Faculty Senate Routing Form  
(action/proposal attached)  

I. Item Title: Changes to Graduate School Admission Requirements (FS 021816.APRC.5)  
a) Brief Description: several changes, including allowing unofficial transcripts upon initial application  
b) Initiated by: APRC  

II. Faculty Senate Action: ☒ approved ☐ not approved ☐ other date: 2/18/2016  

Vote: ☐ Voice Vote, Unanimous ☐ Voice Vote, Majority In Favor  
☒ Vote by electronic Ballot: 22 Ayes; 1 Nay; 1 Abstention  

FS Secretary signature: Henderson date 3/9/16  

III. Provost: ☐ for information ☐ Recognition of Receipt  
☐ for action....................☒ approved ☐ not approved  

Comments:  

______________________________________________________________  
Person responsible for Implementation:  
Provost signature: Dwayne Shultz date 3/14/16  

IV. Chancellor: ☐ for information ☒ Recognition of Receipt  
☐ for action....................☒ approved ☐ not approved  

Comments:  

______________________________________________________________  
Chancellor signature: Dawda Buleh date 3/5/16  

Once finalized copies will be returned to the Provost Office's representative who will scan and distribute electronically to:  
Chancellor  
Provost  
Chair of Faculty Senate  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (for catalog and handbook)  
Associate Dean of Graduate School (for catalog)  
Others (i.e. person responsible for implementation)
Graduate School Admission

The Dean of Graduate School and Research is responsible for the admission of all graduate students. All students taking graduate courses, whether for credit, noncredit, or audit, must make formal application to the Graduate School and meet any program specific admission requirements prior to enrolling in any graduate course work. All applications must be submitted online and inquiries should be addressed to grad@wcu.edu or:

Graduate School and Research  
110 Cordelia Camp Building  
Western Carolina University  
Cullowhee, NC 28723-8022  
Telephone: 828-227-7388 or 800-369-9854  
grad@wcu.edu

The Graduate School welcomes the applications of students without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability. In addition to the stated objective criteria described in the application procedure (e.g., letters of recommendation, official test scores, official transcripts, etc.), the Dean of Graduate School and Research reserves the right to determine, from appropriate information, whether an applicant will be a suitable candidate for graduate studies. The specific requirements for the various degree programs offered are outlined in subsequent sections of this catalog. All prospective applicants are urged to study these requirements carefully prior to initiating an application for acceptance to the Graduate School.

- Admission Requirements
  - Degree Requirements
  - Graduate School Admission Requirements
  - Program Specific Admission Requirements
  - International Admission Requirements
- Deadlines
- Admission Review

- Categories of Admission
  - Regular
  - Conditional
  - Non-degree

- Program Changes
- Stop Out/Leave of Absence
- Readmission
- Application/Admission Deferral

Admission Requirements

Degree Requirements:
Applicants for admission to the Graduate School are expected to hold a baccalaureate or higher-level degree from a regionally accredited college or university by the time they begin their program of study. Certain programs may require specific degrees or coursework as a requirement for admission (see Program Specific Admission Requirements for individual programs). An applicant may be required to take additional coursework as either co-requisites or pre-requisites to strengthen or supplement the undergraduate background.

Graduate School Admission Requirements: Applicants are required to:
- complete and submit an online application
- pay the non-refundable application fee
- provide official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended
  - One unofficial transcript from each university attended should be uploaded within the online application. If you are offered admission, one official transcript showing a conferred baccalaureate or higher-level degree will be required prior to the first day of the enrollment term.
  - Applicants who have earned a degree from an institution outside the United States must have their transcripts evaluated by an accepted foreign credential evaluation service. A document-level transcript evaluation verifying baccalaureate-level degree must be submitted to the Graduate School directly from an approved third-party
transcript evaluator. Programs may require course-level transcript evaluation for admission and/or transfer credit requests.

- Submit any program specific admission materials

Program Specific Admission Requirements

Individual programs establish requirements specific to the program of study and may include letters of recommendation, admissions test scores (GRE, GMAT, MAT), writing samples, proof of licensure, and/or specific prior course work or degrees. Please familiarize yourself with your program’s specific requirements before beginning the online application.

International Applicants – Additional Requirements

In addition to the admission requirements listed above, international applicants have additional requirements and deadlines to meet. It is expected that international applicants will not begin graduate study until the admission process is completed. Since several months may be required to receive and process applications from abroad, international students are urged to submit complete information as early as possible and no later than the recommended timeline for the intended admission term.

