

Supporting the Graduate Community in Addressing Evolving Challenges

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What we'll cover today

- Graduate admissions landscape
- Share key findings of our *GRE*® perceptions study
- How ETS and the GRE Program are responding, and next steps.

Graduate Admissions Landscape

- Increased competition, declining international enrollment, need to reduce barriers → evaluating admissions processes
- Programs that drop *GRE*® scores requirement:
 - Doubt test's ability to predict success
 - Perceive it is a barrier to diversity
- Case is bolstered by recent studies
 - Small sample sizes, other research issues
 - Add to confusion about the test, creating dangerous situation for students and programs



GRE® Brand Awareness Study

Purpose: Provide ETS with a better understanding of the perceptions of the GRE Program — including the *GRE*® General Test, GRE Subject Tests and GRE Program tools and services — among graduate admissions decision makers at U.S. institutions.

Methodology

Disciplines	Total	GRE Usage		Degree Level	
		GRE® Users	GRE® Non-Users	Master's	Doctoral
Arts & Humanities	40	29	11	20	20
Business	40	34	6	31	9
Education	40	32	8	15	25
Engineering	40	37	3	20	20
Life Sciences	40	26	14	22	18
Physical Sciences	40	37	3	19	21
Social Sciences	40	32	8	20	20
TOTAL	280	227	53	147	133

- ✓ 280 admissions decision makers: deans, admissions officers, dept. chairs and faculty.
- ✓ 188 U.S. institutions
- ✓ GRE users and non-users
- ✓ Mix of selectivity
- ✓ 40 surveys per discipline

Throughout the study, statistical testing has been conducted at the 95% confidence level.

Key Findings: Admissions Challenges

Areas of priority by program selectivity

High Selectivity

1. Increasing Diversity
2. Increasing Quality of Applications/Program Reputation

Moderate Selectivity

1. Increasing Quality of Applications/Program Reputation
2. Increasing # of Applications/Students

Low Selectivity

1. Increasing # of Applications/Students
2. Increasing Quality of Applications/Program Reputation

Top admissions challenges vary by program type and are typically centered on expanding volume of applicants/students, improving application quality/program reputation, and/or diversity.

Key Findings: Admissions Challenges

Areas of priority by degree level

Doctoral Non-Users

1. Diversity/Creating Supportive Environment for members of Underrepresented Groups
2. More Accurately Assessing Noncognitive Skills
3. Increasing Program Reputation

Doctoral *GRE*® Users

1. Increasing Quality of Applications/Program Reputation
2. Increasing # of Applications/Students
3. Diversity

Master's *GRE*® Users & Non-Users

1. Increasing # of Applications/Students
2. Increasing Quality of Applications/Program Reputation

There are a few notable differences among doctoral non-users.

Key Findings: Admissions Processes

Less than half of respondents describe their admissions process as holistic, and about one in five are unsure.

