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Course Synopsis

In this course you will learn: basic SLATE structure and the basic graduate admissions process; how to find records in SLATE; how to access individual sections of the application record and support documents; how to move a record through the bin system; how to determine the status of an application; and how to create your own queries of application and admission data.

1. <u>SLATE Structure & the Admissions Administrative Process</u>

SLATE is the online system for managing the recruitment, application, and admission processes for Graduate School degree programs. Understanding how SLATE is structured to mirror the real-world admissions approval process is essential to understanding how SLATE works.

SLATE Bin Structure – An Administrative Pathway & Process

SLATE application records are organized in bins which group records together according to their current position in the administrative process. Think of the SLATE bin structure as *file cabinet drawers* each representing different stages in the application cycle; SLATE bin names correspond to steps in the administrative process. Workflow generally moves applications from "left to right" through the bins: from <u>Evaluation</u>; to <u>Departmental Review</u>; to <u>School Review</u>; to <u>Graduate School Review</u>; and finally to a <u>Decision</u> bin.

The bin map (below) appears on the **Dashboard** tab of each *current applicant's* SLATE record. The dark blue shading indicates the current bin location of the record.



NOTE: Since the Bins exist only to support the process of admitting <u>new</u> students, the Bins contain application records for the current application cycle only. AAPSI clears bins at the end of application cycles; however, you can find older records in SLATE with a search by name, application term, or other data elements.

Primary Administrative Functions in SLATE 1- Lookup Records individually, using the Search box in the upper right corner 2- Use quick Searches to find groups of records (ex. 2018 Fall applicants) & filter results; use Queries to save & export application data to Excel to sort the applicant pool 3- move records through bins, by a predetermined administrative workflow 4- evaluate applicants, access application materials 5- determine status of an application record, where it stands in the decision cycle 6- make admission offers, using the RAF form; this leads to an admission offer letter 7- deny applicants 8- compile application & admission statistics (two sources: Queries in SLATE; and statistical reports in VIRG, GAPSTAT)

Graduate School Admissions Process : 7 Steps

Workflow refers to the path an application record follows through the bin system. Each academic department has its own review process for evaluating and sorting applications, but all admissions offers start from the **DGS Review** bin, then go to the **Dean's Review** bin*, then to the **Graduate School** bin, then finally to the **Admit** bin.



* Certain programs do not have an associate dean in the approval chain, and send admission offers directly from DGS Review to the Graduate School bin. Please contact <u>walt.bieschke@vanderbilt.edu</u> if you have questions regarding workflow for your program.

Step 1: Evaluation - Admissions decisions begin at the department level. Starting in the Initial Evaluation stage (see bin map), administrators move records from bin to bin manually using the Edit Application Details link on the application tab. This means administrators must know where to send the record next.

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Step 2: Decision - All admission offers are created when the application is in the <u>DGS Review</u> bin. The DGS completes the Recommendation for Action Form (RAF) to make an admission offer. <u>Note</u>: the DGS must add the record to his/her Queue, then toggle from Lookup to Reader to access the RAF.

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After toggling from Lookup to Reader, the DGS accesses the RAF form by clicking Review Form/Send to Bin:



Step 3: Dean's Approval - The DGS then electronically forwards the application to the Dean Review bin for initial approval. The DGS can move the record either by using Edit Application Details in Lookup, or by using the fields at the bottom of the RAF when submitting the admission offer for dean's review. Note: For programs without an associate dean, the record is sent directly to the Graduate School bin for approval.

<u>Note</u>: The **Next Bin** drop-down field will default to *DGS Review (current)*. So if you're not ready to send the RAF to the dean, leave *DGS Review (current)* as the Next Bin, and your draft will auto-save. In this example, click **Send** to move the RAF into the Dean Review bin.



> <u>Step 4: Graduate School Approval</u> - The Dean approves the admission by moving the application to the *Graduate School* bin for final approval.

