

Slate Faculty User's Guide: Graduate Application Review System

Slate is UC Merced's graduate admissions system that is being used for the following components:

- 1) Forms and emails for managing inquiries from prospective applicants
- 2) Application submission system
- 3) Application review system
- 4) Application decisions, letters, and reply forms

This manual is designed as a basic reference guide for the application review system, known as [Slate reader](#).

Slate Reader Overview

The [Slate reader](#) allows users to do the following: view applications, review them by adding comments and other input, and move them through the review stages. Applications move through various stages of review, expressed as "bins" in Slate, before possibly being recommended for admissions:

- 1st Stage) Faculty Review bin (mandatory)
- 2nd Stage) Committee Review bin (optional)
- 3rd Stage) Chair Review bin (optional)
- *4th Stage) School Review bin (mandatory for applicants who are being recommended for admittance)
- or
- *4th Stage) Deny Bin (Program chairs send denials to this bin)
- 5th Stage) Grad Div. Admit Review Bin (After the School Review Bin, Grad Div. will process applicants being recommended for admittance)

Applications start in the Faculty Review bin; they may advance into the Committee Review bin (if applicable) or be moved to the Chair Review bin (if applicable). The **Program Chair** is the user who will move the application via their submitted reader form. They can move applications in any of the 1-3 Stages. The **Program Chair** can move an application into the School Review Bin or Deny Bin via their submitted reader form.

Applications in the School Review Bin: These are applicants that are being recommended for admittance. The Program Chair will move these applicants into the School Review Bin via their submitted reader form. In the School Review Bin, School Staff will add the school funding/unfunded letter, check if an applicant requires an English Proficiency Interview, and other miscellaneous School Admin reviews. After the School Staff has reviewed the application, they will move the application into the Grad Div. Admit Review Bin for Graduate Division processing.

Applications in the Grad Div. Review Bin: Applications sent into this Bin will be reviewed and processed by the Graduate Division. Grad Div. will check if the applicant meets the [admissions requirements](#): Baccalaureate degree, 3.0 GPA minimum, GRE/GMAT (if applicable), Subject Specific Exam (if applicable), valid TOEFL/IELTS test scores (if applicable), and letters of recommendation. **Grad Div. will also see requests for exception and will forward them to the Graduate Dean for Review. If an applicant does not meet the requirements, the Program Chair will need to request an exception via their submitted reader review form.*

Faculty members can only view the applications submitted to the graduate groups that they are members of. Faculty users can view their applications at all stages of review and admission. **However, the information and functions available to users depend on their assigned roles.** The roles for faculty are:

- **Regular Faculty** reviewers can add comments and input at the Faculty Review stage only. They cannot move applications through the review stages.
- **Admissions Committee** reviewers can add comments and input for applications in Faculty and Committee Review stages. **They cannot move applications through the review stages.**
- **Admissions Committee Chair** reviewers can add comments as above, and they can move applications into Chair Review.
- **Graduate Group Chair** reviewers can do all of above, and also add comments and input at Chair Review, as well as move applications into School Review for administrative review

When an application is submitted to a graduate program, faculty members who want to submit feedback on an applicant must manually add the application into their queue (**Instructions on page 4**). An application must be in a user's queue for the user to add comments and input. When a user (*faculty, committee, chair*) submits their reader input form for the queued application that they are reviewing, Slate will automatically remove the application from the user's queue. Users can "re-queue" and "un-queue" applications at any time. **** Applications do not need to be queued, in order to view an application****

Brief Slate Reader Instructions

I. Logging In

- 1) Log into Slate using: <https://applygrad.ucmerced.edu/manage/reader>
- 2) Use your UC Merced single sign-on in order to enter the Slate Reader homepage

II. Reader Navigation

- 1) All navigations options are displayed on the left side bar
- 2) On the right side of the homepage is a keyboard shortcut bar giving details on how to navigate through the application, zoom on material and return to your queue

The Slate Reader

Navigating the Interface

The Slate Reader is designed to be navigated using both the mouse and keyboard. While some users may be accustomed to using only the mouse to navigate web pages, using keyboard shortcuts enables faster navigation, and we've included several keyboard shortcuts in the Slate Reader to help you move through applications quickly.

