

Graduate Application Instructions

Thank you for your interest in Iowa State University! Please read these instructions carefully before beginning your application.

Admission Criteria

Admission criteria are established by both the Graduate College and by the graduate program.

- Iowa State requires a bachelor's or higher degree from a **regionally-accredited** college or university prior to beginning graduate studies. Because holding a degree from a regionally accredited institution is a fundamental requirement for graduate study at Iowa State University, no appeals to waive this requirement are considered.
- International degrees must be comparable to a US bachelor's degree or higher from a college or university regionally accredited/recognized by the Ministry of Education in that country.
- 3-year degrees from India, Bangladesh, Canada (excluding Quebec), Nepal, and Pakistan are not accepted. 3-year degrees from other countries are reviewed on an individual basis.
- A minimum cumulative grade point average equivalent to at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (B grade) is required for admission.
- The English proficiency requirements of the Graduate College and the graduate program to which you have applied must both be met prior to enrollment.
- There is no university-wide requirement that graduate applicants submit results from the Graduate Records Examination (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT); however, most programs do require one or the other.

Pre-application

Iowa State University's Graduate College has made the use of a pre-application available to graduate departments. Some departments have chosen to require or optionally use this Pre-application. **The pre-application is free, does not require letters of recommendation** or most other documents, and consists of only a subset of the primary applications questions, enough information for departments to make a recommendation on the applicant based on academics.

Starting an application or pre-application is the same no matter which method the department(s) use. **Applicants who apply using the pre-application, should hear something from their department within a few weeks.** If approved to move on to phase 2, applicants will then be asked to provide the remaining application requirements, documentation, letters of recommendation, and pay the application fee.

Deadlines

Deadlines represent the endpoint in the application process (i.e., the final completion of your file) rather than the beginning of that process. All materials with the exception of examination results should be received by the program deadline for timely consideration. Graduate programs vary in their willingness to consider late applications. Deadlines can be found in the [Program Requirements](#).

Application Processing Fee

The nonrefundable application fee for domestic students (US citizens, US permanent residents, refugees, asylees, DACA or undocumented) is \$60. The nonrefundable application fee for international applicants is \$100.

Multiple Programs

If you wish to apply to multiple programs, **you will incur multiple nonrefundable application fee charges (e.g., \$120 for two domestic applications, \$180 for three domestic applications).** You will not need to submit multiple copies of your supporting application materials, as those will be made available to all programs to which you apply.

Please note, however, that the programs will be informed that you are applying to multiple programs.

Fee Waivers

The only fee waivers offered are to McNair Scholars. US military veterans and those currently serving will have their application fee deferred until they enroll.

Completing the Application

Name

If variations of your name will appear on examination score reports or academic records, please provide those variations in the space provided. If you have only one name, please enter it in the last name or surname field. It is important that international applicants use the same spelling that appears on their passport to prevent problems with the visa process.

Address

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) require that international students requesting a student visa provide a residential address outside the United States. We recommend you avoid using PO Box addresses whenever possible as express mail carriers will not deliver to PO boxes.

Universities Attended

Please list your most recent university first, including the one you are currently attending. Note for Indian applicants: Please list the university that will award your degree, NOT the affiliated or constituent college in which you are enrolled.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

On the application, you are asked to provide your cumulative GPA at the undergraduate level (and graduate if appropriate). You should use the grading system used at your institution, and provide the maximum attainable score as well. For example, for U.S. schools, one would write "3.0/4.0." Students graded on percentage systems might write 80/100%. Examples of other systems include: 2nd Class Upper/1st Division; 7/10; 13/20, etc.

Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is part of the actual application form. **There is a strict limit of 500 words**, so we encourage you to be succinct. **Once submitted, no changes can be made, so please proofread your statement (as well as all other entries) carefully before submitting your application.** You can either add your statement of purpose in the field provided on the application form, or upload it as a separate document.

Online Recommendations

Iowa State University prefers that you use the online letter of recommendation process. By including your recommenders' names and e-mail addresses on the application form, they will be sent an email with a link to our online Letter of Recommendation form after you

submit your application. **Emails to your recommenders will not be sent until you pay the application fee and submit your application.** More details are provided in the **Letter of Recommendation** section of these instructions.

