

**Minutes of the Graduate Council
March 24, 2023**

Members in Attendance:

Ali Beskok, Alan Itkin, Elfi Kraka, Anna Lovatt, Renee McDonald, Brian Molanphy, Volkan Otugen, Anthony Petrosino, Robin Poston, Dinesh Rajan, Gretchen Smith

Members Not in Attendance:

Kate Carté, Akihito Kamata, Alexandra E. Pavlakis

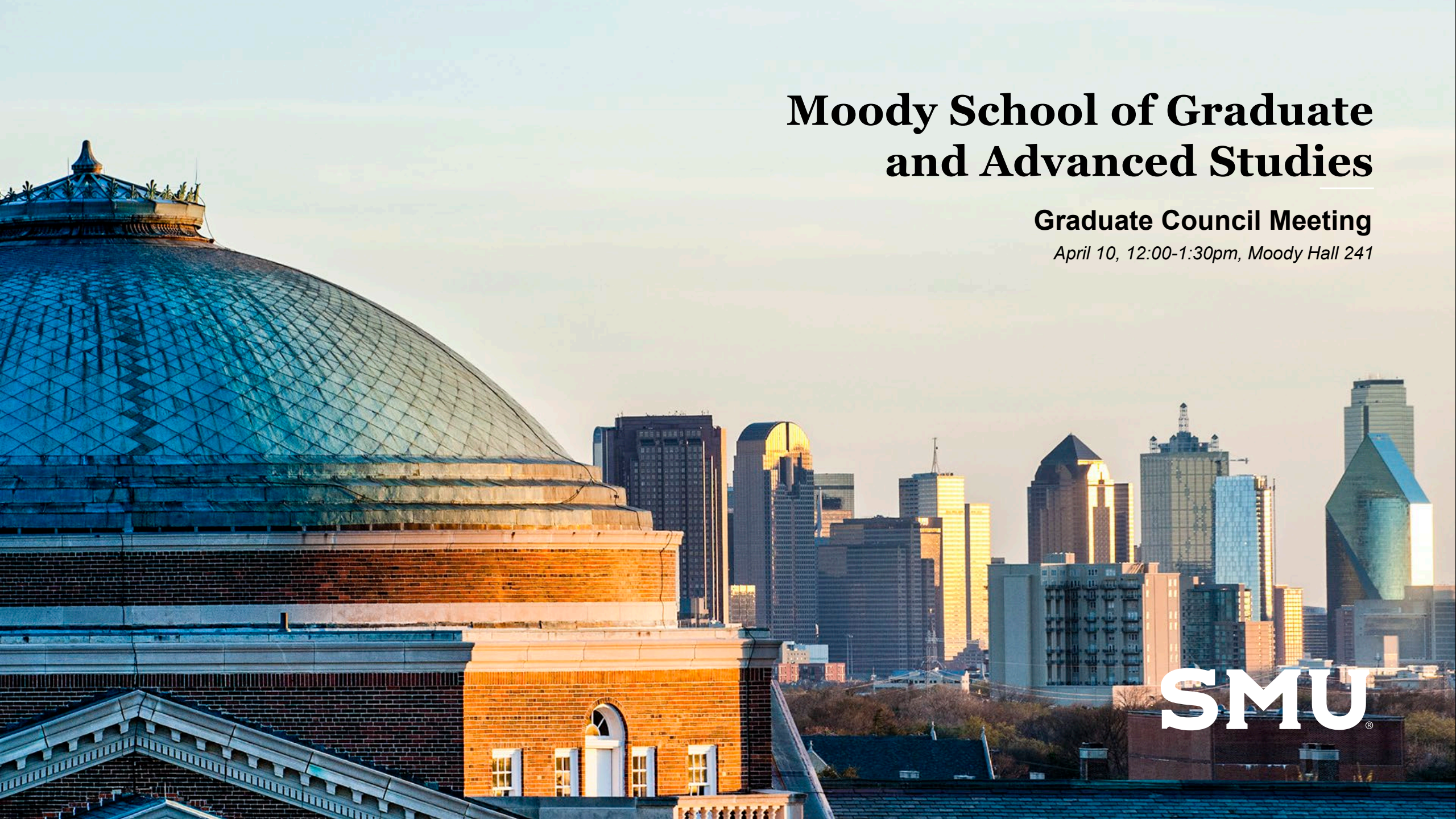
Business:

- **DPRs for Graduate Programs:** Joe Papari, Director of Enrollment Services for Student Systems and Technology in the University Registrar's Office, explained that federal financial aid and other regulations require Universities to be able to demonstrate that courses students are taking are counting towards their degrees. For this reason, the Registrar's office is developing Degree Progress Reports (DPRs), which are a means of demonstrating this, for all SMU graduate programs (they exist for undergraduate majors and minors already). Mr. Papari demonstrated the DPRs that had been developed for one graduate program, the Master of Applied Statistics and Data Analytics program in Dedman College. Mr. Papari offered to work with any schools that wished to begin developing DPRs for their programs right away. Dr. McDonald suggested that it might make sense to continue working on the Dedman College master's programs, starting with the other programs in the Statistics and Data Science Department. Mr. Papari will reach out to her to plan for doing so.
- **Minutes of the February Meeting:** Approval of the minutes of the February 10 meetings was moved, seconded, and carried. Prof. Molanphy requested that Council members be invited to provide comments on the minutes in advance of the vote, and Drs. Poston and Itkin confirmed that the Council members will be able to comment on the minutes in Box.
- **Graduate Appeals Policy:** Dr. Poston reviewed the Graduate Grade Appeal Policy that had been developed by members of the Graduate Council with input from many stakeholders, including the Faculty Senate (see slide 9 below). Prof. Molanphy mentioned that there is now a Graduate Education Committee in the Faculty Senate and suggested that, in future, that would most likely be the best committee to review similar proposals on behalf of the Faculty Senate. Dr. McDonald recommended sharing the proposal with department chairs and other university stakeholders to make sure that everyone who needs to know about the coming change is informed. Prof. Molanphy recommended that the final version be clearly marked to make sure there is no confusion. Dr. Poston called for a motion to approve the policy. Approval of the graduate appeals policy was moved, seconded, and carried by a unanimous vote of all Council members present.

- **Provost R1 Investments:** Dr. Poston discussed the proposals for funding for doctoral students and postdocs that had been shared with the Provost (slides 6-7). \$800,000 has been set aside for funding initiatives to increase doctoral conferrals, especially in humanities and social science fields, and \$1.05 million has been set aside for initiatives intended to increase the number of science and engineering postdocs. Dr. Poston explained that the Provost is still reviewing the proposals.
- **Moody School Fellowship Offers:** Dr. Itkin went through the results of fellowship nominations so far and showed the Council which students offered Moody Graduate, Mustang, and University Fellowships had accepted the offer of admission, declined the offer, or not yet responded to the offer. Dr. Rajan asked if applicants who were on the waitlist for a fellowship but had already accepted the offer of admission would still be considered for a fellowship. Drs. Poston and Itkin confirmed that these applicants would remain on the waitlist and would still be considered for a fellowship, if funding became available.
- **PhD Health Insurance Program:** Dr. Itkin described how the PhD Health Insurance program works and explained some of the issues that had arisen related to paying students in a timely fashion (slides 12-14). Dr. Rajan suggested that the schools could be responsible for assigning awards and could be held accountable if there is a discrepancy between the list of those who have been awarded and those who meet the eligibility criteria. Dr. McDonald suggested that department administrators could be granted access to a query that would generate a list of students in their department who could be eligible for a health insurance award. The Council discussed this and agreed that a subcommittee—Dr. McDonald, Dr. Otugen, Dr. Lovatt, and Dr. Itkin—would discuss it and come up with a proposal for the full Graduate Council.
- **English Language Proficiency Requirement:** International graduate applicants are currently required to provide English language proficiency scores unless they have an undergraduate degree from a short list of English-speaking countries. Dr. Poston explained that there had been complaints about this list. She shared alternative approaches at Vanderbilt University and UT Austin (slides 16-18). The Council discussed this and agreed that a hybrid approach, with some countries' students provided an automatic waiver of the language requirement with other students being allowed to petition for a waiver, might be best.
- **Graduate Honor Code:** Dr. Poston went through the current honor code policy that applies to SMU undergraduates as well as graduate students in Dedman College, Lyle, Moody, and Simmons (slide 20). She proposed modifying the policy to allow graduate students to be reviewed by an honor council comprised mainly of graduate students and said that she would be discussing this with Dr. Mmeje, Vice President for Student Affairs.
- **Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards:** Dr. Itkin shared the list of winners of the Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards and thanked the Council members and others who served on the selection committee (slide 22).
- **Moody Hall Glass Pillars:** Dr. Poston described glass pillars outside of the Dean's Office on the third floor of Moody Hall and requested input for text or images that could appear on the glass in these