Using the Mouse

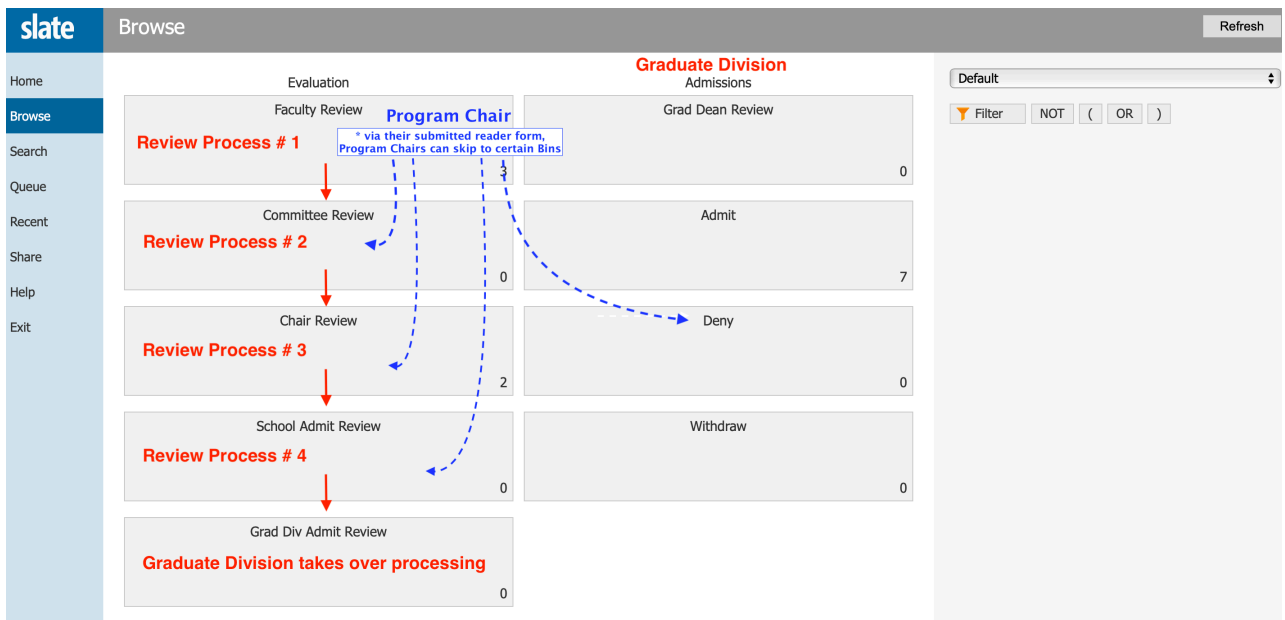
- Click tabs in the left panel to change sections
- Double-click on a page to zoom in
- Right-click on a page to zoom out
- Click-and-drag to move within/between pages

Using the Keyboard

- **Arrow Keys:** move up/down/left/right
- **Pg Up/Pg Down:** page up, page down
- **+/-:** zoom in, zoom out
- **Tab:** next section in index
- **Shift + Tab:** previous section in index
- **1-9:** display 1st tab, 2nd tab, etc. in index
- **Ctrl + Left/Right Arrow:** rotate page (PC)
- **Cmd + Left/Right Arrow:** rotate page (Mac)
- **Shift + H:** toggle highlight remover
- **H:** toggle highlighter
- **N:** toggle note editor
- **Q:** toggle display of queue
- **R:** toggle display of Review Form / Send to Bin
- **S:** toggle display of search
- **Esc:** close open panels, return to first section