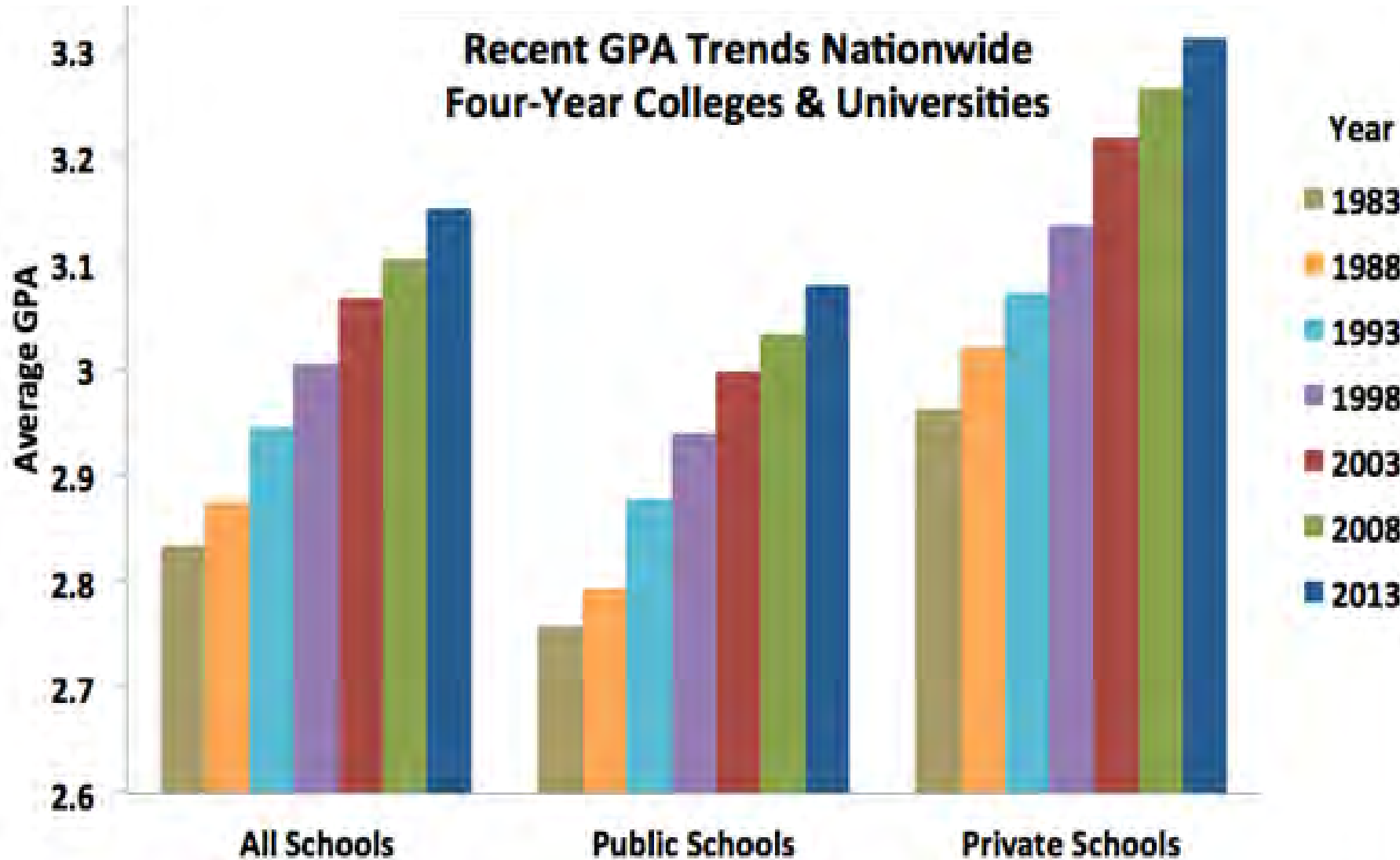
Description selected	<i>GRE</i> [®] Users	<i>GRE</i> [®] Non-Users
Holistic	43%	49%
Partially holistic	35%	26%
Not holistic	4%	4%
Not sure	17%	21%

- ✓ **Holistic** – high selectivity, business, A&H
- ✓ **Partially holistic** – education, engineering, high percentage of international applicants
- ✓ **Not sure** – engineering, A&H, physical science

Key Findings: GRE Use and Perception

About 95% of *GRE*® score users anticipate continued use of the GRE test three years from now, though 4% of score users that currently require scores are anticipating making score submission optional.

