

By carefully weighing strengths, achievements, and the ways in which an applicant might contribute to educational environment of the graduate degree program, evaluators increase the likelihood that they offer admission to those most likely to succeed. Predicated on these principles, the Graduate School, in collaboration with the holistic review faculty working group, offered a new section in the Hobsons Fall 2018 graduate program application. The added content was intended to help graduate programs complete a holistic review of applicants, better understanding some of the non-cognitive skills diverse applicants possess that can promote student success.

In the holistic review process—also known as full file review—readers give careful consideration to all the credentials presented by the student for indicators of qualities known to contribute to successful graduate degree completion. Holistic review ensures that no single factor leads to either accepting the applicant or excluding them from consideration. Further, holistic review seeks to determine if the applicant has not only the academic qualifications for admission, but also the skills and experiences that facilitate degree completion and a successful research career.

Predicated on these principles, the Graduate School, in collaboration with the holistic review faculty working group, offered a new section in the Hobsons application to graduate programs as of Fall 2018. The content of this section (see images below) was intended to help graduate programs understand some of the non-cognitive skills applicants possess. Through added contact between applicants and programs, **both entities can make more informed decisions about pursuing a course of study in a particular department/program.**

### **Recommendations/Resources**

The Graduate School understands the disciplinary variance in admissions review. As a graduate community, therefore, it is important to understand how this section was used by each of the 95 participating programs (47 Ph.D., 48 professional). At the end of the cycle, the Graduate School will survey programs, distribute results and convene to discuss the merits of this application section.

The Graduate School and the faculty working group therefore recommends the following:

1. Develop a rubric or strategy which allows a program to assess and incorporate information learned through the new holistic review questions. The attached non-cognitive attributes rubric can be a helpful guide.
2. Gain access to the Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridge program's admissions toolkit Dropbox for holistic admissions: <http://fisk-vanderbilt-bridge.org/tool-kit/>. It provides research, GRE scoring information, non-cognitive skills assessment, mentoring best practices and other resources.
3. Monitor the use of the new section through an established set of metrics:
  - a. Number of people who responded to the additional section (and which questions).
  - b. Of the people who responded: admissions recommendation, interview (yes/no, if appropriate for the review process), enrollment status (i.e. acceptance of offer).
  - c. Make note of recommendations, modifications and best practices to share with the enterprise.

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### Additional Educational Experiences

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are required and must be answered.

#### Additional Educational Experiences

Consistent with our mission, the University of Maryland counts its diversity as one of its greatest strengths, and as an institution, we are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Carefully weighing strengths and achievements in and outside of the classroom allows evaluators to better understand applicants' unique experiences, potential for success, and prospective contributions to the graduate educational environment. If you wish, you may share any experiences you've had with the following. Select all categories to which you'd like to respond. Please note that all responses are optional. (Select all categories to which you would like to respond.)

**Please note: These questions are optional.**

Community involvement and/or service  
*Explain: (2000 characters)*

Characters left in your response 2000

Engagement in leadership roles, facilitating change, or mentoring others  
*Explain: (2000 characters)*

Characters left in your response 2000

Overcoming social, economic, educational or physical barriers  
*Explain: (2000 characters)*

Characters left in your response 2000

Overcoming social, economic, educational or physical barriers  
*Explain: (2000 characters)*

Characters left in your response 2000

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Attribute	Score		
	High	Medium	Low
Positive Self-Concept	Expresses confidence they can complete challenging goals, makes positive statements about abilities	Shows confidence and independence but may be unsure about adequacy or skills	Is unsure they can complete the program, exhibits low self-esteem
Realistic Self-Appraisal	Can clearly and realistically delineate strengths and weaknesses, works on self development	Has trouble identifying strengths and weakness but appreciates/seeks both positive and negative feedback	Over or understates abilities, does little to no self-assessment, does not appear to have learned from experiences
Preference for Long vs. Short Term Goals	Clearly communicates long-range goals beyond the PhD	Primary goal is PhD completion	Is vague about long-term goals, or goals are short term such as coursework
Support Person Availability	Can define a professional support network including mentors	Expresses support from one individual, or family or community	Expresses little or no support from family or institution for goals
Leadership/Community Involvement	Demonstrates involvement and leadership ability in either academics, family, community, religious group, or athletics	Demonstrates involvement in groups in academia or extramural but has not shown leadership	Not involved in institutional or community group, no demonstrated leadership
Knowledge in a Field/Non-Traditional Learning	Has engaged in, and learned from, experiences outside the classroom, i.e. performed independent research, extramural activities, self-taught skills	Shows some evidence of non-traditional learning experience	Has not engaged in or indicated learning from experiences outside the classroom
Perseverance	Can describe a time they failed or encountered an obstacle and successfully coped.	Can identify a time they hit an obstacle but has trouble defining how they overcame the challenge.	Has little experience with failure/obstacles. Cannot provide an example or describe response

Modified from Sedlacek