

Admission Requirements and Limitations for Non-Degree-Seeking Graduate Students

Policy number: 205

Policy owner: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Date of initial publication: September 1, 2003

Date of latest revision: June 22, 2021

SECTION I. PURPOSE

This policy specifies the admission requirements for non-degree-seeking graduate students at the University of St. Thomas and the limitations placed on these students and the courses they complete.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy governs all graduate programs offered in any school or college at St. Thomas. Its terms will apply in the absence of a more stringent policy at the school or college level. If a school or college does not maintain a more stringent policy for a graduate program, or if the school or college policy has omissions or gaps in terms that are covered by this policy, this policy will govern.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

- a. **Academic unit** means a St. Thomas school, college or academic department or program, center or institute.
- b. **Credit-bearing course** means a course that (i) is offered by St. Thomas for academic credit, (ii) is required as an accompaniment to a course offered by St. Thomas for academic credit (e.g., a laboratory section), or (iii) bears no academic credit but is required or counted by St. Thomas as part of a credit-bearing program, in each case regardless of the mode of course delivery.
- c. **Non-degree-seeking student** means a student who has been admitted by St. Thomas to enroll in credit-bearing courses without the intention of obtaining a degree, licensure, or certificate.
- d. **Transcript** means documentation of a student's permanent academic record at an institution, including all courses taken, all grades received, all honors received, and all degrees conferred.

SECTION IV. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Minimum Degree or Equivalent Credentials

In order to be admitted as a non-degree-seeking graduate student, an applicant generally must provide evidence that the applicant has been awarded at least a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent, as detailed below.

1. Baccalaureate or Equivalent Degree

St. Thomas will accept as the minimum degree credential a baccalaureate or higher degree from a U.S. institution that is accredited by one of the institutional (formerly “regional”) accrediting organizations (e.g., Higher Learning Commission). If applicants have degrees solely from institutions outside the United States, St. Thomas will accept those degrees as the minimum degree credential if the applicant complies with applicable policies on international admissions which are established by and housed in each school or college at St. Thomas.

2. Equivalent Credentials

Academic units have discretion to define equivalent credentials that will be considered to meet minimum standard qualifications if a non-degree-seeking applicant does not have the requisite degree. Equivalent credentials may include, for example, an associate’s degree or minimum number of college course credits, plus relevant licensure or certification or a minimum amount of relevant work experience. Each academic unit’s equivalent credentials are subject to approval by the applicable dean and must be stored on the OneStThomas Graduate Policies website.

Adequate documentation of how a student meets an academic unit’s equivalent credential must be retained as part of the student’s admissions file.

3. Waiver

In exceptional circumstances, the dean may petition the provost for an exception to the requirement for a baccalaureate degree or equivalent credentials. Copies of approved waivers must be retained as part of the student’s admissions file and must be on file prior to the student taking any academic course work.

B. Official Transcript

For every applicant admitted as a non-degree-seeking graduate student, an official transcript is required from at least one degree-granting institution awarding the minimum degree relied on by the applicant for admission to the St. Thomas graduate program, unless the student has been admitted based on equivalent credentials or a waiver, as further detailed below.

1. U.S. Institutions

A transcript is official if it is delivered to the St. Thomas admissions office in a secure manner (e.g., directly from the institution by mail, delivery service, or secure electronic document, or in an institution’s envelope with a secure seal by the institution if delivered by the applicant). For applicants with a degree from St. Thomas, St. Thomas transcripts can be retrieved from the institutional system of record and are considered official. For any U.S. institution, transcripts received from contracted third party partners such as EDUCO or IDP are regarded as official.

If the primary baccalaureate degree was issued by an accredited institution located inside of the United States but contains more than 60 credits from an institution outside of the United States, a course-by-course transcript evaluation must be submitted for the coursework completed at the non-U.S. institution(s). If the transcript evaluation does not include a statement indicating that it was generated from original and/or authenticated documents, then an official transcript is required. If the transcript does not include a course-by-course analysis, then an official transcript with courses and grades written in English is required.

2. Non-U.S. Institutions

If the primary baccalaureate degree was awarded by an institution outside of the United States, a transcript evaluation must be submitted by a transcript evaluation service that is a current member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). The transcript evaluation should provide the following information:

- A statement that the evaluation report was based on original and/or authenticated educational documents;
- A statement of U.S. equivalence of a baccalaureate degree from an institution that has institutional (formerly called “regional”) academic accreditation; and
- A course-by-course analysis that includes grades and GPA.

The transcript evaluation is considered to be the official transcript for that institution.

3. Waivers or Exceptions

For transcript waivers or exceptions, the Dean’s Office of each program may grant a waiver:

- a. of an official transcript if the program has a copy of the unofficial transcript with the understanding and requirement that the applicant will supply the official transcript by the end of the first semester of attendance.
- b. for evaluated transcripts, official transcripts or transcripts based on categories of applicants such as H1-B visa, permanent residents, alumni or current students at partner institutions.
- c. of an official transcript if an applicant is admitted pursuant to Section IV.A.2 or Section IV.A.3 of this policy.

Under any of these circumstances, adequate documentation must be retained as part of the student’s admissions file.

SECTION V. LIMITATIONS

Programs that approve students for enrollment whose goals are other than obtaining a degree, licensure or certificate from St. Thomas are expected to assign those students special status codes that identify them as non-degree-seeking students subject to the following limitations:

- Students admitted to non-degree-seeking status are generally not eligible for financial aid.
- The admission of a student to graduate non-degree-seeking status should not be considered a guarantee of future admission to a degree, licensure, or certificate program or the acceptance of credit toward a degree, licensure, or certificate program.
- Although St. Thomas sets no limit on the total number of credits that can be taken as a non-degree-seeking status, if a student is subsequently accepted to a degree, licensure, or certificate program, a limited number of credits may be eligible for acceptance into the program:
 - for academic degrees or licensure programs, no more than one-third of the total credits in the degree would apply from the non-degree-seeking status.
 - for certificate programs, no more than one-half of the total credits in the program would apply from the non-degree-seeking status.

In exceptional circumstances, the dean of the program may be petitioned for a waiver of this limitation. Copies of approved waivers are to be retained as part of the student’s admissions file.