III. Browse Tab

- 1) Under this tab you are able to view all reader bins and number of applications in each bin. Bins are stages of review process and where Faculty can enter to add applications into their queue.
 - i. **Evaluation Column**
 1. Once an applicant submits their application, it will begin its first evaluation process in the **Faculty Review Bin** and then will be moved forward to the next Bin
 2. **Graduate Division** takes action in the **Admit Review Bin**
 - ii. **Admissions Column**
 1. Graduate Division takes action in all the Bins the Admissions Column
 - iii. **Filter Icon**
 1. By selecting the filter icon, you are able to create more specialized filters (e.g. by citizenship)



IV. Adding an application into your Queue:

- 1) Step 1- Select the **Browse Tab** on the left-hand side of your screen
- 2) Step 2- Select the **Bin** in which you would like to retrieve and begin to review applications
 - i. Example: Select Faculty Review Bin and Slate will automatically send you to the **Search Tab** where you are able to view/add applications into your queue
- 3) Step 3- Adding applications into your queue
 - i. Once you have selected your Bin and have been moved to the Search Tab, you must highlight the application that you would like to add into your queue.
 1. Rows that are highlighted in dark blue indicates that you have selected the app
 - ii. After highlight the files that you would like to review, you can click on the **Add to Queue Icon**
 1. Below is an example on how to highlight and to add into your Queue

****See Reference Image on Next Page****

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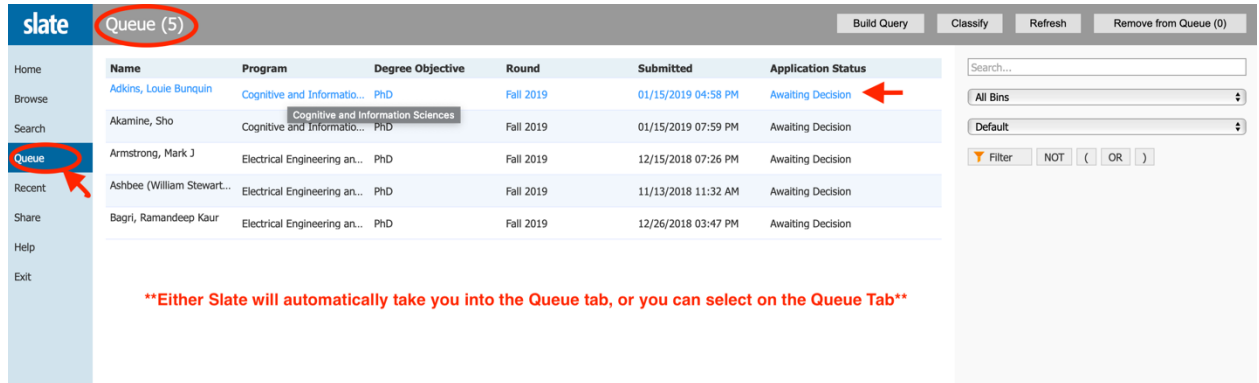
4) Step 3b- Additional way to add an application into your queue

- i. Select a file and click on the paper icon , this will open the application for your review