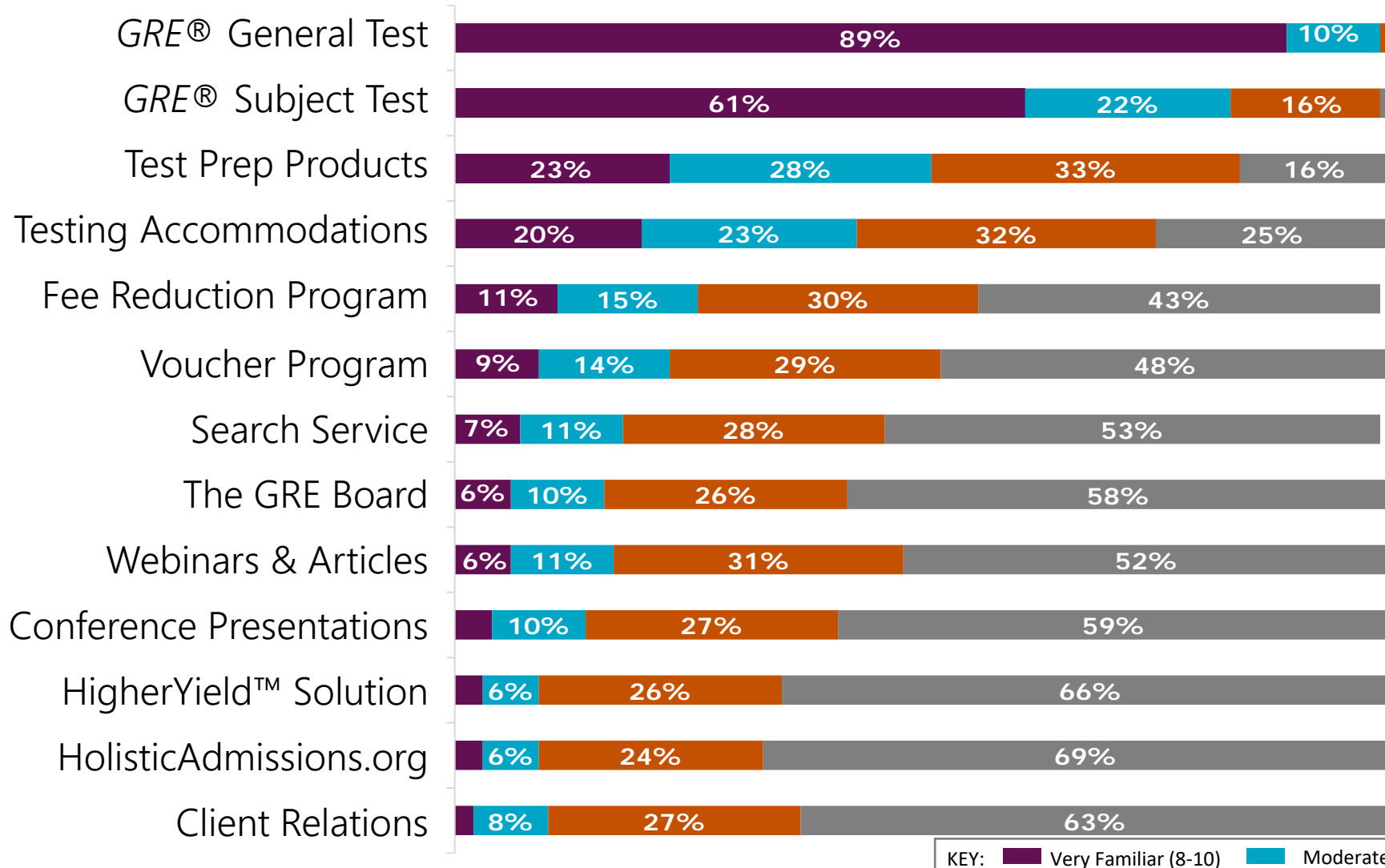
The Problem with Test Optional



Use caution when evaluating other measures, even quantitative measures.

Image from www.gradeinflation.com

Key Findings: GRE Use and Perception



The GRE Program is identified almost exclusively with the GRE assessments. Awareness and usage of GRE Program services and tools beyond the tests is low.

GRE Score Users (n=227)

KEY: Very Familiar (8-10) Moderately Familiar (5-7) Low Familiarity (1-4) Not Aware

