

# Does Testing Serve a Purpose in Holistic Application Review?

David G. Payne, Ph.D.  
VP and COO  
Global Education



# What we will cover today

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



## But before we start ...

- Recognize and thank our *TOEFL*<sup>®</sup> and *GRE*<sup>®</sup> Board members
- They give us input, guidance and support



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# “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*<sup>®</sup> 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
- Arts & humanities
- Education
- Business



## Literature review

**Examined published works related to graduate admissions from early 1950s to present**

# Our research focused on five key areas

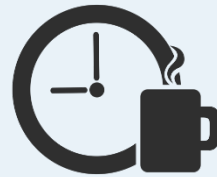
- The types of materials that are collected as part of the application process
- The variety of admissions models that are used to make admissions decisions
- The decentralized nature of graduate admissions
- Training and tools used by graduate admissions committees to support the admissions process
- 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**

## 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*

CONNECTING  
Graduate Admissions  
Practices with Goals  
**Questions to Consider**

ETS and the GMP Program, with the support of the GRE Board, are pleased to share a resource that we hope helps you guide a discussion about your institution's admissions practices or simply reflect upon your own role in the process. We posed these questions to faculty and staff involved in admissions at 159 programs across the United States as part of an effort to learn more about graduate admissions practices and holistic file review. As intense participants reflected on their experiences, they said that our questions prompted them to consider and discuss issues they hadn't before. In response, we created this discussion guide to support faculty and administrators who are interested in having the same kind of thoughtful engagement about their graduate admissions practices on their own campuses.

ETS | GRE

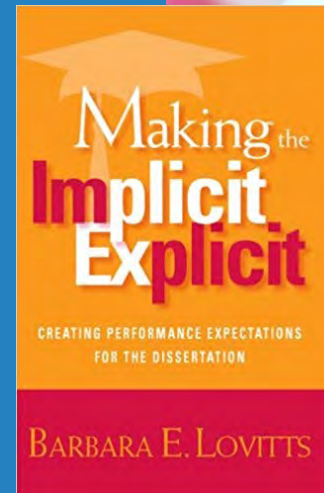
Aims | ACT | Postsecondary

Available at [holisticadmissions.org](http://holisticadmissions.org)

## Promising Practices: Increasing Understanding

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



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**





## Promising Practices: Application Review

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*

Component	Maximum Points
Research	5
Letters of Recommendation (LORs)	3
Work experience/CV	3
Undergrad curriculum	2
GPA	4
Personal statement	3
GRE® scores	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

Component & Max Points	Points values
<b>Research</b> Max = 5	3 – 1 yr UG + work/internship research 2 – 1 year of UG research 0–1 – less than a year <i>1–2 extra for publications, posters, awards, etc.</i>
<b>LORs</b> Max = 3	3 – high on all 6 attributes 2 – high on 5 attributes 1 – high on 4 attributes
<b>Work exp./CV</b> Max = 3	2 – 2+ years related work exp. 1 – 1–2 years related work exp. <i>1 extra for volunteer work</i>
<b>UG curriculum</b> Max = 2	1 – extensive science coursework <i>1 extra for high UGI challenge</i>
<b>GPA</b> Max = 4	4 – 3.8 to 4.0 3 – 3.5 to 3.79 2 – 3.2 to 3.49 1 – 3.0 to 3.19

Component & Max Points	Points values
<b>Personal statement</b> Max = 3	1–2 – quality of writing, maturity <i>1 extra for hardship, disadvantage</i>
<b>GRE® Quant</b> Max = 2	2 – 164–170 1 – 160–163 -1 – less than 142
<b>GRE AW</b> Max = 2	2 – 5.0–6 1 – 4.0–4.5 -1 – less than 3
<b>GRE Verbal</b> Max = 1	1 – 150–170 0 – <149
<b>Total Score:</b> 20–25 – Strong admit 17–19 – Admit 14–16 – Probable admit 10–13 – Probable deny 0–9 – Deny	





## 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*

**Using GRE scores *successfully* in holistic admissions.**

**Look beyond a single admission decision.**  
 This infographic provides a checklist of questions to ask when evaluating GRE scores in the context of an applicant's overall profile. It emphasizes that GRE scores are just one piece of the puzzle and should be considered alongside other factors like work experience, letters of recommendation, and the applicant's goals.

