

Graduate Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies is the administrative office that coordinates many student services related to graduate students. These services include the Graduate Assistant Program, the Teaching Assistant Program, academic policies concerning graduate students, and some scholarship programs. The associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the operation of this office.

The Graduate Council works closely with the dean of Graduate Studies. The council, which is made up of chairs of all graduate programs, provides advice regarding the quality and standards of graduate education, review of existing and proposed programs, and policy and procedures regarding admissions, degree requirements, and related matters.

All graduate students are invited to visit the Office of Graduate Studies, located at 45 Exeter Street, Portland. The office can be reached by phone at (207) 780-4877 or e-mail at gradstudies@usm.maine.edu. The Web site for the office is www.usm.maine.edu/grad. Graduate students are also advised to maintain close contact with the appropriate director or graduate coordinator in their school, college, or program.

Graduate Admissions

The Graduate Admissions Office oversees the application process for all graduate programs at the University of Southern Maine (except the University of Maine School of Law). The director of Graduate Admissions reports directly to the associate provost and dean of Graduate Studies, and works closely with the dean to assist graduate students from the time of application to graduation. All application materials should be sent directly to University of Southern Maine, Office of Graduate Admissions, P.O. Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104-9300. For more information, visit: www.usm.maine.edu/grad/admission.html. The office is located at 39 Exeter Street and can be reached at (207) 780-4386 or gradstudies@usm.maine.edu. Deadlines for admission vary by program.

The following policies and procedures apply generally; consult the particular degree program for specific information.

To be admitted to graduate study, an applicant must have received a baccalaureate degree or the equivalent from a regionally accredited college or university and show promise of ability to pursue advanced study and research in the appropriate program.

Required Submissions

- A. A completed application.
- B. Letters of recommendation.
- C. Official transcript(s) of *all* previous undergraduate and graduate work.
- D. Official score(s) from standardized tests required by the program (e.g., Graduate Record Examination, Miller Analogy Test). Scores must be for tests taken within five years of application deadlines. (Please note that it often takes six weeks for test score reports to be received from the testing agency.) Self-reported test scores, received by the application deadline, may be used for purposes of application review, but no admission decision can be made until official test scores have been received from the testing agency.
- E. Official TOEFL scores of 550 or higher on the paper-based test, 79 or higher on the Internet-based test, or 213 or higher on the computer-based test if the applicant is an international student whose first language is not English. International students who have received their undergraduate degree from an English-speaking institution may apply for a waiver of this requirement.
- F. A nonrefundable \$50 application fee with the application.
- G. A current résumé.
- H. Any other materials as defined by the school or college. Please check the Web site of the program to which you are applying.

For additional policies and procedures governing application to a particular school or college at USM, please refer to the program description in this catalog under each of the respective schools or colleges.

Submission of Application

All documents relating to an application for admission to graduate study are to be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions on the Portland campus. Once all materials are received they will be forwarded to the appropriate graduate unit for review. Final action on the status of the application is taken by the respective graduate program. Notification of final action is made by the Office of Graduate Admissions. All papers relating to an application become the property of the University of Southern Maine. Applicants are responsible for seeing that all application materials are received by the appropriate office and are postmarked by the application deadline. Criteria for application *review* may be determined by individual schools, colleges, or programs. The Graduate Admissions Office must determine that an application has met the criteria for final admission.

International Student Applications

Students whose first language is not English are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and submit scores as part of the application documents. *Only applicants with TOEFL scores of 550 or higher on the paper-based test, 213 or higher on the computer-based test, or 79 or higher on the Internet-based test will be considered for admission to a graduate program.* Individual graduate programs may have higher score requirements. International students who received their undergraduate degree from an English-speaking institution may apply for a waiver of this requirement. Please contact the Graduate Admissions Office for more information on submitting a request for a waiver.

Transcripts from universities outside of the United States must be translated into English and, and must be accompanied by verification that the degree received is equivalent to a United States bachelor's degree. Please see information for international students on the Graduate Admissions Web site at www.usm.maine.edu/grad/international.html for a list of agencies that can provide this verification.

Application Deadlines

Applications for admission and supporting material must be postmarked by the deadlines set by the individual graduate programs. Please refer to the appropriate program description for specific information.

Deadline for Enrollment

An applicant admitted for full-time or part-time study must register in that semester for which he or she has been admitted unless other arrangements are formally made with the program to which he or she has been admitted. The Office of Graduate Admissions must receive written notification of any such arrangements.

Application to Graduate Certificate Programs

Candidates must submit all application materials directly to the Office of Graduate Admission. Candidates for admission must submit:

- a) Application for Certificate Program, including a \$15 nonrefundable application fee;
- b) Official transcripts or copies of official transcripts from all colleges and universities from which you received a degree;
- c) Current resume;
- d) Personal statement;

Additional or other special admission requirements specified by program.

The application for certificate programs is available at the Graduate Studies Web site at www.usm.maine.edu/grad.

