

Title: Separating Verbal and Quantitative GRE Score Minimums for Doctoral Students and Removal of School-Wide Default Master's Minimums

GSC presenters: Sarah Lubienski, Vic Borden, Karen Wohlwend

This proposal is for a...

program change new program policy change new policy

1. What are you proposing and why? (If proposing a change, then the description and rationale should be relevant to the change(s) only.)

GRE Minimums for Doctoral Students

Our school currently requires a minimum verbal and quantitative score sum of at least 302 (and writing of 4.0, which this policy would not change). In order to use the scores in a more valid way, **we propose these separate default minimum scores for SoE doctoral programs requiring the GRE:**

150 Verbal – roughly 48th percentile nationally, 30th percentile for our students

145 Quantitative – roughly 20th percentile nationally, 20th percentile for our students

(Our writing score is roughly 59th percentile nationally; about a third of our students score below that.)

Rationale: The GRE verbal, quantitative and writing scores are intended to be interpreted individually when used for admissions (e.g., see guideline #2 of the “GRE Guidelines for the Use of Scores.”

https://www.ets.org/gre/institutions/admissions/using_scores/guidelines?WT.ac=40361_owt19_180820).

These scores were chosen after considering the verbal and quantitative score distributions of students who enrolled in our programs since 2007, as well as the importance of verbal skills across all doctoral programs in the School of Education. Additionally, we chose scores that were rounded to the nearest 5 to convey to applicants that these are guidelines more than strictly enforced minimums.

The sum of our two proposed scores is now 295 instead of 302, but this does not actually make it “easier” to meet the criteria. About 40% of our doctoral students have scored below our current suggested minimum of 302. Similarly, about 40% of our students scored below 150 verbal AND below 145 quantitative (but only 4% were below BOTH of these scores).

Master's and Specialist Programs

We propose eliminating the school-wide requirement that master's and specialist applicants must have a sum of 291 on the GRE verbal and quantitative tests and a 3.5 writing score. Programs could still advertise and use these admission requirements if they wish. However, we would no longer post these as general school-wide minimums.

Rationale: Many of our master's programs are eliminating the GRE, at least for domestic students. In comparison to Ph.D. students, struggling master's and specialist students less often tax the efforts of faculty, staff and administrators (particularly those outside of their program). As GRE requirements for masters programs become more varied and more the exception than the rule in the SoE, it seems reasonable to remove the school-wide minimum and allow master's programs to use scores as they wish. Specialist degrees are relatively rare in our school, and given the course-work focus of these degrees (i.e., no dissertation), it seems sensible for the school-wide requirements to follow those of our master's degrees. Again, specific specialist programs may maintain their own minimum GRE scores.

Additional note about the SoE Website:

Earlier this fall, the main SoE website language about GRE requirements needed immediate revision due to the changing requirements of our programs. Along with those changes, the Graduate Studies Committee approved softening the language around minimum scores to emphasize a more holistic review of applications, which reflects our current discussions about the GRE and our faculty's actual practices. If this proposal is approved, the website language would then read as follows:

GRE requirements vary between programs. Please refer to [program-specific pages](#) to see if the GRE is required for the program to which you are applying.

If the GRE is required, then the test must have been taken within five years prior to application (exceptions for current or prior IU students may be granted). For programs requiring the GRE, admitted doctoral applicants typically have a GRE ~~combined-verbal and quantitative~~ score of ~~302~~ 150 or better, a quantitative score of 145 or better, and an analytical writing score of 4.0 or better. ~~Specialist and master's applicants who are admitted generally have a GRE combined-verbal and quantitative score of 291 or better and an analytical writing score of 3.5 or better. Despite these suggested minimums~~ However, programs look at applicants' materials holistically and consider all evidence of students' strengths when making admission decisions.

2. How will this impact enrollment?

The suggested minimums were chosen to be roughly similar in terms of selectivity as the previous 302 sum. The more holistic emphasis in the new website language combined with dropping an explicit, school-wide minimum for masters and specialist students could boost applications. (For example, the GSO admissions staff have been asked "should I bother applying?" by students who scored just below our minimums).

3. How will this impact students' time to degree?

Minimally, if at all.

4. How will this impact specific student populations and/or DEI issues?

If some populations are prone to having higher scores in one area and lower scores in another, the old method of summing scores potentially helped those groups meet our criteria for admission. However, if students score somewhat below the mean on both, these students would now more easily meet the minimum score (since the sum of the 2 new scores is lower than before).

5. How will this impact School of Education resources, including faculty loads?

If individual master’s programs do not maintain minimum GRE scores, we might enroll more master’s students who could struggle in our courses, requiring additional faculty efforts to help them succeed. However, there is no clear evidence from empirical studies that this is likely and closer attention to other forms of evidence could avoid this issue. Removal of masters minimums would mean a bit less faculty and staff time spent on dealing with exceptions.