**Be more inclusive by avoiding the use of a GRE cut score.**  
 This section discusses the limitations of using a fixed GRE score as a minimum requirement for admission. It suggests that a holistic review process is more equitable and effective in identifying qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds.

**Consider scores on the three GRE General Test measures independently.**  
 This part explains that the three components of the GRE (Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Writing) measure different skills. It advises admissions committees to evaluate each score on its own merits rather than relying on a total score.

**Use appropriate references when comparing applicant test scores.**  
 This section provides guidance on how to compare GRE scores across different test dates and programs. It notes that scores from different years and programs may not be directly comparable and provides a link to the GRE score comparison tool.

For more resources to support holistic admissions practices and using GRE scores, visit [holisticadmissions.org](http://holisticadmissions.org).

ETS GRE

*At your table:  
Infographic*

**CONNECTING Graduate Admissions Practices with Goals Questions to Consider**

ETS and the IHE Program, with the support of the GRE Board, are pleased to share a resource that we hope helps you gain a new perspective about your institution's admissions practices or simply offers you new ideas for the process. We posed these questions to faculty and staff involved in admissions at 55 programs across the United States as part of a pilot to learn more about graduate admissions practices and how they evolve. An interview collection of their experiences that respond to our questions prompted them to consider and discuss ways they didn't believe in response we created this discussion guide to support faculty and admissions committees who are interested in sharing the same kind of thoughtful engagement about their graduate admissions practices as their own campuses.

ETS GRE

*At your table:  
Discussion Guide*

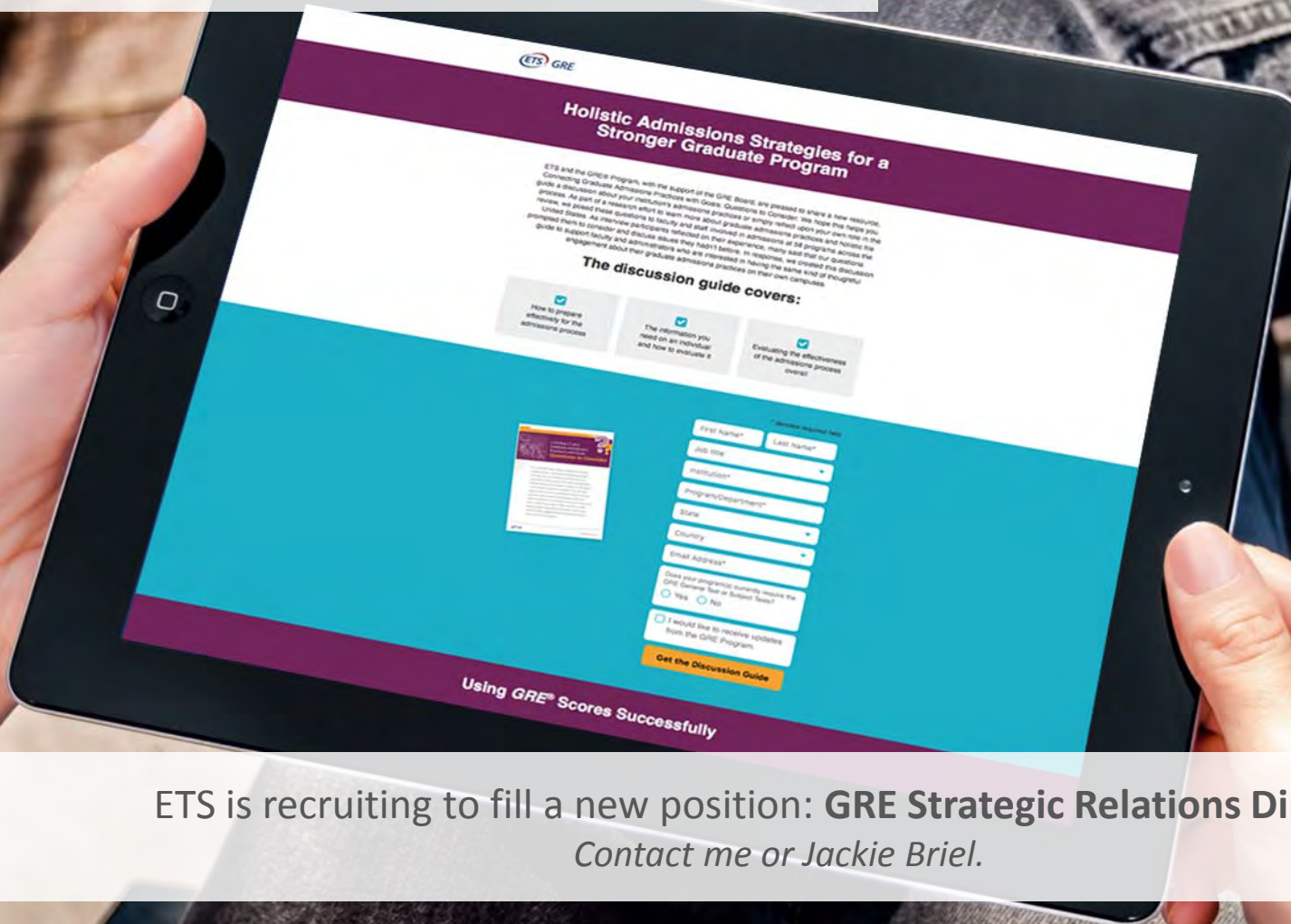
**NEW CHALLENGES IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

