Graduate Program Policies, Procedures, and Information
2020-2021
(updated 02-18-2021)

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Admissions Criteria

The graduate committee has several standards when reviewing files for admission. These include the following items, not necessarily in the order listed.

1) Fit
The committee evaluates whether the applicant is a good fit for the program. Does the applicant clearly outline his/her area of interest and articulate how he/she might add to our graduate program? Does the applicant identify faculty that he/she might collaborate with if he/she were admitted to the program? Does the student's projected area of research complement or extend current faculty research in the specified area?

2) GRE scores
The committee considers the quantitative score and the writing score most seriously, as both of these components are necessary to succeed in our graduate program. No minimum score is required for admission. However, students with scores below the 50th percentile must offer especially strong supporting materials to be competitive.

3) Statistics and methods courses
The committee considers the applicants' statistics and methods background. In particular, we consider whether the applicant has had sufficient training in quantitative methods to successfully pass the SOCA 615 and 616 core courses in our graduate program. Applicants with an absence of statistics courses or with low scores in statistics and methods courses are rated as weaker applicants.

4) Other social science courses
The committee considers the applicant's training. We prefer a sociological background, but it is not required if the student can articulate a clear sociological research agenda and he/she has the quantitative skills we require. One way to assess this is through courses the applicant has taken. We also use the writing sample and personal statement to assess fit.

5) Research experience
The committee considers the applicants' previous research experience. Does the applicant demonstrate they can conduct original research? This could be in the form of professional research presentations, written articles, or evidence from a senior level research class. The committee also examines evidence of working closely with a faculty member to assess research training.

6) Writing sample
The committee evaluates the writing sample. Is there evidence the applicant can synthesize ideas? Does the writing demonstrate critical thought? Original research?

7) Letters of reference
The committee evaluates each of the letters of reference according to several standards. Did the applicant meet the requirement of obtaining three strong letters of recommendation? Are there any red flags raised by the letter writers? What is the letter writer's relationship with the applicant? Is the letter writer an appropriate source to recommend the student to graduate school? Can the letter writer sufficiently speak to the applicant's ability to succeed in a graduate program?

8) Minimum GPA of 3.0 (noted in graduate handbook)

Graduate Students Hiring Undergraduate Students

Graduate students who wish to work with undergraduate students are encouraged to use the University Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP). The RAP can provide useful benefits to an undergraduate student, including a good educational opportunity and resumé entry. The RAP involves a faculty member and graduate student teaming up to create an opportunity for an undergraduate student. Graduate students might think of the RAP as an opportunity for their own professional development. The RAP can be listed on a graduate student's CV (developed and oversaw a research apprenticeship opportunity in WVU's designated undergraduate research training program).

A graduate student who does not wish to use the RAP program to hire an undergraduate student may develop a working relationship through a faculty member. The undergraduate student may be supervised by a faculty member who has a reasonable knowledge of the work being done and can attest to time worked (time cards undergo an auditing review and cannot be approved by someone without direct knowledge/supervision of the work). Without using the RAP, a faculty advisor needs to be more than just aware of the plans in an official capacity.

Funding Resources

Graduate Sociology Association Professional Development Grant

Funding for those of good standing in GSA for professional development (e.g., data collection, membership fees). Applications will be filled out once in the Fall semester and once in the Spring semester. A committee of GSA members and one faculty member will decide who receives funding and how much is available.

WVU Student Government Association (SGA)

The GSA will apply for SGA funding for the NCSA Conference. You may need to submit a report (it can be the same one you submitted for AKD) to whoever is in charge of compiling the grant information that year.

External Funding Opportunities

Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD)

GSA will apply for AKD funding for the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) Conference. You will need to submit your NCSA abstract to whoever is in charge of compiling the grant information that year. After the conference, you will need to submit a brief (usually one paragraph) report of how NCSA was beneficial to you as a professional.

Horowitz Foundation

http://www.horowitz-foundation.org/#!about/pqfht

Its general purpose is to support the advancement of research and understanding in the major fields of the social sciences. Its specific purpose is to provide small grants to aspiring PhD students at the dissertation level to support the research they are undertaking for their project.

Institute for Humane Studies

The IHS Conference & Research Grant provides up to $750 to cover travel costs and fees for career-related expenses.

The Grant is awarded on a rolling basis to current graduate students advancing the principles of freedom through their career. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Presentations at academic or professional conferences
- Travel to academic job interviews on a campus or at professional/academic conferences
- Travel to archives or libraries for research
- Participation in career-development or enhancing seminars
- Submission of unpublished manuscripts to journals or book publishers

Please note, Conference & Research Grants cannot be used solely for conference attendance. Funding will only be considered for individuals *presenting a paper or interviewing for a job at a conference*.

https://theihs.org/funding/ihs-conference-research-grant/

Ninja Analytics
To support research in the area of crime. Set up by Ninja Analytics

Global Religion Research Initiative
https://grri.nd.edu/dissertation

NIJ
https://www.nij.gov/funding/Pages/research-assistantship.aspx?utm_source=eblast-govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=rap2017

Other Resources

NC State – Building Future Faculty Program
https://oied.ncsu.edu/divweb/building-future-faculty-program/?utm_source=CGS%20News%20Network&utm_campaign=065ed10910-CGS_News_Network_10_25_2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5fa324a391-065ed10910-88936753

Information for International Students

This section was written by Lee Yan Song (began program fall 2016). Thanks to his hard work this section provides valuable information to international students about how to navigate the process of working for the university and getting a driver's license.

