

# Admissions

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### 1.1 General Guidelines

Prior to applying to Montana State University (MSU), it is recommended that the applicant contact the department of the intended area of study, as department information, requirements, and deadlines may vary. See the link to Graduate Areas of Study (<https://www.montana.edu/academics/graduate/>) for a list of all of the graduate programs offered at MSU.

Any applicant who has received a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university may apply for admission to The Graduate School. This can be done by applying online (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/apply.html>). The non-refundable application fee can be paid by credit card or online check. A full application fee (\$70) is required for the first application, and a partial application fee (\$35) is assessed for subsequent applications to different programs within the same first year (graduate committees review each application as it pertains to their program). Application fees are valid for one year; after one year, the \$70/\$35 application fees are assessed. If the student has already graduated from a graduate program and is seeking a degree/certificate in another program, a new application must be completed. The application fee will not be waived, deferred, or refunded for any reason. The application fee must be paid before the application will be processed (See Board of Regents Policy 940.2). Exceptions are made for individuals who have earned a graduate degree and wish to return as a non-degree graduate student; only an "intent to register" form should be completed (see the link to "Intent ([https://www.montana.edu/registrar/returning\\_students.html](https://www.montana.edu/registrar/returning_students.html))"). Students who have earned an undergraduate degree at Montana State University (Bozeman) and now want to come as a non-degree graduate student will need to apply to the Graduate School. See the section below for specifics.

During the application process, applicants will be asked to voluntarily provide a Social Security number to distinguish between individuals with the same or similar names. Applicants will not be penalized if they decline to provide this number. Federal law requires that when applicants apply for financial aid, graduate assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, or tuition waivers must provide their Social Security number for purposes of identification.

Once an applicant applies, an MSU identification (ID) number is assigned. If admitted, this number becomes the student's ID. This ID number will be a permanent part of the MSU system.

The initial application fee is valid for no more than one (1) year from the term of the initial application. An applicant who has not been offered admittance can reapply to the same program within this time frame without incurring an additional application fee by contacting The Graduate School ([gradschool@montana.edu](mailto:gradschool@montana.edu)) with the request. If an applicant waits longer than one (1) year, it will be necessary to apply and pay the application fee again.

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**Note: Every applicant who applies for admission to MSU and completes an application will receive a formal decision by The Graduate School, whether they have been admitted or not.**

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**Note: The falsification, omission, or willful suppression by an applicant of any information requested, whether on the application forms or in the application documents, is grounds for either denial of admission or dismissal from MSU.**

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### 1.2 Degree Types and Application Requirements

**DEGREE-SEEKING** — Applicants are encouraged to contact the department "advisor" of their intended area of study (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/departments.html>) prior to applying, as department requirements and deadlines may vary, with some departments requiring an applicant to secure a major research professor prior to applying.

For a graduate degree application to be reviewed for admission, all required application documents must be submitted prior to the department's posted deadline. The Graduate School recommends that the applicant check the link to the application portal (<https://www.applyweb.com/msug/>) to determine if all requested documents have been received. If the applicant is uncertain as to whether or not the documents have been received, they should contact the intended admitting department. Departments typically do not begin a review of applicants until after their posted deadline. Once the department reviews the application and documents, a recommendation is communicated to The Graduate School. The Graduate School will review the department's recommendations and issue a formal decision.

Application Requirements — All applicants applying to MSU must provide the following during the online application process:

- A completed Application for Graduate School Admission (<http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/apply.html>).
- Payment of a non-refundable application fee. The fee must be paid before the application will be processed.
- Transcripts. The Graduate School can use unofficial transcripts to review applications; however, Official Transcripts are required upon being offered admission. The Official Transcripts should be sent to MSU directly from the university the applicant attended, and at minimum, one should have a conferred degree indicated on the transcript while also reflecting all undergraduate and/or post-baccalaureate courses and grades. Applicants who are alumni of MSU do not need to submit their official transcripts from MSU.
- An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale). Applicants with post-baccalaureate experience must have a graduate GPA of at least 3.00. See Provisional Admission (p. 3) for more information.

