

## Department of Political Science, University of Washington

### Admissions Decision Process

The Political Science Department's Admissions Committee is comprised of faculty from several different fields and one graduate student who is elected to the committee by other graduate students in the department.

To determine academic qualifications, fit with our program, and overall competitiveness, the Committee reviews all **required** materials submitted for the application. When evaluating the required materials (listed below), the Committee looks for specific qualities:

#### **Statement of Purpose: A 300-500 word essay.**

- Academic background, including any research experience and methodological skills.
- Plans and goals for study, including intellectual interests and areas of specialization.
- Why you are interested in studying at the University of Washington. How admission to this particular program will help you realize your goals. How the academic interests of our faculty coincide with your own.

**Writing Sample:** A relatively short paper (not to exceed 20 pages) or excerpts from a larger work (e.g., honors thesis) demonstrating your ability to write critically and analytically. Writing samples that are merely descriptive will not stand out. Note that writing samples must be written in English (do not send manuscripts written in another language with abstracts in English).

**Resume:** A brief description of your professional experience, including accomplishments and awards.

**Letters of Recommendation:** The most effective letters of recommendation will come from faculty who can comment in detail on your intellectual ability and potential for success as a graduate student and scholar. We require three letters, and you may if you wish, include a fourth letter for consideration by the committee.

1. **Online option:** Use the new on-line option and designate recommenders. Those you designate are notified by the Graduate School application system and they then send their letters directly, and on-line, to the Department of Political Science. This option and full directions are available through the Graduate School on-line application process (<https://www.grad.washington.edu/applForAdmiss/>).
2. If your recommenders wish to send the confidential letters through the mail, they must be signed and placed in sealed envelopes by the recommender. The letter writer should include the *Recommendation Information Form* with each letter. This is found and downloaded at the end of our website.

Note – We can not accept emailed recommendations that are not processed through the Graduate School Application site for Political Science. If you are going to have your recommendations mailed to the department, please make every effort to include the

sealed envelopes in your package. We realize that in some instances you will need to have your recommender send them directly to us, and we will of course accept them.

**Transcripts:** GPA and academic preparation are reviewed based on official transcripts. We evaluate course performance within the context of the curriculum, school, and time period in which it was taken. We will take into account improvement over one's academic career and performance in graduate course work.

**Test Scores:**

**GRE:** The GRE General Test scores provide the Committee with an additional gauge of competitiveness for the specific abilities that are measured by the test. While having the highest GRE scores you are capable of achieving is always desirable, submitting other application materials that are deemed to be of exceptional quality will help counterbalance lower scores.

Note that GRE scores must be sent directly to the university by the Educational Testing Service (ETS)-photocopied score reports are unacceptable. Our Institution code is **4854**, and our Department code is **1902**. The committee will not review scores that are more than five (5) years old. The Political Science test is not required.

**English Proficiency Scores** for applicants whose native language is not English - Please review the Graduate School's *Information on English language proficiency*, Memorandum #8  
<http://www.grad.washington.edu/Acad/gsmemos/gsmemo08.htm>

Though we require these minimum scores for consideration for admission, most international applicants who are admitted to our graduate program have significantly higher scores.

Note that TOEFL scores and other English proficiency test scores must be sent directly to the university by the Educational Testing Service (ETS)- or other agencies. Photocopied score reports are unacceptable. For TOEFL, our Institution code is **4854**, and our Department code is **89**.

**Minimum Scores and GPA:** Although most applicants who are admitted to the program have combined verbal and quantitative scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) substantially higher than 1100 and a cumulative college grade point average greater than 3.4 (B+), all applicants are examined carefully to identify promising individuals whose scores or grades might not fully represent their potential.