pillars (slide 24). Dr. Beskok mentioned that the Deason Innovation Gym (DIG) could print plexiglass plates with text and images, so that could be an easy and inexpensive option to replace the glass plates regularly. Dr. Poston suggested that the glass pillars could display the core values of the university.

- **Moody Faculty Fellowships:** Dr. Itkin described the goals agreed upon with the Moody Foundation for Moody Faculty Fellowships (slide 26). Funding for this initiative is included in the \$100 million gift from the Moody Foundation. Tony Petrosino, Renee McDonald, Ali Beskok, and Anna Lovatt volunteered to serve on a subcommittee to produce proposals for the full Council for how the program would work.
- Meeting adjourned.



Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Graduate Council Meeting

March 24, 2023, 1:00-2:30pm, Zoom Meeting

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Meeting Agenda

1. DPRs for Graduate Programs (visit from Bobby Lothringer and Joe Papari)
2. Minutes of the February 10 Meeting
3. Provost R1 Investments (Doctoral Students and Postdocs)
4. Graduate Appeals Policy
5. Moody School Fellowship Offers
6. PhD Health Insurance Program
7. English Proficiency Requirement
8. Graduate Honor Council
9. Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards
10. Moody Hall Glass Pillars
11. Moody Faculty Fellowships
12. Other Items

DPRs for Graduate Programs



Minutes of the February Meeting



<https://smu.box.com/s/jtrrptqpy32osv2kj775th1fgk2lupdt>

Provost R1 Investments



Provost R1 Investments

Proposals for additional doctoral student support for the Road to R1

Funding Initiative	Description	Amount Proposed
Provost's Doctoral Candidacy Fellowship	Provost's Doctoral Candidacy Fellowships are intended to support PhD students in the humanities and social sciences who have performed well in the early stages of their programs and demonstrated strong potential to complete their degrees. They are also intended to expand the pool of funding for humanities and social science PhD programs and to increase the size of those programs and the number of PhD degrees they confer and encourage graduation in R1 year of record.	\$595,000
Provost's Research Grant Enhancement Awards	Faculty in social science and humanities departments who secure grant research funding will be eligible to apply for a Provost's Research Grant Enhancement Award.	\$70,000
Provost's Discretionary Doctoral Fellowships	Provost's Discretionary Doctoral Fellowships provide faculty in social science and humanities departments the ability to recruit the best and brightest students possible to join SMU with the support of their college/schools' Dean's Office.	\$105,000
Provost's Summer Research Grant Awards	Provost's Summer Research Grant Awards accelerate degree completion for PhD students in humanities and social sciences by supporting their dissertation research during the summer. Provost's Summer Research Grant Award provides up to \$5,000 per student for summer research support.	\$30,000
		\$800,000

Additional possibilities

Provost's Liberal Studies Scholarship	Provost's Liberal Studies Scholarships provide tuition scholarships of \$15,000/yr for incoming Doctor of Liberal Studies students who commit to pursue their studies full time and complete the degree within three years. Scholarship funds will be used to staff additional classes needed to increase cohort size.	\$60,000
Provost's Religious Studies COVID Delay Return Fund	Provost's Religious Studies COVID Delay Return Funds provide stipends of \$20,000/yr and \$4,000/yr for health insurance for up to three years for current Doctor of Religious Studies students who were derailed by COVID in making progress toward their degree completion. These funds allow them to return to full time study in the program and complete their degrees.	\$48,000