- Below are some application materials that may be required by the admitting department. See the link to the Departments/Areas of Study (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/departments.html>)
  - Up to three (3) letters of reference.
  - A personal statement.
  - A resume.
  - RECENT CHANGE: GRE's are not required by any program at MSU.

International Applicants — International applicants must submit additional documents to complete their application. See the link to International Applicants (p. ).

If admitted and any of the required application documents are not provided (e.g., official transcripts, official English proficiency scores), registration will be prevented until the missing documents are received. See the link to Fees & Holds (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-fees-and-holds/>).

Immunization — All students admitted to MSU are required to submit immunization records. See the link to Immunizations (<http://www.montana.edu/health/immunization.php>) and to Fees & Holds (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-fees-and-holds/>).

Deadlines — Each admitting department sets its application deadlines. See the link to the Departments/Areas of study (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/departments.html>). International applicants must be prepared to submit a completed application approximately 120 days before the intended term starts. However, departments may request more time for the application review. Typically, MSU will need approximately 75 days from the time an offer is made to the start of term to allow for the issuance of an I-20.

Contact the intended admitting department. See Departments/Areas of Study (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/admissions/departments.html>).

See Degree Requirements (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-degree-requirements/>).

NON-DEGREE — Non-degree graduate applicants are those who have earned a bachelor's degree and:

- are taking graduate coursework (400-600);\*
- are not yet pursuing a graduate program leading to an advanced degree, but wish to take graduate coursework;
- have not been offered full or provisional admission to a graduate program;
- have non-degree standing as recommended by the admitting department or The Graduate School;
- applied after the admission deadline

\*If you are taking ONLY undergraduate 100-300 coursework, apply as an undergraduate non-degree through undergrad admissions (<https://www.msuadmissions.org/application/>). If you are an undergraduate alumnus of MSU, then complete this form through the Office of the Registrar for returning students ([https://www.montana.edu/registrar/returning\\_students.html](https://www.montana.edu/registrar/returning_students.html)).

In some cases, taking and passing coursework as a non-degree graduate student may help to provide evidence of a student's ability to perform well in a graduate program. Some departments also may recommend the completion of undergraduate coursework prior to admission into a specific graduate program.

Application Requirements — All applicants applying to MSU must provide the following during the online application process:

- A completed Application for Graduate Admission (<http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/apply.html>)
- Payment of a non-refundable application fee. The fee must be paid before the application will be processed.
- Official transcripts (one of which must have a conferred degree posted from a regionally accredited university) reflecting all undergraduate and/or post-baccalaureate study. Applicants who are alumni of MSU do not need to submit their MSU transcripts

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**Note: Every applicant who applies for admission to MSU and completes an application will receive a formal decision by The Graduate School, whether they have or have not been admitted.**

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**Note: Non-degree graduate students are not eligible for graduate assistantships (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-graduate-appointments/>) or financial aid (<https://www.montana.edu/financialaid/>).**

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**Note: If you are applying as a non-degree and then decide to apply to a degree program, you will need to complete a new application. Degree application will require significantly more application materials, letters of recommendation, and so forth.**

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International Applicants — International applicants can have a status of non-degree graduate student only for one (1) year. It is recommended that the applicant select a degree type and an admitting department when applying. They must meet minimum standards for evidence of English language proficiency. See the link to International Applicants (p. ).

Immunization — See the link to Immunizations (<http://www.montana.edu/health/immunization.php>) and Fees & Holds (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-fees-and-holds/>).

Deadlines — Domestic applications must be received by The Graduate School by the first (1st) day of classes. See Dates & Deadlines (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/dates-deadlines.html>). International applicants must be prepared to submit a completed application approximately one-hundred (100) days prior to the start of the intended term, however departments may request more time for the application review. Typically, MSU will need approximately 75 days from the time an offer is made to start of term, to allow for the issuance of an I-20. For non-degree international applicants, deadlines are as follows:

- Fall Term: May 15
- Spring Term: October 1
- Summer Term: February 1

Registration — Non-degree students will be eligible to register for classes as soon as the completed application is processed. Students will receive an email with information including directions on their next steps, such as addressing holds and registration. If there are documents missing from the application, it will be noted in the acceptance

letter. Applicants may be admitted conditionally (p. 4) with a hold (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policies-text-fees-and-holds/#holds>) limiting their ability to register.