Step 5: Admission Offer Letter Released to Applicant - The Graduate School posts an electronic admission letter in SLATE on the applicant's Application Status Page; there is no paper mailing. The applicant receives an automatic email notification that there has been a status update for his/her application, prompting the applicant to check the online record. Administrators can see the letter from the applicant's perspective by using the Impersonate > Status Page link, then clicking View Update:

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Step 6: Application Filed in ADMIT Bin - The GS moves the application record to the <u>Admit</u> bin for the remainder of the current application cycle, unless an offer is later revised by the program. In that case, the application re-enters the workflow from the DGS Review bin. <u>Only the GS moves</u> records into the Admit bin.

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Step 7: Applicant Response - The applicant enters a decision to <u>Accept</u> or <u>Decline</u> the admission offer, by using the online <u>Admission Response Form</u> on the Application Status Page. The decision must be entered in SLATE in order to update the applicant's official status in the Student Records System.

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example: applicant <u>Declined</u> the offer

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2. Navigate SLATE: Find Individual Records & Groups of Records

There are two main user modes in SLATE: Lookup and Reader.

* **Lookup** mode, a.k.a. the Administrative mode, for departmental admissions administrators (search for individual records; run queries to find groups of records; materials checklists; document downloads; administrative screens).

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administrative managers' SLATE login: http://apply.vanderbilt.edu/manage

example: Lookup view (administrative)

* **<u>Reader</u>** mode, for faculty read-only users (paginated e-book view; read and evaluate applications; no edit capability).



faculty read-only users' SLATE login:

http://apply.vanderbilt.edu/reader

example: Reader view (read and evaluate)

Administrative users can "toggle" between Lookup and Reader modes as needed. Open the Reader by clicking its icon at the top of the screen. To return to Lookup mode, click the Exit link in the Reader; or click the applicant name, then click the Lookup link. Note: Read-Only users cannot access the Lookup mode.





LOOKUP Mode

On top of the SLATE home page, the administrative buttons you will use most often are:



Search Records – quick search to find individual or group records. For example, click on Filter, and enter *application term*, then choose 2018 Fall. Search results will appear on-screen, but cannot be exported or saved.

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* Also, you can use the **Search Box** in the top right corner to search for <u>individual</u> records by *name*, *email*, or *9-digit application ID number*.

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Add Filter

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Queries & Reports – Choose an existing query to run, or build a new query to find certain groups of records, according to your search criteria. (see below, section 6, Queries, for details about building new queries)

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READER Mode



The SLATE Reader **see is accessible to administrators from the icon on top of the home page, in Lookup** mode. However, faculty Read-Only users will log in to the SLATE Reader directly with a different URL and will not have access beyond the Reader: <u>http://apply.vanderbilt.edu/reader</u>

SLATE Reader is primarily for faculty evaluators, allowing easier access to application materials (paginated view of application, rather than separate screens Lookup view). Note: Read-only users do not have access to SLATE queries and reports. Also, the DGS will use the Reader for making admission offers from the DGS Review bin with a Recommendation for Action Form (RAF) – the basis for the admission letter (more details in the Advanced User Course).





3. Application Details & Status Indicators

In Lookup, the application record is arranged in a series of **tabs** along the top of the page. Each tab opens a new screen with different application information. In the examples, also note the highlighted administrative **status indicators** that help you determine things such as: whether an application has been submitted (completed); whether the application fee is paid; whether there is an admission decision; whether an admission offer letter has been released; and, whether the applicant has Accepted the admission offer.



b. <u>Timeline tab</u> – log of administrative events; dates for documents received; system emails sent & received by the applicant; other personal interactions that may be logged by an administrator



c. <u>application tab</u> – this is the tab that bears the name of your program. This is your main <u>Summary page</u> for everything you need to know about the application, at a glance. It includes: application submission status; application fee status; bin location; decision status; applicant response status; checklist of materials received; links to application support documents (transcripts, letters of recommendation); link to the <u>Application</u> <u>Status Page</u> (applicant view, where the admission letter is posted)

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d. <u>**Profile** tab</u> – another way to access application form information & support documents, including verified score reports

e. <u>Materials tab</u> – another way to access application support documents, including transcripts & recommendation letters. Click the list item to view an image of the document.