- Foreign Transcript Evaluation
  A document-level transcript evaluation must be submitted directly to the Graduate School from a third party transcript evaluator.
  o The transcript evaluation must verify that the applicant has earned a degree equivalent to a US baccalaureate-level degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
  o Programs may require a course-level transcript evaluation for admission and/or transfer credit requests

A foreign transcript evaluation may be waived under the following circumstances:

- The International applicant is able to provide evidence that their foreign degree program and/or university meets accreditation standards for the equivalent of a four year U.S. baccalaureate degree from an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- A transcript evaluation by an independent expert may be acceptable in some circumstances, although prior determination of acceptability must be determined by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- An articulation agreement has been negotiated between Western Carolina University and the foreign degree program and/or degree-granting institution, indicating the program or institution meets U.S. accreditation standards for the equivalent of a four year U.S. baccalaureate degree.
- Within a year previous to the submission of the application, another foreign applicant from the same degree program at the same degree-granting institution has provided an official transcript evaluation indicating the degree is equivalent to a four year U.S. baccalaureate degree.

- Tests of Language Proficiency

Official scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) are required for applicants from countries where English is not the primary language (scores cannot be more than 2 years old). A minimum score of 550 (paper-based), 213 (computer-based), or 76 (Internet-based) is required on the TOEFL. A minimum overall band score of 6.5 is required on the IELTS, with a minimum band score of 6 on each of the four modules.

Exceptions to the English Standardized exams are available for the categories listed below. For verification purposes, applicants who qualify must request this exception for processing:

- Applicants from countries where English is the SOLE OFFICIAL language of instruction (Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Canada except Québec, England, Ghana, Ireland, India, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Scotland, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, Uganda, and Wales)
- Applicants who have received or will receive a degree from an accredited university in the United States. If you are currently enrolled at a U.S. institution, you must submit an official transcript and verification of degree candidate status from that institution to qualify for a TOEFL or IELTS waiver.
- Applicants who have received or will receive a degree from an accredited university where English is the SOLE language of instruction. If you are a degree candidate in a university where English is the SOLE language of...
inclusion, you must submit an official verification from that university that English is the SOLE language of
instruction along with your anticipated date of graduation to qualify for a TOEFL or IELTS waiver.
- Applicants who have successfully completed WCU’s Intensive English Program (IEP).

The Office of International Programs and Services may contact the applicant to obtain additional documentation.

Application deadlines and recommended timeline for international students applying to programs without specific deadlines are posted
online under Important Graduate School Dates and Deadlines.

**Deadlines**
The general Graduate School application deadline is the Monday one week prior to the start of the application term, as published in the
academic calendar. Some programs have an earlier application deadline than the Graduate School. See the Early Program Application
Deadlines and Graduate Degree Programs web pages for current information.

**Application Review**
An application is not considered complete for review until all required materials are received by the Graduate School. When all
admission materials are received and processed, the complete application will be forwarded to the program for review. Graduate
programs review applications for their program and make an admission recommendation to the Graduate School. All submitted
application materials become the property of the university and cannot be forwarded or returned.

**Categories of Admission**
Persons applying for admission to the Graduate School, if accepted, may be admitted in one of several categories as described below:

**Regular Admission**
Students with a complete application file, who meet the established requirements for admission to the Graduate School and their
degree programs, are granted Regular Admission. To qualify for Regular Admission, a student must have earned an overall grade-point
average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours of undergraduate work, or a 2.86 on a 4.0 scale cumulatively. An applicant with a
graduate degree does not have to meet the undergraduate grade-point average requirement.

**Conditional Admission**
Some graduate programs allow promising students, who do not meet the formal requirements for regular admission, to take courses for
one semester while they are completing their application file or satisfying the conditions of their admission. To be considered for
Conditional Admission, the student must provide a transcript from a regionally accredited institution. International students should refer
to the Graduate Catalog section on International Applicants.

- A conditionally admitted student can only attend classes for one semester while completing his/her application file. After
the file is complete, the student will be considered for Regular Admission. If a conditionally admitted student fails to meet
the requirements as stated in their conditional letter of acceptance, the student will not be allowed to enroll for any future
terms until conditions are met.
- If a student is conditionally admitted, one or more of the following conditions may apply:
  - Must earn a GPA of 3.0 during the first term of enrollment
  - Must submit acceptable test scores
  - Must submit required letters of recommendation
  - Must submit an official, final transcript showing a conferred bachelor’s degree

**Non-degree Admission**
Applicants may apply to the Graduate School for admission as a non-degree graduate student. Applicants for non-degree admission
must submit an official transcript from a regionally accredited institution showing conferral of a baccalaureate or higher-level degree.
and must have earned an overall grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours of undergraduate work, or a 2.86 on a
4.0 scale cumulatively. An applicant with a graduate degree does not have to meet the undergraduate grade point average requirement. Please note that non-degree seeking students are not admitted to any degree program, are not eligible for financial assistance, and are not assigned to advisors.