Provost R1 Investments

Proposals for additional postdoctoral scholar support for the Road to R1

Funding Initiative	Description	# of Postdoc Positions	Amount Proposed
Provost's Science & Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowship Program	Provost's Science & Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to support post-doctoral candidates in Science and Engineering fields as measured by the ACE Carnegie Foundation. They are intended to expand the pool of funding for science and engineering research programs and to increase the number of science and engineering postdocs on the SMU campus, with special consideration for their being employed at SMU in the ACE Carnegie R1 year of record.	12	\$840,000
Provost's Science & Engineering Research Grant Enhancement Awards	Provost's Science & Engineering Research Grant Enhancement Awards are intended to reward research productive faculty who secure new external funding and support post-doctoral candidates in science and engineering fields as measured by the ACE Carnegie Foundation. They are intended to expand the pool of funding for science and engineering research programs and to increase the number of science and engineering postdocs on the SMU campus, with special consideration for their being employed at SMU in the ACE Carnegie R1 year of record.	3	\$210,000 \$1,050,000

Graduate Appeals Policy



Graduate Appeals Policy

- » The graduate grade appeal policy has been revised based on input received from the Graduate Council, Provost Lobo, the Faculty Senate, school deans, and others.
- » A revised draft of the policy is available for the Graduate Council's vote:
<https://smu.box.com/s/q6hg2kioo0q8ya14q3jr4tvsjua7dbu1>
- » If the Council approves the policy, it will go to the Education Programs Committee (EPC) for approval.

Moody School Fellowship Offers



<https://smu.box.com/s/nvrzft988ompqzfuov6tj46e94tia0>

PhD Health Insurance Program



Health Insurance Award Current Process

1. Department administrator enters students' assistantships/fellowships into their financial aid accounts online.
2. Once all assistantships/fellowships have been entered: department administrator sends a list of students who are eligible and need health insurance to Moody School (Alan Itkin and Kerri Bennett). Deadline for Spring 2023: Feb. 1.
3. Petitions for students who do not meet criteria are sent to Alan Itkin (aitkin@smu.edu).
4. The Moody School generates a report with students' financial aid and other information to confirm health insurance eligibility of students on department list and works with department to correct any discrepancies.
5. The Moody School works with the Financial Aid office to add health insurance awards to students' accounts.
6. Students receive a notification of their award.
7. The Moody School sends each school a detailed "bill" for their share of insurance, and funds are transferred from the schools.

PhDHealth Insurance Department Spreadsheet

Ph.D. Health Insurance Department Spreadsheet									
Dept./Program:		<input type="text"/>	Year and semester:		<input type="text"/>				
Please return this spreadsheet at least one week in advance of the health insurance enrollment deadline to Alan Itkin (aitkin@smu.edu) and Kerri Bennett (kerrit@smu.edu)									
First Name	Last Name	Student ID	Enrolling for term (Y/N)?	Within 5 years in program (Y/N)?	Fully supported by SMU assistantship or fellowship (Y/N)?	In good standing (Y/N)?	Needs insurance (Y/N)?	<--- If no to any: Petition submitted (Y/N)?	Notes

PhD Health Insurance Award Program

» Advantages of the current process:

- » Moody School can ensure that only eligible students are awarded

» Disadvantage of the current process:

- » Multiple steps to assigning awards slows down awards
- » When students are left off lists, they often reach out to the Moody School or the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center, creating additional confirmation steps with departments
- » Collecting lists, reviewing them, following up with departments, assigning awards creates a significant work burden in the Moody School

» Question:

- » Should we revisit this process and empower departments to make awards based on criteria provided?
- » Moody School would still review petitions, answer questions, disseminate eligibility information, and instructions for assigning awards

English Proficiency Requirement



English Proficiency Requirement

Current policy (varies slightly from school to school):

» Applicants who do not speak English as their native language are required to supply scores on the TOEFL English language proficiency test or the IELTS English competency test. The minimum TOEFL score for admission is 80, and the minimum IELTS score is 6.5, unless specified otherwise by a program or department. This requirement is waived for students who have received undergraduate degrees from an English-language institution located in the **United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa only. SMU's ETS code is 6660.**

English Proficiency Requirement

Vanderbilt Policy (no approved country list, but dedicated graduate application processing):

TOEFL and IELTS

Applicants whose native language is not English must present the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) with the application. This requirement may be waived if you have earned a degree from an English-speaking institution. Please contact your program of interest to confirm.

