University Policy AC-38.01-03/15

Policy Title: Graduate Admission Policy

Originator: Dr. R. Podemski, Dean

Responsible Office: Graduate School

Reason for Policy/Purpose:

To set forth policies and guidelines for graduate admission at the University of West Florida (UWF).

Who Does this Govern and Who Needs to Know this Policy?

All Graduate School and graduate department personnel participating in the graduate student admission process.

Definition of Terms:

Program: In this policy statement the term "program" is used to designate the appropriate unit administering the degree. While generally equivalent to an academic department it can refer to a college, school or other unit (e.g. College of Business).

Policy Statement:

1. Introduction. Admission requirements for graduate programs and post-baccalaureate professional programs at UWF are governed by the Florida Board of Governors’ Regulations 6.001 and 6.003 and UWF/REG-3.002. Current graduate student admission policies are published in the Graduate Catalog.

2. Approval of Admission. The admission of graduate students to UWF is determined by a program and the Graduate School. Applicants who have met all admission requirements of the Graduate School and the program, and are recommended by a program, generally are admitted to the Graduate School. However, because of factors related to a department’s enrollment capacity, the fact that a student meets minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to a specific program. The Dean of the Graduate School grants final approval of admission, assuming general admission requirements have been met, and when evidence indicates a high probability of success in the prospective degree program. Applicants may not be considered regardless of a previous institution's credentials if their application is deemed inadequate, incomplete, or insufficient.

3. Inquiries. Information from inquiries about admission received by the Graduate School is entered into the Graduate School’s prospective student inquiry database. The Graduate School supplies prospective
applicants with proper University and program-specific information, and directs any program-specific questions to the appropriate department.

4. Application Requirements. Application requirements and procedures for meeting those requirements are listed on the Graduate School’s website and the Graduate Catalog. Programs may have additional requirements, statements of professional interest; letters of recommendation, or other supplemental application materials. Applicants are responsible for checking with the specific program or department to which they are applying for additional departmental application requirements.

5. Express Admission. Programs may nominate, via the appropriate College Dean, high-performing, currently enrolled UWF undergraduate students for express admission. Express admission is a special admissions procedure that waives certain requirements to quickly admit current UWF undergraduate students to UWF master's programs. Criteria for express admission are listed in the Graduate Catalog.

6. Deadlines. Applications and supporting documents should be submitted by applicants by the deadlines published in the Graduate Catalog. Applications completed after the published deadlines may not be processed in time for the applicant to be considered for enrollment in the desired semester. Applicants who do not meet these deadlines may be considered for admission by the Graduate School upon request of the program. Programs may have earlier deadlines; applicants are responsible for checking with the relevant programs to verify deadlines.

7. Program Recommendations for Admission. The Graduate Applicant Data Sheet (i.e., the admission decision sheet) of each applicant recommended for admission or denial of admission must bear the signature of the person holding signature authority for the program. This is usually the chair of the department that administers the program or a duly identified designee (see University Policy AC-25.01-05/14 Signature Authority for Graduate School Policy). The completed Graduate Applicant Data Sheet for each applicant should be forwarded to the Graduate School at the earliest possible opportunity. This is particularly important for international students, due to the time required for processing.

8. Provisional and Conditional Admission. All applicants must be accepted by the program in which they seek a degree or graduate study. If an applicant has not met all of the admissions requirements or does not have all application materials available, but the program supports the applicant’s admission, the program may request a Conditional Admission or Provisional Admission.

9. Notice of Admission to Applicant. When the Graduate School concurs with the department’s recommendation to admit an applicant, an offer letter from the Dean of the Graduate School is sent to the applicant. Since the final action and notification of such action comes from the Dean of the Graduate School, care should be taken that no irrevocable commitments are made by the program until the Dean has notified the applicant of his or her admission status. Any conditions imposed by the Graduate School will be stated in the offer letter, along with other important general information. Departmental correspondence should make it clear to applicants that their admission will be official only if they receive an offer letter from the Dean of the Graduate School.

10. Admission of International Applicants. If a program contacts international applicants they have recommended for admission the program must include in its correspondence a statement saying that
the applicant should not make travel plans until they receive a formal letter of offer from the Dean of the Graduate School, a "Certificate of Eligibility" from the International Student Advisor, and an appropriate visa.

11. Council of Graduate Schools’ Resolution. It is recommended that programs adhere to the "Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants" published by the Council of Graduate Schools. The Resolution is concerned with the conditions surrounding the acceptance of offers of graduate student financial support. The general spirit of the Resolution is that students should have an opportunity to consider more than one offer and should have until April 15 to do so, that institutions and students should view acceptances in force after April 15 as binding, and that an offer by the institution and its acceptance by the student constitute an agreement that both are expected to honor. The Resolution acknowledges that students, after having accepted an offer, may change their minds and withdraw that acceptance until April 15.

12. Graduate Study for Faculty and Staff. UWF faculty and staff and administrative personnel may pursue programs of study leading to graduate degrees at UWF. Requests to do so are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Dean of the Graduate School and will be granted only when there is no potential for conflict of interest and the anticipated impact upon the unit in which the requestor is employed is minimal. Approval and denial are subject to all rules and regulations of the Graduate School.

Procedures:

The application process for graduate study for faculty and staff will include:

- Complete application to the Graduate School.
- Review of application by the graduate program. Recommendation from graduate program to Graduate School with recommendation to admit or deny.
- Review by the Dean of the Graduate School and decision to approve or deny.
- Notification to the applicant, the academic home department or employing unit, and graduate program.

Authority and Related Documents:

Florida Board of Governors’ Regulations 6.001 and 6.003 and UWF/REG-3.002 govern admission requirements for graduate programs at UWF. Current graduate student admission policies are published in the Graduate Catalog.

APPROVED: Dr. Judith A. Bense, President

Date: 3/20/15

History: Adopted March 2015.