Immunization Law

Maine state law requires all individuals born after December 31, 1956, who plan to enroll in a degree program or plan to take 12 or more credits, to show proof of immunity against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, and tetanus before registering for classes.

Immunization records must be on file with Student Health Services before students will be allowed to register for classes.

Specific information about immunization requirements is sent with admissions packets, and is also available in most departments and at Student Health Services. The Immunization Hotline number is (207) 780-4504.

Readmission

A student previously registered in a graduate program who has failed to maintain continuous enrollment or who has withdrawn or been withdrawn from the program, or a student who has failed to matriculate in accordance with the enrollment deadline and who wishes to resume studies, must file an application for readmission to graduate school by the regularly published deadlines for the semester or summer session and register during the usual registration period. The application for readmission is to be accompanied by official transcripts of any work attempted in the interim, a fee of \$15.00, and any other relevant or required updated material.

Classification of Admissions

Regular admission is granted a student who has a record of high scholarship and about whom there is no question of ability to carry on graduate study.

In some instances, conditional admission may be granted to a student who does not meet the established requirements or standards, provided there is sufficient evidence to show that the student is capable of doing satisfactory graduate work. Prospective students should consult the specific graduate program for further information. A program that admits a student conditionally determines the conditions that the student must meet. If a program determines that a student has not met these conditions, the student may be withdrawn from the program.

Transfer Credit

Transfer credit is credit earned for coursework prior to matriculation into a graduate program at the University of Southern Maine. Credit may be received for coursework completed at the University of Southern Maine or at another institution. Such credit is normally approved only at the time of admission and request for approval must be included as part of the admissions application. The amount of transfer credit is determined by each graduate program. Transfer credit will not be approved for: 1) courses that would not have received graduate credit at the University of Southern Maine; 2) courses that exceed time limits prescribed for a particular degree program; 3) courses in which a grade lower than a B was received; 4) courses that are inappropriate for inclusion in the student's program of study. For specific policies regarding transfer credit, please consult the appropriate section of this catalog. To facilitate the evaluation of transfer credits for courses taken at institutions other than the University of Southern Maine, the applicant should include a copy of the course description taken from the institution's catalog that was in effect the year the course was taken.

Admission of Individuals with Disabilities

The University does not discriminate against qualified applicants on the basis of a physical or mental disability. All classroom buildings and two dormitories are equipped with ramps for wheelchair access. The University Library contains a Kurzweil Reading Machine to assist the visually impaired. Most elevator buttons are coded in Braille. An applicant reporting a physical handicap will be advised to schedule an interview with the University Coordinator of Academic Support Services for Students with Disabilities.

Academic Support for Students with Disabilities

The Academic Support for Students with Disabilities Office works with students to overcome obstacles they may face and to develop strategies and support services for achieving academic success at the University of Southern Maine.

Any USM student with a physical, hearing, medical, emotional, or learning disability who is taking a credit bearing course is eligible for services. Students may be asked to provide documentation.

Academic services may include: tutors; notetakers; taped readings; test proctoring; extra time on tests; interpreters (when appropriate). Students are advised to contact the office before each semester to plan their programs so that appropriate accommodations can be made. A lift-operated van is available upon request to provide transportation between campuses for students with wheelchairs. The Academic Support for Students with Disabilities Office is located in 242 Luther Bonney Hall on the Portland campus. Call (207) 780-4706 (voice) or (207) 780-4395 (TTY) to schedule an appointment.

Appeal of Admissions Decisions

Applicants may appeal an admissions decision by submitting a written appeal to the director of the appropriate program. The appeal will be reviewed by the director, or the appropriate graduate program faculty, and the director will notify the student of action taken on the appeal. Should the student wish to pursue the appeal process further, a written appeal should be submitted to the dean of Graduate Studies. The

applicant's letter should include all information she or he believes should be taken into account in reviewing the decision.

Matriculation in a Second Program

Occasionally students seek to pursue a second program, either after graduating from their first program, or prior to completing the first program. In either case, the student must apply for admission to the new program. All courses, grades, and quality points taken at the graduate level will be recorded on one transcript. The new program will determine which courses will count toward graduation. Typically a maximum of 9 credits may count toward both degrees.

Professional Licensure and Certification Notice

Students who are pursuing degrees leading to application for professional licensure or certification, and/or who will be participating in clinical placements, internships, or practica through their USM program should be aware that their host facility may require a criminal background check, finger printing, or drug screening. In such situations, each student is responsible for obtaining and paying for the background check or other screening process and for delivering required documentation to the facility. Although the University will make reasonable efforts to place admitted students in field experiences and internships, it will be up to the host facility to determine whether a student will be allowed to work at that facility. Students should further be aware that a criminal record may jeopardize licensure by the state certification body. Students may consult the certification body corresponding to their intended occupation for more details. Successful completion of a program of study at USM does not guarantee licensure, certification, or employment in the relevant occupation.