

How to Apply to Graduate Programs

The Directory of Human Factors/Ergonomics Graduate Programs in the United States and Canada was compiled by the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society. Efforts were made to identify human factors graduate programs by placing announcements in the HFES Bulletin and by soliciting names of programs from the HFES membership. Programs so identified and those listed in the 2000 edition were sent a questionnaire requesting detailed program information. All graduate programs in the United States and Canada that returned the questionnaire are included in this directory. No attempt was made to screen programs or to assess their quality.

The information reported in this directory is updated periodically. The date at the bottom of each program listing indicates when the information was last updated.

The purpose of this directory is to supply prospective graduate students with information to help them make a preliminary selection of graduate programs for further consideration. The information in this directory should be helpful for assessing the nature, scope, and requirements of the various programs. We hope you find this directory helpful, and we would appreciate receiving your opinion of it and your suggestions for improvement. Departments with programs not listed in this directory are invited to submit information for future editions. Please send inquiries to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 2001 K Street NW, 3rd Floor North, Washington, DC 20001 USA. Email: info@hfes.org.

The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society instituted an accreditation program for graduate programs in 1989, and 20 programs have been formally accredited. (See the individual program listings).

Inclusion in this directory neither constitutes nor implies Human Factors and Ergonomics Society approval or accreditation. Further, no attempt has been made to independently verify the information supplied by the various programs.

SELECTING A PROGRAM

Select only programs that match your professional interests and into which you have a reasonable chance of acceptance. Consider the admission requirements of each program and candidly assess your probability of being accepted. It is fair neither to yourself nor to the admissions committee to apply to a program for which you are obviously not qualified.

In some cases, however, entrance requirements can be relaxed, or specific undergraduate course requirements can be met by special makeup courses offered by the department. Be sure you understand all such makeup requirements, as they can add a year or more to your graduate career. Makeup requirements are especially important if your undergraduate degree is from a department different from the one to which you are applying (e.g., if you are applying to an engineering department but your undergraduate degree is in psychology). If you have any doubt whatsoever, do not hesitate to call the department.

If you wish to pursue particular areas of interest during your graduate education, you should try to find programs that have research facilities, faculty, and courses that correspond to those interests. It is unlikely that any one program will perfectly match all of your particular interests, but some programs may be more appropriate than others. Again, programs, facilities, and faculties change, so be sure to confirm with the department that the program will indeed meet your needs and expectations.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

It is usually wise to apply to more than one program; this will increase your chances of being accepted. Be sure, however, that you have a reasonable chance of being accepted and that they are programs you would seriously consider attending if you were accepted.

Complete all application materials on time. Submit the applications neatly typed and carefully completed. Sloppy, handwritten applications tend to connote that the applicant lacks commitment and professionalism. If a biographical statement is required, take it seriously. Write several drafts, evaluate whether it conveys the information and impressions you intend, and be sure it is grammatically correct. Remember to proofread what you write.

Choose personal references carefully. They should be people who can judge your academic and/or professional potential. This often requires more than can be learned about you from one class. For this reason we recommend that you cultivate associations with your instructors through seminar classes and independent study activities. Be sure to ask the person in advance whether you can list him or her as a reference for graduate school. This is a common courtesy and may save you embarrassment later.

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

The first notification of acceptance you receive may be an informal phone call from the department chair or one of the other faculty members. You can relax, as you will be receiving an official notification in due time. You need not accept the offer immediately;

you may wish to wait to hear from other schools before making your decision. We recommend the following procedure in the event that you receive more than one offer.

1. Be honest with the department. Tell them you want to wait until you hear from other schools. Find out when they need to know your decision. When you receive a second offer, compare it with the first and decide which you prefer. Immediately notify your second choice that you will not be accepting their offer.

As you receive other offers, evaluate each one against your prior choice and notify the one you do not accept. Remember, the people to whom you will be talking want you to attend their programs, but more important, they want you to make the choice that is best for you. If you are unsure about various trade-offs, feel free to discuss them with the departments involved.

2. If you have not heard from a particular program and another program has made you an offer and needs a decision, do not hesitate to call the first program and explain your predicament. At the least, they will tell you when their evaluations will be complete. Keep the program that made you the first offer informed of developments. Do not keep them in the dark; act professionally. Even if you do not accept the offer, your consideration will be appreciated and you may find that you have established an important professional contact.
3. After accepting an offer, do not take your obligation lightly. Not following through may damage your reputation with the school.

