

Who Gets the Fellowship?

GRE General Test scores can play a useful role in the awarding of on-campus fellowships when used in conjunction with other relevant data, such as grade point average, faculty recommendations, and related course work. There are a number of strategies for using GRE scores in the fellowship selection process. Two strategies are described below.

The Fellowship Selection Process at Institution X

Institution X offers graduate degrees in a wide range of disciplines and routinely processes a substantial number of fellowship applications each year. In the selection process, Institution X places a heavy emphasis on GRE General Test scores and compares an applicant's verbal, quantitative, and analytical scores to the mean for the total group applying to the institution. For students applying to Institution X, the mean verbal score is 470, the mean quantitative score is 570, and the mean analytical score is 480.

The figure that follows shows the percentage of students in the English literature, psychology, and engineering departments who meet or exceed the institutional mean scores for the total group for each of the three General Test measures. Sixty percent of the engineering students fall into this group, as do 50 percent of the psychology students and 30 percent of the English literature students. On this basis alone, Institution X might decide to award proportionally more fellowships to engineering students than to those in the psychology or English literature departments. In doing so, however, Institution X is favoring students

from disciplines that, as a rule, have higher General Test scores; thus, the institution may be introducing a bias that they are not overtly aware of.

An Alternate Approach

However, as an alternative, Institution X might want to consider how their students in each of the three departments perform relative to national mean scores *within field*. As the figure that follows indicates, 50 percent of their English literature students submit General Test scores that meet or exceed the national mean for students in that particular field. Forty-five percent of their psychology students meet or exceed national means for students in their field, as do 40 percent of their engineering students. Clearly, then, comparing students to others within a particular field of study paints a very different picture than when students are compared to the total group of institutional applicants. By making the within-field comparison, Institution X would be giving fellowship awards to students who have relatively high test scores within their field of study.

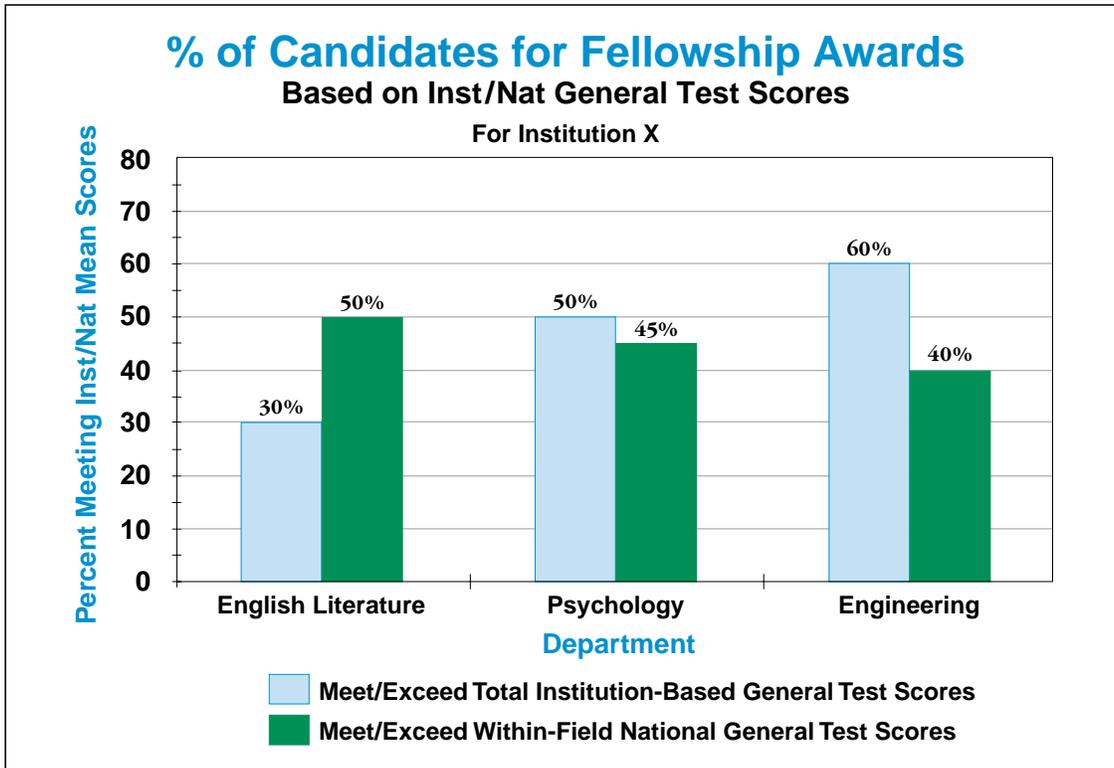
Use Scores with Other Data

The GRE Board encourages graduate schools, departments, and fellowship selection committees to consider GRE scores as a meaningful source of information about an applicant's chance for success in graduate school. GRE scores are best used, however, in conjunction with other sources of information about the applicant.

As the alternative strategy suggests, institutions are also encouraged to look at GRE scores within the context of the applicant's field of study. In this way, students are compared to what may possibly be more appropriate groups, and the fellowships are

less likely to be distributed disproportionately to applicants in fields traditionally having high GRE scores. Data on General Test mean scores within broad graduate major fields can be found in the *Guide to the Use of the GRE*

Program, which is routinely sent to GRE score users. Copies can be obtained by sending an e-mail request to gre-info@ets.org or by calling (609) 951-1570.



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