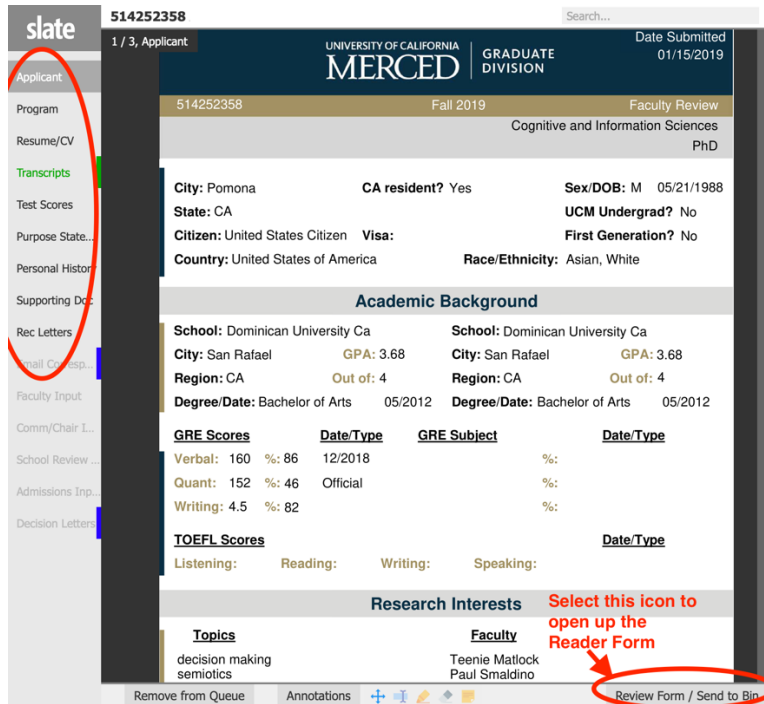
- ii. To add the application into your queue, on the lower bottom left-hand corner of the application you will need to click on the Add to Queue.

V. Reviewing Applications

1) Select **Queue Tab** or Slate will automatically take you into the **Queue Tab** and select an application.



2) After adding/selecting the application, the **application overview cover page** will appear as below.
i. The **application overview cover page** is designed to capture the most relevant applicant information.



- ii. Click on the tabs on the left to see different parts of the complete application, and scroll left and right if there are multiple pages for a given tab
- iii. Then click on the **Review Form / Send to Bin** button at the bottom left

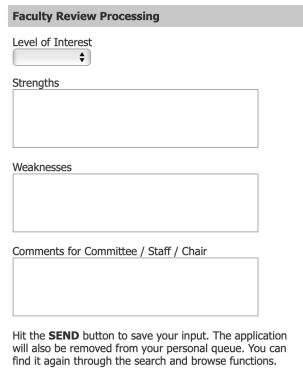
VI. Entering Reader Input

- 1) After clicking on the **Review Form / Send to Bin** button at the bottom left. A form will appear on the right, and the content of the form will depend on the review stage and user role.
- 2) All faculty, including chairs, can add their level of interest, strengths and weaknesses, and any other comments for applications to their graduate programs. Inputs will be saved automatically, but not made visible to other users until clicking on the **Send** button. After clicking **Send**, faculty input becomes available in the **Faculty Input** tab.

REGULAR FACULTY MEMBER EXAMPLE: Here is what a **regular faculty member** will see when an application is under Faculty Review:

i. Faculty Review Processing Section

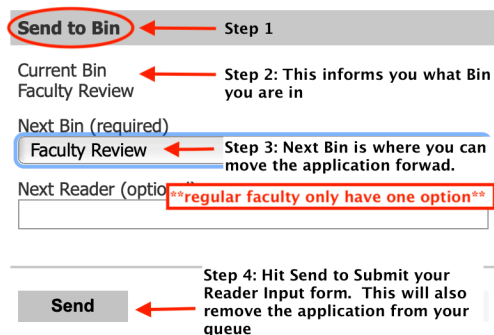
1. This header will change depending what bin the app is in
2. We strongly recommend to utilize the text boxes to enter your notes/feedback
 - a. This is helpful for other readers and for Graduate Division



ii. Submitting your Faculty Review Input Form

- Step 1: Locate the **Send to Bin Section** of your Faculty Review Form
- Step 2: This section informs you what Bin you are in
- Step 3: **Next Bin** section = Faculty Review (regular faculty)
- * Program Chairs and Admission chairs have access to move to other Bins
- Step 4: Hit **Send** to submit your Reader Input form. This will submit your comments/input form, remove the application from your queue.
(If applicable it will also move the application to the desired Bin)
- Step 5: Error Message- See Next Page**

