

(Sent on behalf of Dr. Pedro Reyes, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)

To: Graduate Deans, The University of Texas System Academic Institutions

CC: Academic Provosts

From: Pedro Reyes, Ph.D., Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: Clarification on Rules Related to Graduate Admissions

Thank you again for your participation in the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting at System Administration. We appreciate your consideration of the two Student Advisory Council recommendations and have given your feedback to that group.

We also very much appreciate your participation in the discussion of graduate admissions. During that discussion, a few clarification questions about UT System/Regents' Rules were posed, and I would like to respond to those at this time.

The first question is whether the UT System could modify the requirement that an amendment to a graduate or professional program's admissions policies be published one year before it can be considered in the admissions process. That stipulation, which is articulated in [Regents' Rule 40303](#), comes from a Texas law, *Texas Education Code* § 51.842 (attached). Thus, it cannot be modified, unless State law is modified.

The second question is whether changes to a graduate or professional program's admissions policies, including changes to the criteria used for consideration of admission, must be approved by the Board of Regents. Our interpretation of [Regents' Rule 40303](#) is that any amendment must first be reviewed and approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor and then placed on the Consent Agenda of a Board of Regents meeting for final approval.

Please contact me or Kevin Lemoine ([klemoine@utsystem.edu](mailto:klemoine@utsystem.edu) or 512-499-4293) if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sec. 51.842. ADMISSION AND SCHOLARSHIP FACTORS FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS. (a) A graduate or professional program of a general academic teaching institution or medical or dental unit may consider the following factors in making an admissions or scholarship decision for admissions into or competitive scholarships for the graduate or professional program:

(1) an applicant's academic record as a high school student and undergraduate student;

(2) the socioeconomic background of the applicant while the applicant attended elementary and secondary school and was an undergraduate student, including any change in that background;

(3) whether the applicant would be the first generation of the applicant's family to attend or graduate from an undergraduate program or from a graduate or professional program;

(4) whether the applicant has multilingual proficiency;

(5) the applicant's responsibilities while attending elementary and secondary school and as an undergraduate student, including whether the applicant was employed, whether the applicant helped to raise children, and other similar factors;

(6) to achieve geographic diversity, the applicant's region of residence at the time of application and, if the applicant graduated from a public high school in this state within the preceding 20 years, the region in which the applicant's school district is located;

(7) the applicant's involvement in community activities;

(8) the applicant's demonstrated commitment to a particular field of study;

(9) for admission into a professional program, the current comparative availability of members of that profession in the applicant's region of residence while the applicant attended elementary and secondary school;

(10) whether the applicant was automatically admitted to a general academic teaching institution as an undergraduate student under Section 51.803; and

(11) the applicant's personal interview.

(b) An applicant's performance on a standardized test may not be used in the admissions or competitive scholarship process for a graduate or professional program as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant or as the primary criterion to end consideration of the applicant. If an applicant's performance on a standardized test is used in the admissions or competitive scholarship process, the applicant's performance must also be used to compare the applicant's test score with those of other applicants from similar socioeconomic backgrounds to the extent that those backgrounds can be properly determined and identified by the general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit based on information provided in the institution's or unit's admissions or competitive scholarship process. This subsection does not apply to a standardized test used to measure the English language proficiency of a student who is a graduate of a foreign institution of higher education.

(c) A general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit may not assign a specific weight to any one factor being considered in the admissions or competitive scholarship process for a graduate or professional program.

(d) Not later than one year before the date that applications for admissions and competitive scholarships are first considered for a graduate or professional program under this subchapter, each general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit shall publish in the catalog of the institution or unit a description of the factors to be considered by the institution or unit in making those admissions and competitive scholarship decisions and shall make the information available to the public.

(e) Expired.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1039, Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2001. Renumbered from Education Code Sec. 51.822 by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1275, Sec. 2(25), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.