Previous Iowa State graduate students

If you were previously enrolled at Iowa State as a degree-seeking graduate in the last five years, you do not need to apply again. Contact your major professor to select courses and obtain registration information. If you were last enrolled as a degree-seeking graduate longer than five years ago, you should submit the "Reinstatement to Active Status" form (available on the Graduate College website) and gain the written approval of a graduate program and the Graduate College.

Examination Requirements

All examinations should be taken at least six weeks prior to the graduate program's application deadline to ensure timely receipt and processing of results. Test results must be sent directly from the testing agency to our institution to be considered official.

Please upload copies of any examination results you have at the time you apply as they may help the University locate your official test scores when your application is processed.

English Proficiency

For the purpose of applying to Iowa State, English may be considered your primary language if you have been raised in an environment where English is the only official language of your locality and nation, and English is the language used in your home. If your primary language is not English, you must meet the university's English proficiency requirement in one of the following ways:

1. Earn a bachelor's or higher degree from a country where English is the **only official** language, such as the following. (Complete list available from Admissions.)

Australia	Dominica	New Zealand
Bahamas	Ghana	Nigeria
Barbados	Grenada	Uganda
Belize	Guyana	United Kingdom
Bermuda	Ireland	United States (exc. PR)
Canada	Jamaica	Zambia
(exc. Québec)	Liberia	Zimbabwe

2. Submit official results from one of the following exams. The minimum requirements of both the Graduate College and the graduate program to which you are applying must be met. The minimum scores accepted by the Graduate College are:

- **Internet Based TOEFL (iBT) 79**
- **IELTS 6.5**
- **Pearson Test of English (PTE) 53**
- **DuoLingo English Test 105 (only approved through Fall 2021 admission cycle)**

Official TOEFL exam results must be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service to Iowa State electronically. **Our School Code is 6306.** The IELTS testing agency can send electronic results or may mail official results to the Office of Admissions, Iowa State University, 100 Enrollment Services Center, Ames, IA 50011-2011.

Graduate Records Examination (GRE)

Most programs do not enforce strict cut-off scores. Rather, they review an applicant's complete application package and credentials before making a decision. Official GRE results are sent electronically by the Educational Testing Service. **Our School Code is 6306.** No Department Codes are required.

Graduate Management Aptitude Test (GMAT)

The GMAT is accepted or required of applicants to business-related programs. Please check the [Program Requirements](#) page to determine if your program of choice requires it.

Academic Records

We allow students to upload official copies of academic records for the purposes of application review. Only if you are offered admission to Iowa State will you be required to submit official academic records. See more information about this in the Uploading Documents section, and in the Official Academic Record section.

Academic records are called different names in different countries. In the US, we call them official "transcripts." In India, the acceptable documents are referred to as "annual marksheets;" in Spanish-language countries, they may be called *certificado de estudios*; in France, *relevé de notes*. Records bearing the original stamp or seal of the school official responsible for issuing such records (the registrar, principal, controller of exams, etc.) are considered "official." Records certified by lecturers, professors, or any other school officials who do not hold primary responsibility for maintaining the academic records of the institution are not official. **Academic records printed from a school's website are also not accepted.**

Note for applicants from India We require semester or annual marksheets. College-issued *mark sheets* will only be accepted from autonomous colleges. Consolidated mark sheets are not accepted unless all attempts, retakes, and failures are included. Degree Statements must be issued and certified by the granting university, not the college. When uploading marksheets to your application account, select "Transcripts" not "Exams."

Official records bear the original stamp or seal of the school registrar. Iowa State will not accept transcripts printed from a school's website, nor grade reports.

If you have an electronic copy of your transcript, you cannot upload it directly, as the electronic signature is encrypted and will not allow you to do so. You will need to print a copy of it, and rescan the copy before uploading.

Translations Academic records should be in the official language of the country in which they were earned. If that is not English, an English language translation should be uploaded in addition to the official foreign language academic record. We will accept literal (not interpretative) English translations from any qualified translator.

Previous Iowa State students If you were previously enrolled at Iowa State, you do not need to request your Iowa State transcripts; the Office of Admissions will obtain them directly.

Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

The US Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (**FERPA**) gives enrolled students the right to view the contents of their application files. It is common practice to ask applicants for admission to sign a voluntary waiver of review rights, which means that if you enroll at Iowa State, you are giving up your rights to see the recommendations written on your behalf. You may refuse to give such a waiver. Before doing so, however, please understand that it is commonly assumed that recommenders will be more candid in their statements about you if they know the recommendation will be kept confidential. Some recommenders will refuse to submit a LOR for applicants that do not waive their right to view it.

Once you make your selection and submit your application, **you may not change your response to that question.**

E-mail Requests for Letters of Recommendation

Occasionally, a recommender will indicate they have not received our e-mail notification with the link to the LOR form. In that event, please check that you entered their e-mail address accurately on the

application. If not, you may edit the information on the application and send a reminder to the new address. If it was entered correctly, the e-mail may have been intercepted by the recommender's SPAM filter. Please ask them to check their SPAM folder for the message. As a last resort, they could provide you with an alternative e-mail address, or submit the PDF LOR provided on our website (instructions below).

Managing Your Online LORs

Iowa State's online application system allows you to track when your online LORs are submitted, as well as change recommenders, edit e-mail addresses, and send reminders to your recommenders.

To do so, go to [Graduate Apply](#), and click on "Online Application" (as if you are going to fill in another application). The Log In page will appear where you can reenter your User Name and Password to sign in. Click "Manage Documents" and you will be able to see and track the status of any online LOR. The following options are offered:

- **Cancel** If a recommender has not completed the letter, you may cancel the letter request. You will be returned to the Manage Documents page and allowed to add a new recommender name and e-mail.
- **Resend** If you would like to send a reminder, select Resend Email, and a new request will be sent to the recommender.
- **Edit** If you made an error in the e-mail address of a recommender, or if the recommender has now chosen to send a paper letter of recommendation, you may edit that information.
- **Add New Recommender** This will allow you to send a letter of recommendation request to a new individual not listed on the original application for admission.

PDF Letters of Recommendation

If a recommender does not wish to submit a LOR online, or has difficulty doing so, please follow these instructions:

1. Download the PDF copy of the [Letter of Recommendation](#) form, complete Sections 1 and 3, and save the completed form.
2. Send the form to your recommender. **You must include the postal address and/or e-mail address of the program to which you have applied** so your recommender will know where to send the form once completed. (You will find contact information on the [Program Requirements](#) section on the web.)
3. Please be aware that only online recommendation letters are tracked on the Online Application System. You will not be able to track PDF LORs on the online recommendation system. Those should be sent directly to the graduate program to which you apply. LORs should not be sent to the Office of Admissions.

Uploading your documents

In order to save you the time, effort, and expense of mailing supplemental application materials such as academic records, departmental forms, and resumes, we allow you to upload your supplemental materials at the time that you apply. Uploaded materials will be used to make the admissions decision. Only if you are offered admission to Iowa State will you be required to submit official academic records.

Documents may be uploaded at the same time that you submit your online application, or at a later date if necessary. The following are required:

- Scanned copies of **official** academic records and degree statements issued by any institution where you earned (or will earn) a bachelor's, and any institution attended after that (e.g., graduate work, etc.) Do NOT scan web-based transcripts or grade reports.
- Student copies of your examination results (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS, etc.)
- Any supplemental forms or materials required by the graduate program as indicated in the [Program Requirements](#).

Please do not upload the following:

- Undergraduate records of only one semester enrollment or 15 credits or less
- Secondary and/or pre-university records
- Merit certificates or certificates of participation
- Web-based advising reports or online transcripts
- Transcripts labeled "unofficial" or "grade report"
- Theses or dissertations

Scanning Tips

- Save your documents as a **PDF** files. We will not accept TIFF, JPEG, or Word files.
- If you have received an electronic transcript from your school, be aware that it is encrypted, and cannot be uploaded directly to our site. You must first download it, print it, and then scan it before uploading to our application.
- If scanning transcripts from multiple schools, scan them as individual files.
- If your academic record includes a legend or key which provides information on the university grading scale, please include ONE copy of that page.
- Scan the document at the lowest resolution possible to produce a legible document (maximum 300 dpi). The file size cannot exceed 3MB (3,000 KB).
- If the scanned file is still too large, make a photocopy of the document and then scan the photocopy.
- Please review the image after scanning to ensure it is legible. If it is not, delete it, and experiment with different scanner settings until you find one that results in a legible document.

