional qualifications (e.g., not having a required professional license), or, if applicable, failing to successfully complete a criminal background check is not permitted to appeal the decision.

2. Requirements for Appeal.

The prospective student must submit, in writing, their request for an appeal, along with required documentation, five (5) or more business days before the start of classes for the semester to which the individual is applying for admission.

An appeal filed pursuant to section 1.1 and 1.2 above must include reasoning to support the case that the applicant's GPA is no longer an accurate measure for success in the graduate program. Examples may include but are not limited to: the prospective student has been employed in the field or a related field for an extended period, that the reasons for the low GPA no longer exist, and/or that they have matured since completing their prior education.

An appeal filed pursuant to section 1.3 above, the prospective student must provide documentation supporting that the decision was made in error.

Policy Effective Date: 6/30/2021 • Policy Revised Effective Date: 12/11/2025
Procedures Effective Date: 6/30/2021 • Procedures Revised Effective Date: 12/11/2025

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If the Notice of Decision was issued by the Graduate School less than eight (8) business days before the start of classes, the prospective student will have three (3) business days to submit their request for an appeal and documentation.

3. Consideration of Appeal.

The Dean of the Graduate School (or designee), in consultation with the graduate program, will consider an appeal that meets all the requirements of this policy, although in unusual cases, the Dean of the Graduate School reserves the right to review appeals that do not meet the requirements of this policy. The Dean or designee will make the final decision to approve or deny an appeal and will notify the prospective student in writing of the decision. The decision of the Dean or designee is final.

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Procedures

1. Procedure for Appeal.

The prospective student submits an email to the Dean of the Graduate School with a subject line that states “Request for Appeal of Admission of Decision.” The email must indicate the reason for the appeal as outlined in the policy.

2. Procedure for Review of an Appeal.

The Dean of the Graduate School or designee reviews and consults with the program coordinator of the graduate program to which the prospective student applied. The Dean of the Graduate School notifies the prospective student of the decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the appeal.

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Applicable Forms and Websites

Authority and Revisions

Authority: TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.

Previous Policy: N/A

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.