<u>Pre-arrival</u>

Get a folder or a file to hold all your travel documents. Bring all the letters you got from the school and remember to bring along your **I-20** or you are not even going to enter the US.

Payroll Information

<u>Step 1: Sociology General Office</u>
Go to the general office of the sociology department and get them to print out the letter of employment and have it **<u>hand-signed</u>** by the department chair. The letter can be found at the end of this document. Please remember to print it with the **<u>department's letterhead</u>** at the top

If you are unable to do step 1, it is better to just start on step 2; you just have to make an extra trip to the Office of International Students and Scholars. **<u>Do not delay on step 2 if you are held up in step 1</u>**

<u>Step 2: Office of International Students and Scholars</u>
Go to the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to get registered **<u>as soon as possible</u>**. Their processing time is extremely long (7 to 10 working days) and you might get lost in the system. Any delays in this will result in delays down the road.

<u>Documents that you will need to bring</u>
- Passport
- I-20
- I-94
- Letter of employment from the Sociology department

If you have completed step 1 at this point, give them the letter of employment from the Sociology department and they will give you another letter of employment from OISS. Make sure that this is **<u>hand-signed with a letterhead</u>** too.

<u>Step 3: Social Security Office</u>
Wait for the number of working days before heading to the social security office. If you want you could go back to OISS to ask if you have been registered properly.

If you do not have a car and have to take a bus, the correct bus number is 7/red line. The bus comes every 80 or so minutes as there is only one. They have a twitter account @ML07red or #ML07red which will tell you the current location of the bus. You can board the bus anywhere on its route by waving at the driver. Let the driver know you are going to the social security office, they are usually kind enough to tell you where the stop is. Bring along a book.

<u>Documents that you will need to bring</u>
- Passport
- I-20
- I-94
- Letter of employment from the Sociology department
- Letter of employment from Office of International Students and Scholars

<u>All documents need to be original. No photocopies. No electronic copies.</u>

Once you have gotten a receipt from social security office, you are good to go. Do not worry, the receipt strangely has no details.

Step 4: Payroll
At the time of writing, a lady from payroll is usually at OISS on Tuesdays from morning till early afternoon (say 9am till 1pm?). If you do not want to make a trip to their office you can try to see her then. Ask the staff at OISS about this and email/call her to make an appointment. Otherwise, the payroll office is at One Waterfront Place which is about 15 minutes' walk from Knapp hall.

Documents that you will need to bring
- Passport
- I-20
- I-94
- Letter of employment from the Sociology department
- Letter of employment from Office of International Students and Scholars
- Receipt from social security
- Blank check from your bank
- WVU identification number

Once you get your social security card, you will need to go back to payroll to show it to them. **DO NOT DELAY ON GETTING ONTO PAYROLL.** If you are not on it by the fifth week of school, your tuition wavier will be void and there will be a lot more trouble for you and the department then (http://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/funding-and-cost/graduate-assistantships/policies/appointment-deadlines)

Getting Your Driver's License

After you are done with and have gotten your social security card, it is time to take the bureaucratic battle to the next government agency – the DMV. It might be optional to get a US driver's license but it's highly recommended. It might sound weird to you but a driver's license is the default form of identification and is widely accepted in the US so getting one will make your day-to-day experience less of a hassle. The good news is that if you already have a foreign license, you can clear both the written and driving test in the same day; else you have to wait 30 days in-between

Step 1: Get your documents
List of documents you need
- Passport (with your visa)
- I-20
- I-94
- Social security card
- 2 proofs of WV residency
    - I used my lease agreement and my bank statement, for full list of acceptable proof - http://www.transportation.wv.gov/DMV/Drivers/Pages/Drivers-Licenses.aspx

- Written verification of attendance at the school, go here (http://oiss.wvu.edu/students/forms) to get a Good Standing Letter. You can pick it up in a few days' time at the OISS
- Bring money or cards to pay for fees and cards
- Current driving license (if you have one)

Step 2: Study
- Read the WV driver's handbook here- http://www.transportation.wv.gov/DMV/DMVFormSearch/Drivers_Licensing_Handbook_web.pdf
- Practice some questions, I just used the DMV genie phone app
- If you are going to take the driving test on the same day, practice parallel parking, other than that you should be fine. They will make you drive around for a bit (make sure you stop at stop signs and use signal lights).

Step 3: Go down to the DMV
Although their opening hours are from 830am to 5pm. **Go before 3pm**. They made it very clear that internationals have to go before 3pm as we have more documents. No appointment needed.

If you are taking the driving test on the same day, bring or borrow a car, it can be any car as long as is as A) registration and B) insurance. You can use a rental car as long as the rental agreement in is your name and you have proof of insurance. **You will also need a licensed driver with their license with you**, so call in a favor from someone.

Put make up and comb your hair too because your face that day will be immortalized on your driver's license. After you pass, they will give you a temporary license and your real one will come in the mail in about 2 weeks' time.

Leaving the Country
Whenever an international student leaves the country and comes back, before he/she leaves they should bring their I-20 to the international student office to get it signed. If not, you will have immigration problems.

Appendix I: Form for International Students

West Virginia University

Student Affairs

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that _____

(**Name – F-1 Student**)

has been offered, or is already working in, general on-campus employment.

Nature of student's job (e.g., waiting tables, library assistant, research assistant, etc.):

_____

Start Date**:** _____   Number of Hours/Week: _____

Employer contact information: _____55-6000842_____

(**Employer Identification Number (EIN)**)

_____

(**Employer Telephone Number**)

_____

(**Student's Immediate Supervisor**)

Employer Signature (Original): _____

Signatory's Title: _____

Date: _____

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http://www.wvu.edu/~