**CERTIFICATE** — A certificate is typically less than thirty (30) credits of graduate coursework in a specific program. To apply, see the department offering the certificate (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/programs.html>).

**International Applicants** — International applicants must submit additional documents to complete their application. See the International (p. ) link to learn more.

**Immunization** — See the link to Immunizations (<http://www.montana.edu/health/immunization.php>) and to Fees & Holds (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policies-text-fees-and-holds/>) for more information.

**Deadlines** — Each admitting department sets its own application deadlines. See the link to department websites (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/programs.html>).

See the link to Certificate Requirements ([http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policies-text-degree-requirements/#certificate\\_requirements](http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policies-text-degree-requirements/#certificate_requirements)).

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**Note: Only some certificate programs are eligible for financial aid. See the link to Financial Aid (<https://www.montana.edu/financialaid/>).**

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**CONTINUING EDUCATION/Montana State Online** — Some individuals choose to take online coursework through Extended University (also known as continuing education). Enrollment in continuing education coursework (<http://eu.montana.edu/ContinuingEd/>) does not immediately admit a student into Montana State University as a non-degree student. These courses are typically numbered as “588” (see the link to Online Education (<https://www.montana.edu/online/>) at MSU).

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**NOTE: As a Continuing Education student, you are not eligible to take courses which can be counted towards a degree (See Online Education at MSU (<https://www.montana.edu/online/>)).**

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**DUAL DEGREE** — Dual degree is when an applicant is seeking two (2) graduate degrees simultaneously. The Graduate School recommends communicating your intent with both departments prior to applying to both programs. If both departments agree that the applicant can apply, then the applicant completes two (2) applications, one for each program. To avoid sending two sets of identical transcripts, please notify The Graduate School ([gradschool@montana.edu](mailto:gradschool@montana.edu)).

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**Note: The applicant will need to complete all the application requirements (See the link to degree-seeking (p. 1)) for each degree program. Confer with the departments regarding documents that can be used for both degree programs. Application documents will be reviewed separately by each**

**department and all requirements must be met. An applicant may be admitted or denied from one or both programs.**

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### 1.3 Admission Decision Notification

Admission decisions are made on an individual basis. Applications are typically reviewed by the department after their posted deadlines. After the initial review, an application recommendation is submitted to The Graduate School to review the applicant's academic history and preparation. All applicants will receive a formal decision. If an international applicant is admitted to MSU, a letter of acceptance, an I-20 form (necessary for an F-1 student visa), and other registration information will be mailed to the student from the Office of International Programs (<https://www.montana.edu/international/>). Enrollment in a graduate degree program may be limited by the availability of faculty, staff, facilities, areas of interest, and so forth. In such cases, it is not possible to admit all applicants who are otherwise qualified.

Students may be admitted to MSU with the following statuses: Full Admission (p. 3), Full Admission with Provision (p. 3), Full Admission with Condition (p. 4), or Full Admission with Provision & Condition (p. 4); this will be specified in the letter of acceptance.

Applicants should consider themselves admitted only when an official acceptance notification has been received from The Graduate School. Admission is typically for only one (1) graduate degree program at a time unless seeking dual graduate degrees (p. 3).

Applicants are typically admitted into the requested term. Occasionally, the admitting department may select a different starting term than originally requested by an applicant. This change can be due to a variety of reasons. For example, if qualified research advisors are unavailable, the capacity of the graduate program is exceeded, and so forth. Applicants should apply for the term they wish to be admitted. However, if an admitted student requests a change in the term admitted (i.e., a deferral), this request must be made in writing to both The Graduate School and the admitting department (email is acceptable). If approved, a deferral can be for up to one (1) year or two (2) terms, not including the summer term.