Key Findings: Trends in Test Usage

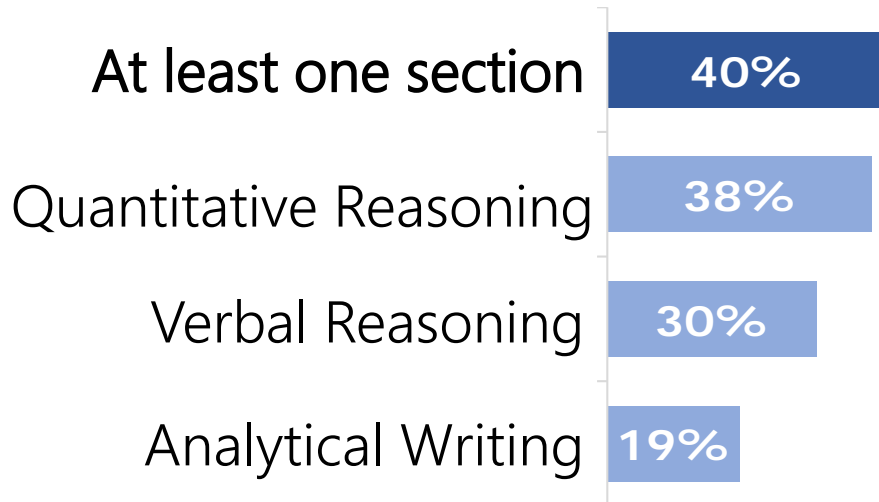
13% of Non-User respondents (n=57) are considering using the *GRE*® tests in some way during the coming three years. Influencing factors include:

- Changes in department staff/roles
- Possible accreditation requirements

Key Findings: Other Trends in Test Usage

Despite the *GRE*® Program's recommendations against the use of threshold (cut) scores, they are continuing to be used. Use is likely to increase as well.

Use of Minimum Threshold Score Among *GRE*® Score Users (n=227)



Potential New Users:

10%

of those not currently using a minimum threshold score

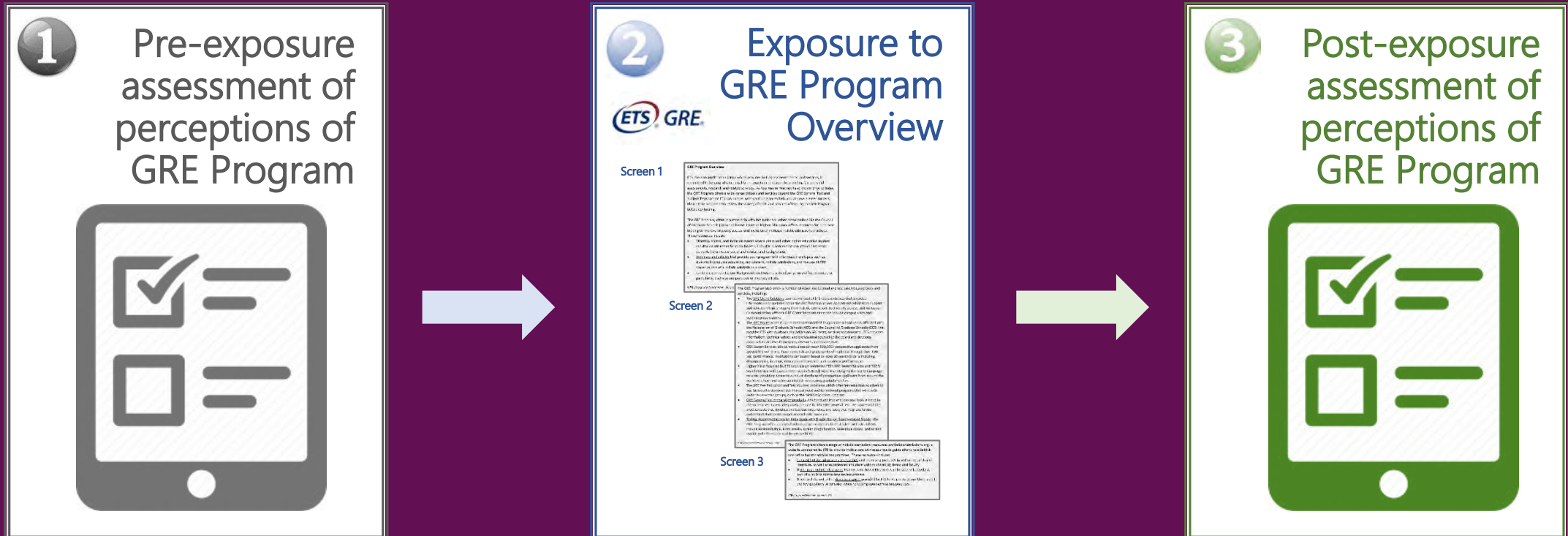
are considering adopting a threshold score over the next three years