- Transient Admission. Transient students are graduate students pursuing a degree at another institution who wish to enroll in courses at WCU as part of their program requirements from the other institution. A transient admission application requires submission of an official transcript from a regionally accredited institution showing conferral of a baccalaureate-level degree. All other non-degree status regulations apply.

Some programs allow non-degree students to take one or more graduate courses for self-improvement or exploration of graduate degree program offerings. However, a program may restrict enrollment into classes to degree-seeking students within its program. Check with the program director or academic department head to determine if the program allows non-degree students to be enrolled in a specific class.

Non-degree graduate students who wish to be considered for admission into a graduate degree program may do so by following the instructions noted in the Program Change section. Students should be aware that work completed in a non-degree status does not necessarily apply toward a degree, nor does being allowed to take courses imply acceptance into a degree program.

Non-degree students may complete a maximum of 12 hours. Students enrolled in graduate certificate programs are exempt from the 12 hour maximum limit. Non degree students who wish to complete more than 12 hours must obtain special permission from the Dean of the Graduate School. If a student has taken courses in non-degree status and later is formally admitted as a degree candidate, the program may accept up to 9 non-degree credit hours. Admission as a non-degree graduate student does not guarantee admission into a graduate degree program. Non-degree students may not request transfer of credit.

**Program Changes**

Students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program of study or are enrolled as a non-degree seeking student may wish to request a change in program. In such cases, the student must complete a new application through the Apply Yourself online system and supply any additional materials as required by the prospective program. Any required transcripts and test scores that the Graduate School already has on file can be used. The student may request a refund of the application fee by contacting the Graduate School via email.

Once the new application has been submitted, it will be reviewed under standard admissions processes. The student will be notified via email when a decision is made and asked to accept the admission offer if one is made. When the student accepts the offer of admission, the student's record will be changed accordingly.

Admission to one degree program does not guarantee admission to another degree program. A student may not be admitted to more than one degree program at the same time.

**Stop Out / Leave of Absence**

Any student who has not yet registered for a given term, and who needs to take time off from school without losing catalog rights or registration eligibility, can either take a "Stop Out" (for one to two terms of leave) or a "Leave of Absence" (for three terms of leave).

Students may take one or two terms of leave called a "Stop Out" without declaring a leave of absence with the Office of the Registrar. Students are eligible to register the following semester. A Leave of Absence may be granted upon request to those who are eligible to register for a term, but have not yet done so. They can be taken for up to one full year (three terms). Note that students requesting a Leave of Absence will be required to reapply online and pay the fees to be reinstated (see table below). Students who are pursuing a Graduate degree or a postgraduate credential program need to complete the Stop Out or Leave of Absence Form and obtain program approval signifies by signatures of the Program Director or Department Head, in order to take the educational leave.
Readmission

Before interrupting enrollment (either through Stop Out or Leave of Absence), students should become familiar with potential ramifications that an absence in enrollment may have in terms of their ability to return or to complete a specific program of study. Any graduate student, who takes a Leave of Absence and is inactive for three or more consecutive terms, including summer, must reapply online at grad.wcu.edu and pay the reapplication fee to be considered for reinstatement as an active student. This policy impacts all programs, even those that do not require continuous summer enrollment. All time limits apply for course work taken, and the student is subject to the catalog term in effect at the time of readmission unless a catalog change is approved by the Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.

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Students whose enrollment is terminated for academic reasons should consult the description of the procedures outlined in the "Academic Dismissal Policy" section of this catalog.

Any graduate of a WCU graduate degree program who wishes to pursue additional graduate course work or another graduate degree at WCU must apply to the Graduate School for that program or course work. After submission of the application, the applicant may request a refund of the application fee by contacting the Graduate School via email.

Application/Admission Deferral

The Graduate School allows deferral, conditional on program approval, of an application/admission for up to one year past the original start term. Deferral requests must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School. Many considerations are involved, so applicants considering deferral are encouraged to contact the Graduate School as soon as possible.