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**Note: Some departments will not allow a newly admitted student to defer their starting term.**

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**FULL ADMISSION** — A status of full admission is assigned when an applicant demonstrates the potential for success in graduate studies and they meet the requirements of the admitting department and The Graduate School. See the link to Application Requirements (p. 1).

**FULL ADMISSION WITH PROVISION** — A status of provisional admission is assigned when the applicant has not met the requirements for full admission. For example:

- a cumulative undergraduate GPA greater than 2.75, but less than 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale);
- insufficient rigor in the last two (2) years of study;
  - a major change in the area of specialization (e.g., B.A. in English, applying for an M.S. in Psychology);
  - other academic weaknesses.

The Graduate School assigns a provisional admission status with up to fifteen (15) credits of leveling coursework. The admitting department will communicate in writing to the applicant the leveling coursework on or before the first (1st) day of the term the student begins their graduate study. This coursework also will be listed in writing on the official acceptance letter from The Graduate School.

Applicants admitted provisionally may be suspended without a probationary period if the provisions placed on their admission have not been met. See the link to Suspensions ([http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-grades-academic-standing/#academic\\_probation](http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-grades-academic-standing/#academic_probation)).

**FULL ADMISSION WITH CONDITION** — A status of full admission with condition(s) results in a hold and occurs when the application is missing an official document, such as official transcripts or examination scores. See the link to Fees & Holds (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/policiestext-fees-and-holds/>).

**FULL ADMISSION WITH PROVISION & CONDITION** — A status of provisional admission with condition occurs when the applicant has been admitted with both provisions and conditions. See Provisional Admission and Conditional Admission above.

**DENIED ADMISSION** — Applicants may not be offered admission based on academic qualifications, low-examination scores, lack of available faculty/facilities, and so forth. The admitting department may recommend that the applicant enroll as a non-degree (p. 2) graduate student.

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#### 1.4 International Application Process

International applicants should provide the following during the online application process. In those cases where documents must be mailed, please use the following address: Montana State University, The Graduate School, P.O. Box 172580/104 Montana Hall, Bozeman, MT, 59717 or have electronic transcripts sent to: [gradschool@montana.edu](mailto:gradschool@montana.edu).

**Deadlines**—Each admitting department sets its own application process and deadlines. Look at the Programs on this link (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/programdetails.html>); each program name hyperlinks to learn more about the program, deadlines, what is needed to apply, if you need to secure a faculty advisor prior to applying, and more. Know that International applications must be prepared to submit a completed application with a **minimum of 120 days prior** to the start of the intended term. Many departments request more time for the application review, particularly if the department indicates a priority deadline pertaining to funding. MSU typically needs a minimum of 75 days from the time an offer is made to the start of the term to allow for the issuance of an I-20.

Requirements for application:

- A completed Application for Graduate Admission (<https://www.applyweb.com/msug/>).
- Payment of a non-refundable application fee of U.S. \$70.00, **which will not be waived, deferred, or refunded** (See Registrar's Residency webpage (<https://www.montana.edu/registrar/residency/resfaq.html>)). The fee must be paid by credit card before the application will be processed or reviewed.
- Evidence of English Language Proficiency (<http://www.montana.edu/international/admissions/englishproficiencygraduate.htm>). At the time of applying, MSU requires applicants from countries where English is a second language to present evidence of proficiency in the use of the English language. See the box below for the countries that were waived;

**if your country is not on the list, the English proficiency exam will not be waived.** Minimum test scores from acceptable testing agencies are TOEFL: 80-internet-based [iBT], IELTS: 6.5, or 120 Duolingo (We are not accepting Pearson's PTE at this time). These are only minimum scores; MOST departments have set higher scores, especially for those students who will be offered funding through an assistantship - check the program webpage to learn their requirements.

Certificates of completion with official grade reports and the instructor's recommendation from accredited alternative English as a Second Language programs may be considered and can be uploaded into the application for review, and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. MSU reserves the right to request students to submit additional proof of English proficiency, even if they meet the above-listed requirements.