Likely Adjustments Among Threshold Users:

- 23% may increase thresholds
- 8% may lower thresholds
- 3% may remove thresholds

Key Findings: Reactions to GRE® Program Overview

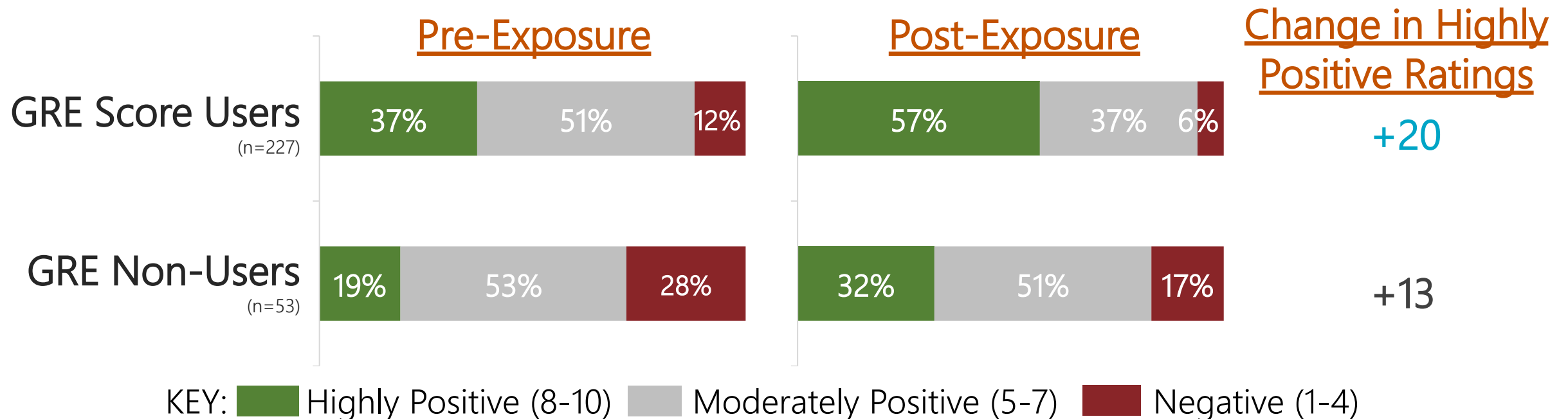
Information about GRE Program positively influenced perception.



Key Findings: Reactions to GRE® Program Overview

Information about GRE Program positively influenced perception.

Overall Perceptions of the GRE Program: Pre- vs. Post-Exposure





How we're responding

- Expanding resources and communications
 - [Holisticadmissions.org](https://www.holisticadmissions.org)
 - Fee Reduction Program
- More visibility
 - Events
 - Social interactions
- Engage with community
 - Understand needs
 - Partner on new solutions

ETS Resources: HolisticAdmissions.org



Partnering in Potential.

[Home](#) [Why Holistic?](#) [Curated Approaches](#) [Implementation](#) [Using GRE® Scores](#) [Recruiting](#) [Events](#)



Navigating Holistic Admissions for a Stronger Graduate Program



The GRE® Program helps graduate and professional schools around the world identify, recruit and admit the right students for their programs.



ETS Resources: HolisticAdmissions.org

Holistic Admissions Implementation

This collage features three articles from the website. The top-left article, 'CONNECTING Graduate Admissions Practices with Goals Questions to Consider', discusses the importance of aligning admissions practices with institutional goals. The top-right article, 'Understanding and Improving Graduate Program Retention Rates', includes a photo of a student in a library and a quote from Brent Bridgeman. The bottom article, 'Holistic File Review: Getting the Greatest Value Out of Test Scores', explains how to use test scores more effectively in admissions.

Coming this fall: Holistic Admissions Digital Guide

Recruitment

This collage highlights successful recruitment campaigns using the GRE Search Service. The top article, 'Fulfill Your Program's Potential', lists benefits like a diverse applicant pool and cost-effectiveness. The middle article, 'In Search of the Next Class of Computer Science Graduates', features a testimonial from North Carolina State University, showing a 200% increase in applicants and a 45% increase in offers. The bottom article, 'Recruiting for a Program', discusses the challenges of finding the right candidates for a specific program.