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4. SLATE Queries

Think of a Query as a saved set of Search criteria that you can re-run, and save the results history like dated snapshots (*detailed query guide available separately*). Click the icon to open the Queries page. You can click on an existing query in the list, and run the query to get data. You can build your own custom queries to look for specific data sets.

Build The Query

Click **New Query** to begin building a new query.



VANDERBILT GRADUATE SCHOOL

The query filters list is quite large & granular, but it is searchable by *keyword*. The list includes all data points collected in the application form.

SLATE Graduate Admissions: BASIC Course

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Include status indicators in your search criteria, such as: bin location; or, Decision (i.e. to find all Admitted records, query for – Decision Released IN : Admit) to find records with that status.



Run The Query

After you've built the query by adding your Exports, Filters, and Sort Keys, click the query name at the top of the page to open the query page and run the query. If you wish, you can export your search results to an Excel spreadsheet.



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5. Application Fees & Fee Waivers

Most application fee waivers will be managed automatically in SLATE, depending on what the applicant enters in the Personal section of the application. Information about the application fee and fee waiver policy is available on the Graduate School <u>website</u>, and questions may be sent to <u>gsfeewaivers@vanderbilt.edu</u>. A small number of additional waivers will be granted at the discretion of the school/college and program based on recruitment priorities. Applicants may request a waiver from the department, or departments may decide proactively to grant a waiver even without a request.

It is the responsibility of individual department offices to communicate with their Associate Dean, to align with the dean's policy and wishes regarding discretionary waivers. Some schools will manage discretionary waivers at the dean's level, without involving your department; please confirm with your dean. Each discretionary waiver carries a cost of \$95 which will be charged to your program or school.

example: how *application fee payment status information* appears in the administrative view, on the application tab, Activities section.

Activities				
Date A	Code	Subject	User	
New Activity				
10/11/2017	Payment	Payment Due: 95.00 USD	emosuser	0
09/29/2017	Received	Received Copy: Self-Reported GRE		6
09/29/2017	Received	Received Copy: Self-Reported GRE		0
09/28/2017	Received	Received Conv: Self-Reported GRF		0

Locating the Waiver Code

Program/School administrators can locate an applicant's waiver code by going to their application and selecting the "Waiver Code" tab located on the right-hand side.

German - PHD Ox Awaiting Materials Current Bin: Awaiting Materials No decision on file. Ein Submitted July 23, 2017 Bin: Awaiting Materials No decision on file. Bee Last updated July 23, 2017 Don	ancial Aid
waiting Materials Current Bin: Awaiting Materials No decision on file.	ancial An
ast updated July 23, 2017 Dor	
	wnload PDF
opulations:	personate > Applications
Im	personate > Status Page
Applicant Waiver Code Edit	t Application Details
Entered	blication Details
Applicant Waiver Code 900203163	ancial Awards
Top	pping Up
E alle	iver Code

Providing the Waiver Code

It is recommended that School/Program administrators share the waiver code with the applicants through SLATE, as this will record the interaction. Applicants will only be able to enter a waiver code before submitting their application.

From the Dashboard, click on the applicant's email address under the "Contact" section on the right.

Dashboard	Timoline	German - PHD Avaiting Submission	Profile	Matorials	Dotails	External Systems	
Dashboard							Nashville, TN
Started Apps : Submitted App Biographic	Graduate & Pr s :	ofessional Applicat German - PHD Aw	siting Subn	ission			Nagvile TENNESSEE Charjotteo
Male Born 09/29/19 United States 0	90, age 26 Ditzen						123 Main Street Nashville, TN 37209
German - Ph	HD						Contact
Awaiting Subm Started 07/21/	ission 2017						Email test@test.com Mobile +1 914-482-4272



This will bring up an email window. Enter the message to the applicant, including their waiver code, and click Send.





