Does Testing Serve a Purpose in Holistic Application Review?

David G. Payne, Ph.D.
Vice President and COO, Global Education
ETS
Plan for today

• **One presentation** of approximately **30 minutes**, followed by Q & A

• Webinar **recording and slides** will be **emailed** to participants and **posted** on the CGS website

• Please **submit questions** through the GoToWebinar **control panel**

• **Technical issues?** Troubleshooting help available:
Audio Troubleshooting

• Having trouble hearing us? Try switching to a different audio connection. You can change from Telephone to Mic & Speakers or vice versa without leaving the session.

• If you experience trouble with a telephone connection, click “Problem dialing in?” for an alternate phone number to dial.
Does Testing Serve a Purpose in Holistic Application Review?

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VP and COO Global Education
What this presentation covers

- Share “Promising Practices” for holistic application review collected, curated and developed by ETS research, market research, client relations and program staff
“Promising Practices” for holistic application review

**Project Goals**

- Learn more about current admissions practices and the challenges facing those involved in the admissions process
- Understand how the **GRE** General Test and other tests are being used
- Curate and develop practices that admissions committees can use to move toward a more holistic graduate admissions process
We conducted extensive research about admissions practices and test use.

**Campus visits**
71 interviews with deans and faculty in the following disciplines:
- Life sciences
- Physical sciences
- Engineering
- Social sciences

**Literature review**
Examined published works related to graduate admissions from early 1950s to present:
- Arts & humanities
- Education
- Business
Our research focused on five key areas

- The types of materials that are collected as part of the application process
- The variety of admissions models that are used to make admissions decisions
- The decentralized nature of graduate admissions
- Training and tools used by graduate admissions committees to support the admissions process
- Program perspectives on admitting diverse applicants
Goal to provide “Promising Practices” that respect common challenges and constraints

- Overtaxed faculty & staff
- Lack of time
- Careful spending
- Application volume
- Communications challenges
Promising Practices: Goal Setting

Work together to set goals and strategies to achieve them

- Agree upon goals early on and structure entire admissions process (recruitment to enrollment) to achieve them
- Be explicit about plans to identify and recruit desired populations and how to assess desired attributes
- Determine the role and importance of each component of an applicant’s file
Promising Practices: Goal Setting

Work together to set goals and strategies to achieve them

What can help: Discussion Guide

Available at holisticadmissions.org
Determine and communicate the application review and selection process so all decision makers understand:

- Enrollment goals, strategy and process
- How to evaluate each component of the application
  - Role and importance
  - Order of review
  - What inferences can be made
- How to mitigate unconscious bias
- How disagreements will be resolved

Making the Implicit Explicit
Creating Performance Expectations for the Dissertation
Barbara E. Lovitts
Promising Practices: Increasing Understanding

Determine and communicate the application review and selection process so all decision makers understand:

What can help: An example

Desired Attribute
Related Component
Unrelated Component
Review multiple components — even when narrowing the pool — and don’t over rely on any one component

- If using cut scores, add another component
- Quantify traditionally qualitative components
- Align rubric weighting to goals
- Review components in order of priority based upon enrollment goals
- Consider an alternative review process
Promising Practices: Application Review

Review multiple components and don’t over rely on any one component

What can help:
(Sample rubric for illustrative purposes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation (LORs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience/CV</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE® scores</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component &amp; Max Points</td>
<td>Points values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>3 – 1 yr UG + work/internship research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 1 year of UG research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–1 – less than a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1–2 extra for publications, posters, awards, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LORs</strong></td>
<td>3 – high on all 6 attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – high on 5 attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – high on 4 attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work exp./CV</strong></td>
<td>2 – 2+ years related work exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 1–2 years related work exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 extra for volunteer work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UG curriculum</strong></td>
<td>1 – extensive science coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 extra for high UGI challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPA</strong></td>
<td>4 – 3.8 to 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 – 3.5 to 3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 3.2 to 3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3.0 to 3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component &amp; Max Points</th>
<th>Points values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal statement</strong></td>
<td>1–2 – quality of writing, maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max = 3</strong></td>
<td>1 extra for overcoming challenges, contribution to diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRE® Quant</strong></td>
<td>2 – 164–170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max = 2</strong></td>
<td>1 – 160–163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – less than 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRE AW</strong></td>
<td>2 – 5.0–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max = 2</strong></td>
<td>1 – 4.0–4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1 – less than 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRE Verbal</strong></td>
<td>1 – 150–170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max = 1</strong></td>
<td>0 – &lt;149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
<td>20–25 – Strong admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17–19 – Admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14–16 – Probable admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10–13 – Probable deny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–9 – Deny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sample rubric for illustrative purposes*
Promising Practices: Application Review

Review multiple components and don’t over rely on any one component

What can help:
Alternate review processes

- Multistage
- Two Pool
- Separate and Convene
Adopting Promising Practices is a change management process

It will take time.
It will take leadership.
It will be worth it.
Resources to help you get started

created by ETS, grounded in research

Available at holisticadmissions.org
Recently launched: holisticadmissions.org
We are always ready to help

- Prompt Response
- Campus Visits
- Presentations
- Student Fairs
- Webinars

GRE® Program
ets.org/gre/institutions
GREtests@ets.org
609-683-2002
Questions?

Type them into the Questions box on the GoToWebinar control panel.