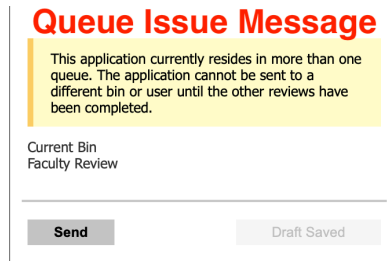
Steps 1-4 shown on screenshot below



Step 5: Error Message- Multiple Users- Queue Notification Message

If you see this Yellow Message Below, you will still be able to submit your form by select Send

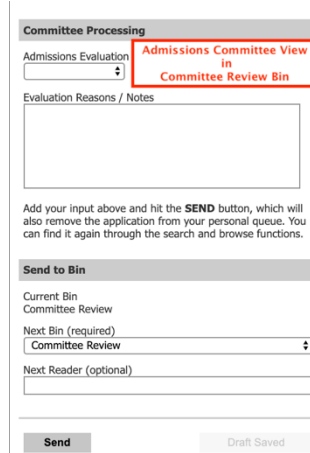
Contact Grad Admissions @
gradadmissions@ucmerced.edu, if there are any questions



VII. Faculty who are assigned as admissions committee members.

- 1) Admissions committee members will take action in the **Committee Review Member Bin**
- 2) You will see a reader input form that will ask for an admissions recommendation among other self-explanatory inputs
- 3) Committee members are unable to move application forward
- 4) To Submit your form
 - i. **Next Bin** section = Committee Review (committee member)
 - ii. Hit **Send** to submit your Reader Input form. This will submit your comments/input form, remove the application from your queue.
 1. If you are unable to submit your reader input form, you will see the following message
 2. **Error Message- See example reference above**

Admissions Committee View
in Committee Review Bin

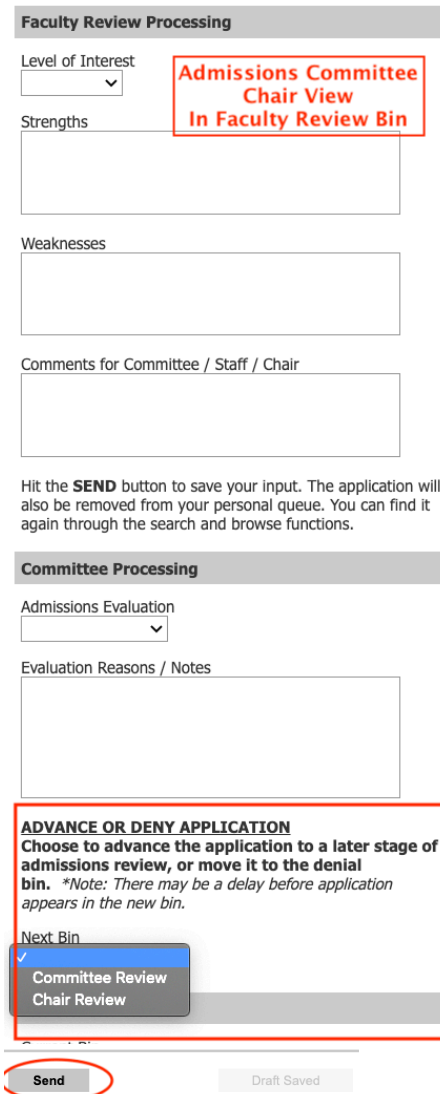


VIII. Faculty who are assigned as Admissions Committee Chairs

- 1) Faculty who are assigned as **admissions committee chairs** will see a similar input form as mentioned above. The Committee Review input form asks for an admissions recommendation among other self-explanatory inputs.
- 2) **Admissions committee chairs have the ability to move into Chair Review**