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These interactions can be viewed through the Timeline.

Dashboard	Timeline	German - PHD Awaiting Materials	Profile	Materials	Details	External Systems			
Date 🔺	Code	Subject					User/Status		Timeline
New Interaction									Interactions
07/23/2017	Message	Application Fee Waive	Code				Sent)~<	Addit Log

Applicant Experience

Once an applicant receives their waiver code, they will need to enter it in the "Waiver Code" page of the application.

	Waive	r Code	
Program	Mawa way been pro	uided with a walver code for your	analication too?
	Yes *	vided with a warren oode tor your	approximent real?
	Waiver Corle	900303183	
	110100 0000	(MARKAN IND)	
	Continue		
Statement of Purpose			
Walver Code			

Applicants will see that the fee waiver has been applied once they submit their application. They will see the Application Fee Waived checklist item (or notice of Payment Due) on their Status Page. Because this rule does not run on submission, it may take several minutes for the waiver to be added.

Applica	tion Checklist	Application Submitted: 07/23/2017
Status	Details	Date
¥ Received	Application Fee Waived	07/23/2017
🗙 Awaiting	Self-Reported or Official GRE	
✔ Waived	TOEFL or IELTS Score	07/23/2017



If an application fee payment is due, the applicant will see this indication on the Application Status Page after they submit the application, along with the prompt and link for payment.

Status I	Jpdate	
New updates to y	our application were posted October 13	, 2017.
View Update >>		
Paymen	t Due: 95.00 USD	
🗙 Awatrg	Application Fee - Submit Payment fi	95 00 USD
Applica	tion Checklist	Application Submitted: 10/11/2017
Status	Details	Date
X Awateg	Application Fee Waived	
- Received	Official GBE	09/28/2017

Entering the Waiver Code Administratively

If an administrator wishes to enter the waiver code on behalf of the applicant, they can do so by going to the "Waiver Code" tab on the right-hand side. Copy the waiver code and click "Edit". If an applicant has already submitted their application, this is the only way to apply the waiver code on their behalf.

Dashboard	Timeline	German - PHD Awaiting Materials	Profile Hateri	els Details	External Systems	
German - PH	D	Current Rise Au	niling Materials		In desision on the	Overview Einancial Aid
Submitted July 2 Last updated July	3, 2017 23, 2017	San tana ana pe	nong risto das			Read Application Download PDE
Populations:						Impersonate > Applications Impersonate > Status Page
Applicant Waive	r Code 90	0203163				Edit Application Details
Applicant Waive Entered	r Code					Enancial Awards
Edit						Waiver Code

Enter the code and click "Save".

Dashbeard Timesia	E German - PHD Awating Hatenals	Profile Platenals	Details External Systems	
Serman - PHD waiting Materials jubmitted July 23, 2017 ast updated July 23, 2017 Populations:	Current Bin: Au	vaiting Materials	No decision on file.	Overview Ensurcal Aid Read Application Download PDE Impersonate > Applications
Applicant Waiver Code Entered	900203163			Impersentite > Status Page Edit Application Details Application Details Einansial Awards Toping Lip Wature Code

It may take up 15 minutes for the waiver to reflect on the application.

Bunny, Bu	gs							Applicant	479639951
Dashboard	Timeline	oP in Biomedica Awaiting Materials	nvironmental En., And	iting Submission	Profile	Materials	Details	External Systems	
IGP in Blome Awaiting Materia Submitted August Last updated Au Populations: Checklist	edical and Bi s t 31, 2017 pust 31, 2017	ological Sciences PHD 2018 F Current Bin: Avaitin	all g Materials	No decision	i an file.			Overview Einancial Aid Read Applicat Download PD Impersonate Edit Applicatio	00 E > Status Page In Datails
Insert Requirem	ent							Application De Financial Awa	<u>Salia</u> rds
¥ 07/21/2017	Application P	ee Walved			Received		• Edt	Interviews	
₩ 07/21/2017	Official GRE				Received		• Edt	Nursing	
V 08/31/2017	Self-Reporte	d GRE			Received	Copy	• Edt	Summer Proo	m
V 09/01/2015	Transcript (A	uburn University (Auburn])			Received		*	Topping Up	
¥ 01/21/2016	Transcript (D	Juke University)			Received			Walver Code	