- You may access information regarding the TOEFL including registration and sample tests, at ets.org/toefl.
- The Vanderbilt Institution Code for TOEFL is **1871**.
- The minimum acceptable score on the paper-based TOEFL is **570**, and for the Internet-based test, **88**. Many programs, however, require a considerably higher level of proficiency.
- The TOEFL IBT, TOEFL Home Edition, and TOEFL Essentials (8-9.5 band range) tests are also accepted.

English Proficiency Requirement

UT Austin Policy:



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EXPLORE APPLY AFFORD ENROLL

Home > Apply > Qualifying Countries

Qualifying Countries

- American Samoa
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada (except Quebec)
- Dominica
- Ghana
- Grenada
- Grand Cayman
- Guyana
- India
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Liberia
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Singapore
- Trinidad/Tobago
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- United Kingdom
- U.S. Pacific Trust

Why isn't my country listed?

For purposes of the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) or [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)](#) requirement, international applicants are exempt only if they are from a country where English is the sole official language and the primary conversational language of the country. In some countries, English is but one of the officially recognized languages or it is not the primary language used to communicate outside of the classroom.

Graduate Honor Council



Graduate Honor Council

- » Currently there is one honor code, published in the [Student Handbook](#), for undergraduates and graduate students with some exceptions:
 - » “Schools of Law, Theology, Business, or Education of Southern Methodist University” (according to Student Handbook)
- » In 2021-22, the Faculty Senate Research and Graduate Studies Committee worked on developing a “graduate honor code”
- » This issue has come up now, because at least one department (in Simmons) is working on their own honor code policies
- » Membership of the Honor Council (“hearing panel” = 4 students + 1 faculty member):
 - » Five first-year students
 - » Six sophomore students
 - » Seven junior students
 - » Eight senior students
 - » One graduate student from a school under the council’s jurisdiction
 - » Five members nominated by the Faculty Senate and appointed by the Provost

Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards



Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards

- » Sponsored by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success
- » At least two awards, each including a \$1,000 prize, are made annually.
 - » One award for an instructor of record
 - » One award for a teaching assistant or lab instructor
- » Eight nominees in 2023, reviewed by a committee including: Alan Itkin, Sheri Kunovich, Anna Lovatt, Volkan Otugen, Karen Thomas (Director of CTE)
- » **Awardees 2023:**
 - » Meghan Beddingfield, PhD Program in Religious Studies, Award for Outstanding Instructor of Record
 - » Arvin Maghsoudlou, PhD Program in Art History, Award for Outstanding Instructor of Record
 - » Austin Mullins, PhD Program in Physics, Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant or Lab Instructor

Moody Hall Glass Pillars



Moody Hall Glass Pillars

- » Outside of the Dean's Office on the third floor of Moody Hall are four glass pillars.
- » Originally, these were going to be changed out each year with the names and programs of PhD graduates from the previous year.
- » We are reconceptualizing these and are seeking input.
- » We do not wish to change them out each year.



Moody Faculty Fellowships



Moody Faculty Fellowships

- » We are planning to have our first class of Faculty Fellows in 2024-2025.
- » This is one of the programs proposed to the Moody Foundation in the gift agreement
- » Moody Faculty Fellowships “will support outstanding faculty, including visiting faculty, and reward and encourage mentoring of graduate students and the conduct of research.”
- » They are also intended to contribute to strategic goals, such as increasing conferrals of doctorates to support the Road to R1 and the Strategic Plan.
- » We need additional volunteers for a subcommittee on these fellowships, to help with selection criteria, nomination procedures, etc.

Other Items