ETS Resources: HolisticAdmissions.org

GRE® Test Value and Validity

ETS GRE Partnering in Progress

Four Facts about the GRE® General Test

A focus on the utility and importance of standardized testing in graduate admissions

Are you considering changes to your admissions processes? This document pulls together useful information — including findings from the largest, most relevant studies — that shows the GRE® General Test's unique value in helping programs ensure that prospective students have the critical thinking skills needed to meet program requirements.

- 1. The GRE® General Test successfully measures an applicant's readiness for graduate-level academic work.**

As a standardized measure of an applicant's readiness for graduate-level academic work, graduate programs can use scores to fairly compare students from different backgrounds. The test assesses critical thinking, verbal and quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing skills. These are skills needed across many disciplines and are critical in helping graduate students navigate the rigors of the academy.

The test's ability to assess these skills have been documented through an extensive body of research:

 - A [study](#) that examined the GRE® scores of 25,356 students enrolled in master's and doctoral programs at 10 institutions found that the test correlated with academic performance across programs ranging from STEM to the humanities. For students in biological and biomedical programs, for example, 30 percent of the students in the lowest quartile of GRE® Quantitative Reasoning scores were in academic peril. Only 8 percent in the top quartile of scores were in academic peril.
 - A [meta-analysis](#) by researchers at the University of Minnesota using data from 82,659 graduate students across multiple disciplines, concluded that GRE® scores are "generalizably valid predictors" of:
 - first-year and cumulative GPA
 - comprehensive examination scores
 - publication citation counts
 - faculty ratings

Validity was established for both master's and doctoral programs. The study also found "consistently positive" — though not always statistically significant — correlations with degree attainment and research productivity. These are outcomes that extend beyond what the GRE® test was designed to measure.

Using GRE® scores successfully

Guidelines for identifying the best applicants

- 1. Use multiple criteria, including GRE® scores, in admissions decisions.** This helps ensure fairness and balances the limitations of any single measure of knowledge, skills or abilities.

Be more inclusive by avoiding the use of a cut score. GRE scores help you compare applicants, but if you use a cut score as a criterion, you could miss an applicant who would be a great asset to your program.
- 2. Consider scores on the three GRE® General Test measures independently.** The level of verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and analytical writing skills needed for success in your field may vary. Using a single score masks critical information about that individual's specific skills.

Use percentile ranks to compare applicants who took the same admissions test. It is not appropriate to use percentile ranks to compare applicants across different admissions tests (e.g., GRE scores with GMAT® scores or LSAT® scores). Instead, use the appropriate GRE Comparison Tools to interpret GRE scores in the context of GMAT scores or LSAT scores. ets.org/gre-business/comparison or ets.org/gre/law/comparison

To get information about using GRE scores, score interpretation resources, holistic admissions and best practices, fairness and validity information, and more, visit ets.org/gre/institutions
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ETS GRE Partnering in Progress

GRE® Test Validity: Putting It in Perspective

By Brent Bridgeman and Heather Hall

There are many myths that are widely thought of as true, but actually are not. And yet other actual facts are treated as myths. A good example is the myth that the correlations of GRE® scores with grades are so low as to suggest that the GRE® General Test is of no value. This myth may come from the perception among some academics that the correlations between GRE scores and graduate GPA should be as high as the correlations they see in their own fields of study, such as medical research, aeronautics or chemical engineering.

In reality, in the field of educational measurement, the correlations between GRE scores and grades are quite meaningful. In fact, the correlations are stronger than many claims that are commonly believed to be societal truths.

For example, would it surprise you to learn that GRE General Test scores correlate more highly with students' graduate GPA than smoking is likely to predict lung cancer? How about scores from the GRE Analytical Writing section are better predictors of a biological and biomedical science doctoral program student's grades than taking hypertension medication is of a reduced risk of stroke?