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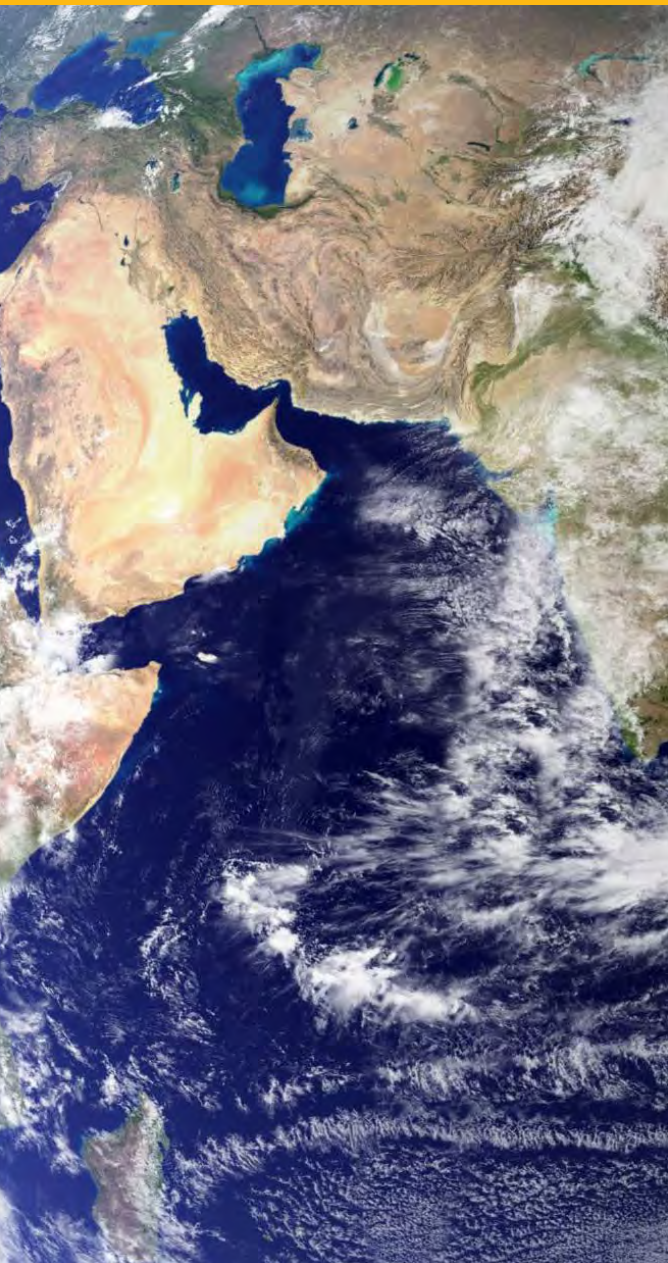
*At ETS's Booth:  
IHE Booklet*