- Transcripts reflecting all undergraduate and/or post-baccalaureate study from each international and U.S. college/university\*\*. **International transcripts must be translated and transcribed to US standards.** MSU does not require a specific accredited company to translate and transcribe international transcripts, but we can suggest the companies on this link to agencies who can perform this transcript requirement.

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**Note: MSU reserves the right to question the evaluation of all non-U.S. academic credentials/transcripts. We recommend using an accredited translation/transcription company, such as World Education Services (<https://www.wes.org/>) or other agencies found on this link.**

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- An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale). Applicants with post-baccalaureate coursework must have a graduate GPA of at least 3.00 (p. 1). Unofficial transcripts can be used for the application review process. If offered admission, you will be required to supply official transcripts. Official transcripts are only those which come directly from your previous university OR through a transcribing/translating company, directly to MSU.

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**Three (3) Year Bachelor's Degrees:** MSU accepts a three-year Bachelor's degree from applicants. You are welcome to submit an application which the department will review to determine whether you are a strong enough candidate to be admitted. If admitted, you may be asked to take some undergraduate courses at the start of your graduate degree at MSU to strengthen your background.

**Higher National Diplomas (NHD):** Students who have completed a Higher National Diploma (HND) may submit an application to Montana State University, which the department will review to determine whether you are a strong enough candidate to be admitted, provided that you have also completed a National Diploma (ND). You must submit transcripts and certificates for both degrees. If admitted, you may be asked to take some undergraduate courses at the start of your graduate degree at MSU to strengthen your background.

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**Note: If you have received a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate from an institution in the U.S. or a country listed below, an English proficiency examination is not required. If your country is not listed, the requirement to supply an English proficiency exam will not be waived:**

Anguilla  
 Antigua & Barbuda  
 Australia  
 Bahamas  
 Barbados  
 Belize  
 British Virgin Islands  
 Canada (except Quebec)  
 Cayman Islands  
 Dominica  
 Falkland Islands  
 Gibraltar  
 Ghana  
 Grenada  
 Guernsey  
 Guyana  
 Ireland  
 Isle of Man  
 Jamaica  
 Jersey  
 Liberia  
 Montserrat  
 New Zealand  
 St. Kitts & Nevis  
 St. Lucia  
 St. Vincent & the Grenadines  
 Trinidad & Tobago  
 Turks & Caicos Islands  
 United Kingdom  
 United States Territories

- Three (3) letters of reference. You will be asked to provide information about your references. The electronic process will prompt each reference to submit a signed reference letter in English. You do not need to wait to submit your application; these letters will move into your application even after it has been submitted.
- The Graduate Records Exam (GRE) is **NOT required to apply for any program at MSU**.
- Copy of applicant's passport.
- A personal statement.
- At the time of applying, MSU does not require certification of financial support from applicants with non-immigrant visas. The U.S. government requires international applicants to show proof of funds to cover at least the first year of study if they are offered admission. If you are receiving full funding from a department at MSU, you will not need to submit further information on your financial certificate. To understand the costs associated with attending MSU, please refer to the Cost to Attend MSU (<https://www.montana.edu/international/admissions/cost.html>) page. Students will need to submit the International Student Financial Certificate found on the OIP Forms Page (<https://www.montana.edu/international/admissions/forms.html>) and proof of funds when offered admission to MSU. This proof can be in the form of an official letter in English from a banking institution showing the amount of funds available to the applicant during the academic year. These documents can also be uploaded during the application process if you have them available at the time of applying. If an applicant will enroll in online courses only and will not

apply for a student visa to enter the U.S., it is not necessary to provide proof of funds.

- Immunization records are required once admitted (<https://www.montana.edu/health/immunization.html>). Registration holds are placed on all students until proof of required immunizations are submitted. Questions should be referred to the MSU Student Health Service at +1-406-994-2311.
- A resume, if required by the admitting department (<https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/programdetails.html>).

During the application process, an applicant can provide unofficial scores; however, if accepted, registration will be prohibited until an official score report is received from the testing service.

General Information— All international graduate students are required to comply with a number of U.S. regulations. See International Student and Scholars Information (<https://www.montana.edu/international/iss/acceptedstudents/>).

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