How GRE® Scores Stack Up!

r - Coefficient of Correlation	Measures Correlated
.03	hypertension medication & reduced risk of stroke
.08	bypass surgery for heart disease & survival for at least 5 years
.08	over smoking & incidence of lung cancer within 25 years
.09	alcohol use during pregnancy & premature birth
.12	low-level lead exposure & reduced childhood IQ
.23	GRE Verbal Reasoning scores & GPA in Health Professions & Clinical Sciences Master's Programs
.23	alcohol use & aggressive behavior
.27	GRE Analytical Writing scores & cumulative GPA in Biological & Biomedical Science Doctoral Programs
.30	sleeping pills & short-term improvement in chronic insomnia
.32	psychotherapy & subsequent well-being
.34	elevation above sea level & lower daily temperatures
.34	Vigra use & improved male sexual functioning
.37	GRE Quantitative Reasoning scores & cumulative GPA in MBA Programs
.40	habitat size loss & species decline
.44	weight & height for U.S. adults

If You're Not Using GRE® Analytical Writing Scores, You Might Be Missing Out

If you're involved in the graduate admissions process and you're not using GRE® Analytical Writing scores, you are probably missing out.

It turns out that of the three section scores that the GRE® General Test provides — Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning and Analytical Writing — how well students perform on the Analytical Writing section is frequently the best or second best predictor of their future GPA. This is the case for most programs at both the master's and doctoral levels.

Think institutions tend to discount Analytical Writing scores when they're looking for evidence of a candidate's academic proficiency. Perhaps being on a smaller scale scale gives the impression that it's less important," says Brent Bridgeman, Distinguished Presidential Appointee at ETS Academic to Career Research.

Center: "Not only is the Analytical Writing score often the best or second best predictor of student success, but it also provides evidence that candidates can both think critically and clearly express their reasoning in writing. These two skills are essential across programs."

The Analytical Writing section requires test takers to complete two writing tasks — one that analyzes an issue and one that analyzes an argument. The tasks measure test takers' ability to:

- Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively.
- Examine claims and accompanying evidence.
- Support ideas with relevant reasons and examples.
- Sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion.
- Control the elements of standard written English.

Correlations Between Graduate GPA and GRE Sections for Eight Program Areas!

	Education	Engineering	English (average of Verbal Reasoning & Analytical Writing)	Biological & Biomedical Science	Mathematics and statistics	Psychology	Health professions & clinical sciences	Business management (including MBA)
Overall GRE® Scores								
Verbal Reasoning	.05	.14	.22	.28	.12	.08	.23	.14
Quantitative Reasoning	.12	.24	.14	.15	.24	.05	.25	.18
Analytical Writing	.06	.10	.23	.33	.17	.21	.35	.19
Overall GRE® Scores								
Verbal Reasoning	.05	.08	.08	.10	.24	.20	.10	
Quantitative Reasoning	.26	.34	.18	.22	.41	.38	.34	
Analytical Writing	.06	.10	.21	.27	.18	.28	.28	

ETS Resources: Fee Reduction

- 50% fee reduction vouchers have been available to individuals who can demonstrate financial need or through programs like McNair Scholars.
 - Three significant changes introduced this month:
 - Now voucher recipients also receive free access to our top-of-the-line test prep, valued at \$100.
 - Vouchers available through three more national programs (IRT, LSAMP & SACNAS®), bringing the total number to 10.
 - Vouchers available for the first time to international students through EducationUSA.
- EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program
 - Gates Millennium Scholars Program
 - Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT)
 - Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research (U-STAR) Program
 - National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science Program (GEM)
 - NSF Lewis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Program
 - Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP)
 - Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) Program
 - Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
 - TRIO Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
 - TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program

ETS Resources: Supporting Institutions (Excerpt)