Launched This Week: [holisticadmissions.org](http://holisticadmissions.org)



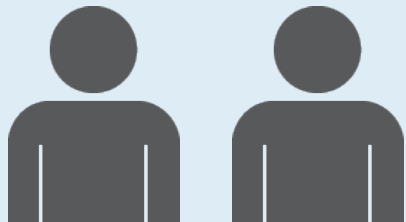
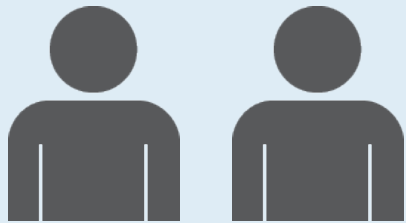
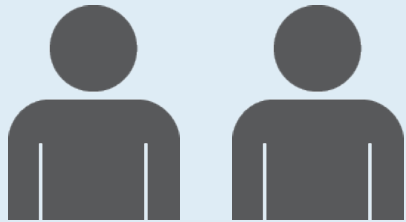
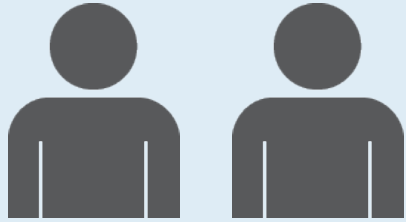
ETS is recruiting to fill a new position: **GRE Strategic Relations Director.**  
*Contact me or Jackie Briel.*

# *TOEFL*<sup>®</sup> Program Update



## Test content distribution

Beginning in March 2017, ETS and the *TOEFL*<sup>®</sup> Program implemented a new process for computer-delivered tests that will help deter cheating by varying the content for test takers in different time zones.



## Facial Recognition in China

The *TOEFL*<sup>®</sup> program and the National Education Examinations Authority in China had hardware and software developed for a new biometric security feature: facial recognition

- Test taker's image captured during check-in process
- System performs facial recognition verification against national identification document
- Database of test takers and imposters for additional verification continually expanded
- Now implemented in all centers for the *GRE*<sup>®</sup> General Test and the *TOEFL* test

# TOEFL<sup>®</sup> revised Paper-Delivered Test is active

- The revised paper-delivered test is a paper version of the *TOEFL iBT*<sup>®</sup> test, without a speaking section
- It replaces the previous paper-based test, although scores are still valid for 2 years
- It uses the TOEFL iBT score scale
  - Reading, Listening and Writing scores to be reported on 0–30 scale
  - No total score
- October 14, 2017 – First administration
- November 23, 2017 – First scores reported
- Marketing and Client Relations teams are implementing communications efforts





# We are always ready to help



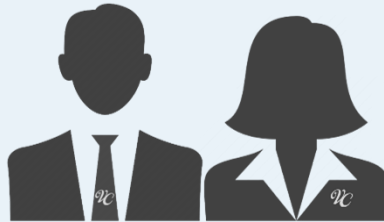
**Prompt Response**



**Campus Visits**



**Presentations**



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