Admissions Committee Chair View in Faculty Review Bin

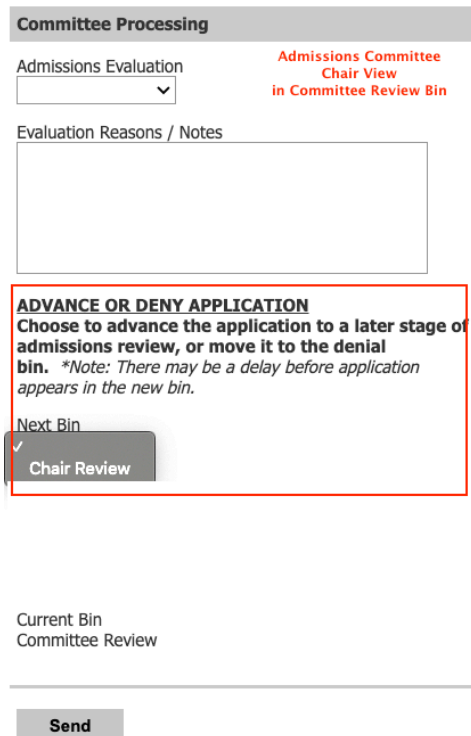
- 1) Admissions committee Chairs can take action in the **Faculty Review Bin**
- 2) You will see a reader input form that will ask for an admissions recommendation among other self-explanatory inputs
- 3) To Submit your form
 - i. **Advance or Deny Application** = Chair Review
 - ii. Hit **Send** to submit your Reader Input form. This will submit your comments/input form, remove the application from your queue.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Faculty Review Processing". It contains several input fields: "Level of Interest" (a dropdown menu), "Strengths" (a text area), "Weaknesses" (a text area), and "Comments for Committee / Staff / Chair" (a text area). A red box highlights the "Admissions Committee Chair View In Faculty Review Bin" text. Below the form, there is a "Committee Processing" section with an "Admissions Evaluation" dropdown and an "Evaluation Reasons / Notes" text area. A red box highlights the "ADVANCE OR DENY APPLICATION" section, which includes instructions and a "Next Bin" dropdown menu. The "Next Bin" dropdown is open, showing "Committee Review" and "Chair Review" options. At the bottom of the form, a "Send" button is circled in red, and a "Draft Saved" button is visible.

Admissions Committee Chair View in Committee Review Bin

- 1) Admissions committee Chairs can also take action in the **Committee Review Bin**
- 2) You will see a reader input form that will ask for an admissions recommendation among other self-explanatory inputs.
- 3) To Submit your form
 - iii. **Advance or Deny Application** section = Chair Review
 - iv. Hit **Send** to submit your Reader Input form. This will submit your comments/input form, remove the application from your queue.



Committee Processing

Admissions Evaluation Admissions Committee Chair View in Committee Review Bin

Evaluation Reasons / Notes

ADVANCE OR DENY APPLICATION
Choose to advance the application to a later stage of admissions review, or move it to the denial bin. *Note: There may be a delay before application appears in the new bin.

Next Bin
✓ Chair Review

Current Bin
Committee Review

Send

Error Message- Multiple Users- Queue Notification Message

*If you see this Yellow Message Below, you are still able to submit your Reader form as long as you enter your decision under the **Advance or Deny Application**.*

Once you submit your reader form, the application will be removed from your queue
.....
Contact Grad Admissions @ gradadmissions@ucmerced.edu, and we can assist with resolving this error message. Or if there are any questions regarding this message notification.

Queue Issue Message

This application currently resides in more than one queue. The application cannot be sent to a different bin or user until the other reviews have been completed.

Instructions for Chairs

- 1) Chairs have access to the forms and functions described above. In addition, chairs can advance applications to any Bin by choosing from the **“Advance or Deny Application”** dropdown list at the bottom right, before clicking the Send button.

ADVANCE OR DENY APPLICATION
Choose to advance the application to a later stage of admissions review, or move it to the denial bin. **Note: There may be a delay before application appears in the new bin.*

Stage of Review
▼

- ✓ Committee Review
- Chair Review
- School Admit Review
- Denial

***change

hit the **SEND** button. *Ignore*
ing **SEND** will also remove the
e. You can find it again
rowse functions.

