

# University of Washington School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) Graduate Applicant FAQ

## **1. I would like to have an application packet mailed to me.**

In an effort to save paper (and trees!) all of our materials are now online, including the application. The funds saved from printing materials can now be directed to student support.

## **2. I don't have an educational background in forestry. May I still apply to the program?**

Yes! Students who are interested in forestry study have backgrounds in a wide variety of areas; they should review the graduate interest area information at <http://www.sfr.washington.edu/academicPrograms/graduate/applicant.shtml> and check with individual faculty members to determine if there is any preparatory coursework that may help their application.

## **3. When is the deadline to apply?**

December 31st is the deadline to be considered for the following Autumn Quarter admission.

## **4. I plan to apply by the deadline but what if my application is delayed?**

Late applications are reviewed after all on-time applications, on a space available basis. Students should make every effort to complete the application by the deadline.

## **5. Must I also apply to the UW Graduate School?**

Applications should ONLY be sent to the UW Graduate School, which manages all incoming applications. SEFS is notified of all applications, and has access to online applications, test scores, and recommendation letters. See the Graduate School website, <https://www.grad.washington.edu/applForAdmiss/>, for details.

## **6. What do I send to the School for my application?**

Official transcripts. Everything else should be uploaded to the online application. However, unofficial transcripts may be sent if there is a delay in obtaining the official transcripts.

## **7. How many transcripts do I need for my application?**

One set. Applicants offered admission will need to send a second set of official transcripts to the Graduate School after they have been notified of admission and instructed to send another set.

## **8. Is there a template or an example to follow for my statement of purpose?**

No, but applicants should consider including information about academic background, volunteer or field experience, and desired course of study. The statement should be limited to 300 words and a maximum of two pages double spaced.

## **9. I just have a résumé; will I be penalized for not submitting a CV?**

No. A CV is only appropriate for those with publications and advanced degrees.

## **10. Is there a form that I should give to my recommenders to submit with my letter?**

No. Applicants should follow the instructions for submitting the application to the Graduate School, which allow recommenders to submit letters electronically, as well as by email, fax, or postal mail. Recommenders should indicate "Graduate Application Recommendation Letter" on the envelope, fax or electronic letter.

## **11. How many applications do you receive and how many spaces are available?**

The School receives approximately 200 applications per year and accepts approximately 40% of applicants.

**12. May I submit various papers or publications?**

These are not required; however, one writing sample in the form of a publication or paper may be submitted. (Video/audio tapes, slides, or photographs are not acceptable.)

**13. May I have the GRE test waived?**

No. The GRE test is required; there are no exceptions.

**14. Must I take a subject GRE or the general GRE?**

Only the general GRE is required.

**15. What is the GRE Code for the School?**

The University of Washington has one GRE code: 4854. There is no additional code for SEFS.

**16. What if my GRE scores are low? Are there preferred scores?**

All aspects of a student's application are considered. For example, high GPA or superior letters of recommendation, excellent statement of purpose, etc., could possibly outweigh low GRE scores. Generally reviewers are looking for scores in the 80th percentile and above. Applicants might consider retaking the GRE if scores are exceptionally low or explaining reasons why the scores are low.

**17. GRE no longer has my scores because I took the exam over 5 years ago. Do I have to retake the GRE exam?**

A copy of an official test report of an exam taken within the past 10 years is acceptable and should be sent to SEFS Student and Academic Services. The exam must be retaken if the official test report is not available.

**18. If my GRE test results will not be available until after the deadline, should I go ahead and send the rest of my application materials?**

Yes. Incomplete application materials can be sent, so that an applicant file can be started. However, faculty will not review the file until it is complete. Applicants should notify the SEFS Graduate Coordinator of the scheduled exam date.

**19. I wish to submit all of my materials at one time, but I have not received my letters of recommendation and/or transcripts. I'm concerned that I will miss the deadline. What do I do?**

For tardy letters of recommendation, applicants should immediately contact the parties involved to ask for the letters as soon as possible; in some cases it is better to ask someone else for a letter of recommendation and not to wait for a tardy letter. For transcripts, unofficial copies can be sent to SEFS and then followed up with the original transcript sent via regular mail. Applicants concerned about missing the application deadline should contact the SEFS Graduate Coordinator.

**20. I'm an international student. Do I have to take an English Proficiency test?**

Yes. The test is required of all international applicants from non-English speaking countries. This is a UW requirement and there are no exceptions or waivers of the test.

**21. Which English Proficiency Test should I take?**

The UW Graduate School will accept the IELTS or the TOEFL. For more information about the tests and scores, see <http://admit.washington.edu/Admission/International/EnglishProficiency>.

**22. How does the School evaluate applications to its graduate program?**

In addition to a strong GPA, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, etc., the School pays close attention to the statement of purpose: is the statement clear and focused? Does the applicant know what he/she wants to do within his/her area of interest? Does the applicant write maturely and well? Match with faculty and graduate interest group is also considered since admitted applicants will need a faculty adviser/committee chair who understands their work.

**23. How will I know when my file is complete or if I am missing any materials?**

Applicants should check their application status by logging into their UW Graduate School application at <https://www.grad.washington.edu/applForAdmiss/>. The SEFS Graduate Coordinator notifies applicants by email shortly after the application deadline, reminding them of any missing items. Applications are processed and notifications sent as quickly as possible.

**24. I am an international applicant and I heard that I must apply for admission to the Graduate School by November 1st. Is this correct?**

The Graduate School no longer requires early application for international applicants. All applicants should make every effort to have a complete application by the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

**25. I won't be getting my bachelor's degree until June. Must this degree be indicated on the transcripts I send you?**

No. However, applicants accepted into the program will need to submit up-to-date transcripts to the School and to the UW Graduate School showing the degree granted.

**26. I applied last year and was not accepted or was accepted and could not come. Can I reapply for this coming year?**

Yes, the School holds applications for one year, and reapplicants should contact [cfradv@uw.edu](mailto:cfradv@uw.edu) detailing the materials to be used from the previous application. However, ALL reapplicants must reapply to the Graduate School and again pay the application fee; see <https://www.grad.washington.edu/applForAdmiss/> for the Graduate School's on-line application.

**27. What funding opportunities are available through the School?**

Funding varies greatly by interest area, and includes merit-based fellowships, research assistantships, and teaching assistantships. All of these funding sources waive tuition and provide a stipend as well as medical/dental/vision insurance. Applicants should also check with individual faculty members in their area of interest about funding availability.

**28. What about funding for international applicants?**

International applicants are considered for awards. Again, funding varies by interest area. Teaching assistantships require a higher level of English proficiency and testing than other awards.

**29. How do I apply for financial aid at the University of Washington?**

All applicants applying by the December 31st deadline are considered for the School's merit-based fellowships. For Federal Student Aid, like Stafford loans, applicants should contact the UW Financial Aid Office, 105 Schmitz, Box 355870; 206-543-6101; [mosfa@u.washington.edu](mailto:mosfa@u.washington.edu).

**30. When will I know if I have been accepted or not?**

SEFS admission decisions are made by the end of February. Applicants are notified no later than the first week of March.

**31. If I am accepted, how soon do I have to let you know that I am coming?**

The School would appreciate hearing from applicants as soon as possible; however, the Council of Graduate Schools, <http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=201>, indicates that applicants may have until April 15th to accept or decline offers of admission to all U.S. institutions.

**32. If I am admitted, may I defer entry into the program the following year?**

Yes, deferred entry can be granted on a case by case basis and only after consultation with the assigned faculty adviser and notification to the SEFS Graduate Coordinator.