Using This Directory

For each of the programs listed in this directory, information is presented in compact form about each of the following categories: program background, application process, admission requirements, admission data, tuition, financial assistance, degree requirements, curriculum, research and teaching opportunities, student statistics, and faculty. If information was not available, "n/a" is used.

Each major category of program information will be discussed in turn. The programs are listed in alphabetical order by name of school. The department listed under the school name of each listing is the one in which the administration of the program is housed. If it is a joint program, both departments are listed in order of number of students in the program.

BACKGROUND

- **Title:** This is the official designation of the program.
- **Contact:** Write or call this person for more information about the program. Est: The year in which the program was established. This may have a bearing on the interpretation of the other information.
- **Quarter/Semester.** This is the academic calendar under which the program operates. Any reference to units required refers to this system.
- **Granted last 3 years:** The number of degrees granted for the three years 1998 through 2000.
- **Part-time:** Whether you can attend part-time.
- **Program:** A short description of the nature of the program.
- **Accredited by:** Name of organization accrediting the program (not the institution).
- **HFES student chapter yes/no:** Whether an official HFES student chapter exists at this institution.
- **Catalog:** Cost, and where to send for a catalog.

APPLICATION

- **Deadlines:** Application deadlines.
- **Fee:** Application fee.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- **GPA:** Grade point average.
- **GRE:** If required, shows minimum total score or separate scores for v (verbal) + q (quantitative) and sometimes + a (analytical).
- **Other:** Describes other requirements and/or recommendations.
- **Research, Work experience, Letters, Interview:** Shows relative weight (high, medium, or low) given to each category when application is considered.

ADMISSIONS

- **Students applying last year:** This is for the academic year.
- **Accepted:** Number of students in the academic year who accepted admission offers.
- **Entered program:** Number of students entering program in the academic year.
- **Openings/year:** Anticipated number of openings per year for the next several years.

TUITION AND FEES

Lists tuition and fees for residents and nonresidents (where applicable), and indicates the academic calendar on which costs are based (semester, quarter, etc.).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- **% receiving:** Percentage of students receiving some sort of financial assistance.
- **Amounts:** Minimum/typical/maximum amounts per academic year.
- **Available:** Types of assistance available — TA means teaching assistantship, RA means research assistantship. Exempt refers to whether tuition is exempt.
- **Apply:** When to apply for financial assistance.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

For each degree offered, a condensed description of the various requirements is given. Typically included are number of units, exams (other than regular course exams), languages, research, and practical experience required. Included is the typical number of years required to obtain the degree.

CURRICULUM

- **Required:** Titles of required courses.
- **Electives:** Titles of popular electives offered at least once every two years.
- **Required courses outside department:** Number of courses required to be taken outside the major department.
- **Recommended courses outside department:** Number of courses recommended to be taken outside the major department.
- **Offered:** Whether the required and elective courses are offered at night, on weekends, or during the summer.
- **Class size:** Typical class size in required courses.

STUDENT STATISTICS

- **Active:** Number of students actively enrolled in the program.
- **First-year students:** Number of first-year students.
- **Mean scores:** Gives mean GRE (Graduate Record Exam) scores and undergraduate GPA (grade point average, A = 4.0) for students currently in the program. These are typically higher than the admission requirements, and they probably better reflect the quality of the students accepted.

FACULTY

Lists the "core" faculty in the program; that is, those who required courses and/or actively advise and direct students in the program. For each faculty member listed, the following information is included: highest degree obtained, when obtained, where obtained, and areas of specialization or interest.

HFES ACCREDITATION: BACKGROUND

The HFES Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) was established as a special committee of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society in October 1989. The purpose of the HFES accreditation program is to ensure that accredited human factors educational programs meet objectives appropriate to the preparation of students for research and practice in human factors.

The ARC consists of five members, who oversee the activities of the Accreditation Review Panel. The panel is made up of 20 persons who work in small groups to review applications for accreditation. In the years since start-up of the accreditation program, several programs have been reviewed and a number of programs have been accredited (see individual listings).