Send Draft Saved

NOTE! *Error Message- Multiple Users- Queue Notification Message*

*If you see this Yellow Message Below, you are still able to submit your Reader form as long as you enter your decision under the **Advance or Deny Application**.*

Once you submit your reader form, the application will be removed from your queue
.....
Contact Grad Admissions @ gradadmissions@ucmerced.edu, and we can assist with resolving this error message. Or if there are any questions regarding this message notification.

Queue Issue Message

This application currently resides in more than one queue. The application cannot be sent to a different bin or user until the other reviews have been completed.

2) Chair Processing Form

a. Graduate Group Chair can add input and further advance an application to the **School Review Bin**.

- i. **Exceptions/Conditions:** If an applicant has low test scores/ GPA/ etc., you must enter your request for an exception here
- ii. **Advisor(s):** Write in the expected Advisor(s)
- iii. **Comments to Staff/Dean:** Enter additional comments for any justification here as well

Chair Processing

If needed, admission exceptions (i.e., low GPA, low test scores) must include a justification, to be typed in the Exceptions / Conditions text box below.

Exceptions / Conditions ****Important****

Advisor(s)

Comments to Staff / Dean

Chair notes are helpful for Graduate Division & Fellowship Review Committies

iv. Fellowship Nominations

1. The inputs include a multi-select list to nominate an application for one or more recruiting fellowships, along with paragraph text boxes for comments on the applicant's fellowship qualifications and the graduate group's fellowship selection process. The text entered or pasted in will be made available to the fellowship review committee(s), along with the application itself. Once again, chairs must click Send to submit their inputs and make their nominations.

To nominate the applicant for more than one fellowship, hold the Ctrl key (Command key on Mac) and select the fellowships from the pick-list.

Fellowship Nomination(s)

Chancellor's

Earle C. Anthony

Fields Family

Grad Dean Recruitment

Health Sciences

HotChalk

Renewable Energy

Southern California Edison

Able to nominate an applicant

Why is your student a strong candidate for a fellowship? How will this student be an asset to your program and UC Merced? How will the student's background enhance and advance learning and research/scholarship in your program? MAX 200 WORDS

If you are nominating this student for the Eugene Cota-Robles fellowship, please specify the ways in which the student contributes to diversity, equity and inclusion in accord with UC Merced's mission. Contributions may include the student's experiences and activities, as well as future plans, to help advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the service of meeting the educational needs and interests of California's diverse population. MAX 200 WORDS

v. Deny Disposition

1. Under the **Advance or Deny Application** Section, here you will be able to deny applicants by selecting **Denial**.
2. Slate also shows chairs an additional “Deny Disposition(s)” multi-select list. Applications that are eventually denied admissions **must have associated rationale for auditing purposes**. Remember to submit your rationale by clicking **Send**.

ADVANCE OR DENY APPLICATION
Choose to advance the application to a later stage of admissions review, or move it to the denial bin. **Note: There may be a delay before application appears in the new bin.*

Stage of Review

To deny admission, select one or more reasons from the list below.

Deny Disposition(s)

Below Program Standard
Incomplete File
Lack of Funding
Low Test Scores
Mismatch with Program
No Primary Advisor Available
Not Competitive
Unable to Accommodate

Important
Chairs must indicate Deny Disposition(s)

Add your input above and hit the **SEND** button. *Ignore everything else below.* Hitting **SEND** will also remove the application from your queue. You can find it again through the search and browse functions.

vi. What happens After Selecting Send?

1. Send to
 - a. **Deny:** Application is moved into the Deny Bin, and will be processed by Grad Div.
 - b. **School Review:** Selecting School Review, you are approving to admit the applicant. The Application is moved into School Review Bin will be reviewed and processed by the **Program Support Staff**. Once the **Program Support Staff** confirms the application is ready for Admit Processing, they will move the file into the Admit Review Bin.

