Do Graduate Anthropology Programs Require the GRE?

A common question asked by graduate anthropology departments is: *If we stop requiring applicants to submit Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores, will we attract a more diverse cohort of students?* Unfortunately, national databases do not collect information on which universities or departments require GRE scores. In 2019, the American Anthropological Association attempted to answer that question by surveying all U.S. colleges and universities that have granted a degree in anthropology. Of the 462 institutions that were contacted, 121 (26.2%) completed or partially completed the survey. Represented in the survey results are 35% of all doctoral and 25.3% of all master’s programs that granted degrees in anthropology during the survey period.

Responses to "Are students required to submit GRE scores for admission to your doctoral program?"

The data from this limited number of anthropology departments shows no statistically significant relationship between a department’s GRE requirements and the demographic composition of applicants and accepted candidates. However, extensive research, conducted by organizations including the ETS itself, has revealed that “disparities in performance among underrepresented groups still exist.” Moreover, even as more and more anthropology PhDs have been granted to students of color in recent years, their recognition within the discipline has not increased in proportion with their numbers. Therefore, it is recommended that departments continue to investigate avenues of inclusivity, to consider applicants holistically, and to apply an intersectional analysis of the politics of power and inequality in anthropology.

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1 Complete datasets from the previous Department Surveys can be accessed through the AAA Research and Report Repository.
3 Source: NCES, IPEDS collection, Completion survey component, 2011–2018 (final) and 2019 (provisional)
4 Christen A. Smith and Dominique Garrett-Scott, “‘We are not named’: Black Women and the Politics of Citation in Anthropology,” Feminist Anthropology, (April 2021): https://doi.org/10.1002/fean.12038