Managing Your Documents

A list of the unofficial documents attached to your application can be found in this section of the Online Application System. You can also upload new documents that you did not have available when you submitted your application. Just remember that documents must be in PDF format and each document must not exceed 3 MB.

Difficulty in Uploading/Scanning

We understand that not all applicants have the ability to prepare scanned legible documents for upload to the online application system. Your application will receive full consideration as long as your official transcripts are in the Office of Admissions by the appropriate deadline.

Important Note: Iowa State reserves the right to rescind any offer of admission if any discrepancies are found between your uploaded and official academic records and test scores, if altered or forged records are submitted, and if any essay, personal statement, or other supplemental materials include plagiarized information. If this information is discovered after matriculation at the institution, disciplinary action may be taken up to and including dismissal from the university.

Application Processing

Upon receipt of the online application, all required academic records (transcripts), and satisfactory examination results, the Office of Admissions reviews your file for completeness, and makes it available to the graduate program(s) to which you have applied. During our peak review season, this can take up to 3 weeks. If you have not uploaded the required academic records, your file will be marked "Incomplete" and an e-mail will be sent to you informing you that a required academic record is missing.

If your academic records have been received, the graduate program will then review the rest of your file to determine if all the additional materials they require have been uploaded. Each graduate program

has its own processes for file review. Some may notify you when an item is missing; others will not contact you as they consider it the applicant's responsibility to meet their published requirements.

If the file is complete, it is made available to the program's admissions committee for review. Some graduate programs do their review on a rolling basis, and others wait until February or March and review all applicants at the same time. Please contact the graduate program directly for information on when their decisions are usually made.

The graduate program makes its admission recommendation to the Graduate College for the Dean's approval. If approved by the Dean, the Office of Admissions receives the electronic file and takes formal action.

Notification of Admission

Some departments notify the applicant of their recommendation to the Graduate College; others prefer to wait until the Graduate College has approved the decision and formal notification can be sent by the Office of Admissions.

Students in the US will receive their admission documents by US mail.

International Students

If you will be on an F-1 or J-1 visa, Admissions reviews your financial documents to ensure you have made satisfactory arrangements to cover your educational and living expenses (and those of any family members) for the duration of your program. If not, you will be notified what is missing. If you have sufficient private funds, a full scholarship, or have been given full funding by the graduate program, your file will be released for issuance of the visa eligibility form (I-20 or DS-2019).

The admission letter (and I-20 Form) will be forwarded to students residing outside of the US by Express Mail. (During the COVID-19 pandemic, official documents will be emailed to student residing outside of the US.)

Accepting your offer

You should contact the admitting department by email, your intent to enroll. The contact information for the department is in the [Program Requirements](#).

Official Transcripts

If you are approved by the Graduate Dean for admission to the university, you will be instructed to send hard copies of your official final academic records and degree statements. Documents you uploaded at time of application are not considered official.

Paper copies mail to:

Office of Admissions
100 Enrollment Services Center
2433 Union Drive
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-2011

Electronic transcripts

In some cases, Graduate Admissions is able to accept official electronic transcripts sent directly by your institution. If you wish to provide electronic transcripts, have your institution's Registrar send transcripts/credentials directly to etranscript@iastate.edu through a secure, approved, document-transfer service. Not all institutions offer secure document transfer.

Electronic documents sent as PDF attachments will not be accepted as official.

All materials submitted in support of your application of admission become the property of Iowa State University and will not be returned in original or copy.

Questions and Contacts

It is always our pleasure to assist students in their application process; however, we do ask that students read all instructions carefully before contacting us, as answers to your questions may have already been addressed.

In order to better serve you, please also note below which office should be contacted regarding application issues:

Office of Admissions

Online application form
Uploading documents
Academic records/degrees
English proficiency exams

Graduate Program

Letters of recommendation
GRE/GMAT examinations
Admissions/denial decisions
Assistantship decisions

Contact Us

Office of Admissions
100 Enrollment Services Center
2433 Union Drive
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-2011
Tel. 1 (515) 294-5836
Fax 1 (515) 294-2592
www.admissions.iastate.edu