Instructions on How to Pull a Query

- 1) Within the Slate Reader, select the Home Tab
 - a. Locate the **Click HERE** to download Excel list of applicants...

- b. Click on Pinned
 - i. In the pop up select your program and hit SAVE

- c. Last Step: Output should be Excel Spreadsheet, and then click on Export. File will generate.

Name	Email	Program of Application	Degree Objective App	Citizenship Sta
Abedzadeh, Sahar	sahar.abedzadeh69@gmail...	Electrical Engineering and...	PhD	Foreign National
Ahammad, Fnu	eee.ahammad@gmail.com	Electrical Engineering and...	PhD	Foreign National
Ahmad, Mohsin	k.m.ahmad90t@gmail.com	Electrical Engineering and...	Master of Science	Foreign National
Akhter (Halima Akhter), H...	halimaakhter014@gmail.c...	Electrical Engineering and...	PhD	Foreign National
Alavizadeh (Myseld), Zahr...	zahra.alavi70@gmail.com	Electrical Engineering and...	PhD	Foreign National
Allan Dillon Bria	dillon.allan.02@gmail.com	Electrical Engineering and...	Master of Science	US Citizen

English Language Testing

In addition to the university admission criteria, international students are required to submit the following:

TOEFL or IELTS Scores: All graduate applicants -- regardless of citizenship -- whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English, must show evidence of having recently taken the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) or the [International English Language Testing Service \(IELTS\)](#) examination. Please note that TOEFL and IELTS scores expire two years after the test date. The minimum requirements are as follows:

- TOEFL: 550 on the paper test or 80 on the TOEFL iBT (internet-Based Testing)
 - IELTS: a score of at least 6.5
1. UC Merced's *TOEFL* iBT score requirements for admission consideration is an overall minimum score of 80. The minimum scores on each section are as follows:
 - Writing: 19
 - Speaking: 26 (see * below)
 - Listening: 17
 - Reading: 18
 2. UC Merced's *IELTS* score requirements for admission consideration is an overall minimum score of 6.5. The minimum scores on each section are as follows:
 - Writing: 5.5
 - Speaking: 8
 - Listening: 6
 - Reading: 6

Some programs may require higher scores. Please check individual program websites for specifics.

NOTE: International and U.S. Permanent Resident graduate students who are not citizens of countries where English is either the primary or dominant language MUST pass an approved oral English-proficiency examination to be considered for appointment as a Teaching Assistant or Teaching Associate. There is NO EXCEPTION to this requirement.

For admission purpose only, the TOEFL may be waived for an applicant who has received an advanced degree from a U.S. institution or from a country where English is the language of instruction. This DOES NOT exempt the applicant from the English-proficiency examination for Teaching Assistant or Teaching Associate appointment. For more information regarding the English-proficiency examination, please visit the [Center for Engaged Teaching & Learning](#) website.

****Under special circumstances a TOEFL Speaking score below 26 may be accepted towards admission as long as an overall score of 80 is maintained. Similarly, under special circumstances an IELTS Speaking score below 8 may be accepted as long as an overall score of 6.5 is maintained. This DOES NOT exempt the applicant from the English-proficiency examination for Teaching Assistant or Teaching Associate appointment. At least one semester of teaching is required for graduation from most Ph.D. and some Masters programs.***

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UC Merced also accepts scores from the Academic Modules of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) designed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and administered by the British Council worldwide. You are responsible for providing us with an official Test Report Form (TRF) of your IELTS. We do not accept official IELTS reports via email. Remember to order the TRF when you register to take the test. Your most recent overall BAND score must be at least 6.5 on a 9-point scale. To register for the IELTS, consult the [IELTS website](#), contact the office of the center where you plan to take the test, or contact the [British Council](#).