6. How will this be effectively sustained over time?

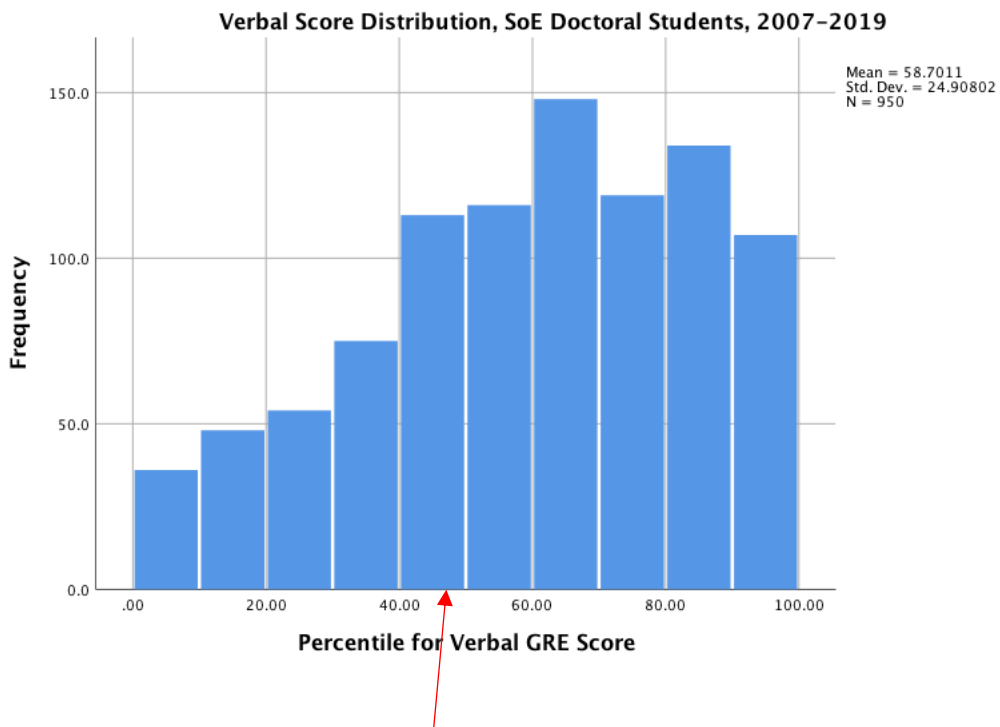
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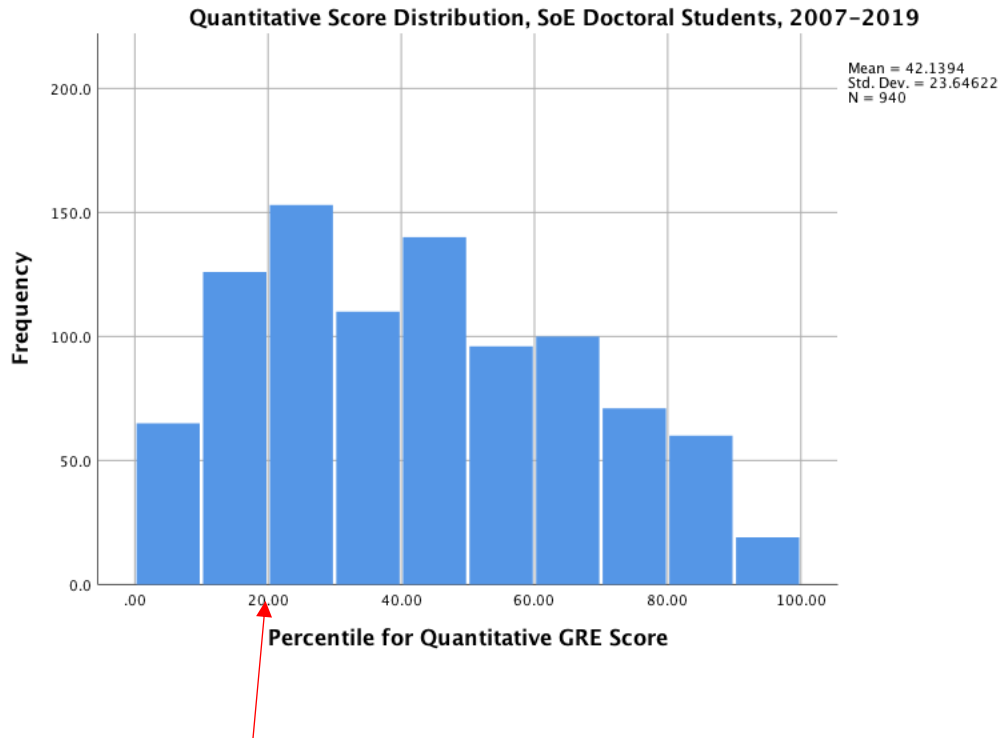
APPENDIX for those who are interested...

Histograms Showing the Distribution of SoE Doctoral Students’ Scores

Red Arrow Indicates Approximate Proposed Cutoff

(percentiles used due to differences in score meanings across the years)





Current status of GRE requirements for master's students

Program	Domestic	INTL
M.S.Ed. in Adult Education (Online)	undergrad GPA is below 3.20	Required
M.S.Ed. in Art Education	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Counseling and Counselor Education – School Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Learning and Developmental Sciences – Counseling Psychology Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Mental Health Counseling and Counselor Education – Mental Health Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Mental Health Counseling and Counselor Education – Addictions Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Elementary Education – Early Childhood Education Track	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Educational Leadership (Online)	Not required	Not required
M.S.Ed. in Elementary Education – Elementary Education Track	undergrad GPA is below 3.20	Required
M.S.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in History and Philosophy of Education	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in Learning and Developmental Sciences – Inquiry Methodology Track	Required	Required

M.S.Ed. in Instructional Systems Technology (Online or Residential)	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education (Online)	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education – General Track	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education – Educational Leadership Track	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education – Higher Education Track	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution	not required if undergrad or graduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution
M.S.Ed. in Learning and Developmental Sciences – Educational Psychology Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Learning and Developmental Sciences – Learning Sciences Track	Required	Required
M.S.Ed. in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (Online or Residential)	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Secondary Education – Mathematics Education Track	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Secondary Education – Science Education Track	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Secondary Education – General Track	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Social Studies Education	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required
M.S.Ed. in Special Education (Residential or Online)	undergrad GPA is below 3.00	Required