<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>Admissions</i>
<p>Search Services — Reach 1 million+ prospective applicants. Search <i>GRE</i>[®] and <i>TOEFL</i>[®] test-taker databases by country of citizenship, academic performance, educational objectives and ~30 other criteria: ets.org/searchservice.</p>	<p>Admissions Support — Resources to support a goal-oriented, fair admissions practice inclusive of <i>GRE</i>[®] General Test and <i>GRE</i>[®] Subject Test scores: ets.org/gre/admissions.</p>
<p>HigherYield[™] Enrollment Marketing Solution — Launch and manage dynamic multichannel campaigns to qualified candidates through a solution powered by ETS and Liaison International: higheryield.org.</p>	<p>Holistic Admissions Support — Tools for implementing a holistic admissions practice, including promising practices curated from programs using them successfully now: holisticadmissions.org.</p>
<p>Test-Taker Trends — Download <i>A Snapshot of Individuals Who Took the GRE[®] General Test</i>: ets.org/gre/snapshot.</p>	<p>Test-Taker Essays, Photos and Scores — View scores and test-taker photos online, create custom reports, and access actual Analytical Writing responses with the <i>ETS</i>[®] Data Manager: ets.org/gre/edm.</p>
<p>Best Practices — Learn recruitment tips through webinars and articles. Opt in: ets.org/gre/update.</p>	<p>Score Use and Interpretation — Guidance and resources for using scores appropriately in making admissions decisions: ets.org/gre/Institutions/admissions/using_scores and ets.org/gre/scorerresources.</p>

ETS Resources: Reducing Barriers for Test Takers

<i>Free Resources and Services</i>	
<p>Free Official Test Prep — Online practice that simulates the actual test, Analytical Writing topics, a 100-page math review and more: ets.org/gre/prepare.</p>	<p>International Applicant Resources — Advice on applying to and managing the cost of graduate school, “how to” videos and much more: takehgre.com.</p>
<p>In-Language Webinars — Learn about the test, discover prep tools and interact with a GRE test expert: ets.org/gre/webinars.</p>	<p>GRE® Search Service — Free opt-in service that connects test takers and graduate programs interested in them: ets.org/gre/perfectmatch.</p>
<p>Fee Reduction Program — 50 percent off the regular test fee plus free test prep for those who demonstrate financial need: ets.org/gre/feereductions.</p>	<p>Accommodations — Industry-leading support for test takers with disabilities and health-related needs: ets.org/gre/disabilities.</p>
<p>ScoreSelect® Option — Allows test takers that test more than once to send only their best set of scores to schools: ets.org/gre/scoreselect.</p>	<p>Test Center Convenience — Year-round testing at 1,000+ centers in 160+ countries: ets.org/gre/testcenters.</p>
<p>GRE Diagnostic Service — Free Quant and Verbal section performance insight for test takers: bit.ly/2pO0xIS.</p>	<p>Official GRE® Advisor Kit — Presentations, materials and videos to help advisors guide prospective students to important information: ets.org/gre/institutions/prepare/advisor_kit.</p>

More Visibility: ETS event, webinars, GRE LinkedIn® Page



Strategies for
**Increasing Graduate
Program Diversity**

Promising Practices
in Graduate
Admissions, Case
Studies in Successful
Innovation



NAGAP Webinars



Follow us!

[linkedin.com/showcase/the-gre-program](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/the-gre-program)



International
Recruitment
Strategies, Successful
Solutions, and Tools



Continued Engagement with the Graduate Community

- The *GRE*® Board
 - 18 graduate deans, including appointments from CGS and AGS.
 - Guide the program and share information with us about challenges and opportunities in the graduate community.
- New GRE Program market research study – A qualitative study that take a deeper look at graduate program needs; wrapping up this summer.
- Hiring about 10 graduate faculty and deans across a variety of disciplines to consult with the GRE Program team.
- Looking to use our research expertise and experience for the good of the graduate community through the development of new offerings and resources that can help address these needs.

How You Can Help

- ✓ Sign up for the *GRE*® Program email list at www.ets.org/gre/update.
- ✓ Add us as a “safe sender” to ensure that our emails are coming to your inbox, not your clutter folder.
- ✓ Share our emails with your teams.
- ✓ Follow us on LinkedIn®: [linkedin.com/showcase/the-gre-program](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/the-gre-program)
- ✓ Respond to our surveys if asked; it’s one of the ways that we learn what you need.
- ✓ If you are dealing with requests to drop the GRE test, email me at (gretests@ets.org) for materials, client relations support.
- ✓ If you know of organizations or disciplinary societies that might be interested in working with us on solutions to address graduate program needs, please let me know.

Thank you

David Payne
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