Tracking Discretionary Waivers

A standard query has been created for departments to use in order to track which applicants have received a discretionary waiver. From the Query tool, click "Include shared queries" on the right-hand side, and click on the "Queries for programs" folder. You will see a query named "Discretionary Waivers". Open the query and click "Run Query" to view your results.

slate 🖩 🕋 🔫		2 7 🔅	Sear	🚔 Chris Noel Logout	Â		
Queries		Search Queries		Queries Reports Widgets			
new adery Glick adery				Predictions			
Name	Folder	Population	Updated	Voyager			
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				Audit Queries			
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				Doc Exports			
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6. Admission Offer Letters

Admission offer letters, and the Recommendation for Action Forms (RAFs) that trigger them, are discussed in detail in the ADVANCED User Course.

All admission offer letters are posted online in the applicant's record. No paper copy is produced, nor is the letter itself ever emailed to an applicant, for security and privacy reasons. After the Graduate School gives final approval of the admission offer, the applicant receives an automatic email notice from SLATE that there is a status update in their application record. The applicant logs into the Application Status Page, and clicks the View Update link to see the admission offer letter. Applicants can download the letter in PDF format.

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Recommendation for A	tion Form						
Submitted	10/12/2017 at 10:08:40 AM by Walt Bieschke		Graduate S	ichool approval			
Last Updated	10/13/2017 at 12:38:20 PM						
Created	10/12/2017 at 10:08:40 AM						
Bin	Graduate School into DGS Review						
Recommended Action	Admit, with financial awards						
RAF Update Date	10/13/2017						
Is this a revised offer? (A	No	·					
previous offer has been released)		Octo	ober 11, 2017				
Comments (Vanderbilt							
internal)						Pfi	nnt Fne
Date Applicant Must	04/15/2018						
(mm/dd/yyyy)							
		Mr. E	Bugs Bunny				
Admit with finan	tial awarde	2301 Nast	West End Ave Apt 3 Wille, TN 37203-1700				
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Predefined Awards	University Fellowship						
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7. Best-Practices & Tips

- History is your friend. Look at last year's records as a refresher for how RAFs and admission packages should look for your program.
- Have fewer queries to manage, by including more Exports in your results. You can export an Excel spreadsheet and sort by key data points.
- Sometimes an applicant with a previous application will want to re-apply, and will ask your program to "reconsider" a past application. Do not "change the application term" on the record so that they don't have to re-enter their information. Instead, you can *clone* a record, and then put the cloned copy into the current application pool. This preserves the application statistics and historical record, and prevents problems in the Student Records System if the applicant is admitted. Cloning only works for submitted applications.
- End-of-cycle "bin cleanout" at the end of each admissions season, the AAPSI office removes current applications from the bins, to make way for the new records of the next application cycle. Records from previous terms all remain in SLATE, and are still available through Search and Query functions.



8. Contacts, New User Accounts, & Training Resources

Admissions Primary Point-of-Contact:

Walt Bieschke, Assistant Director of Admissions

walt.bieschke@vanderbilt.edu

- Requests for new SLATE user accounts & SLATE training
- Questions about special admissions cases & Graduate School admissions policy
- Faculty/staff SLATE technical issues
- questions about departmental approval workflow
- written SLATE training guides, available in comprehensive & topical formats
- Admissions Tips & Best-Practices email series

Applicant Help Desk:

apply@vanderbilt.edu

- Routine questions from applicants & prospective applicants about application & admission process & Graduate School admissions policy
- Questions from writers of letters of recommendation
- Applicant & Recommender SLATE technical issues

Application Fees & Fee Waivers Questions:

gsfeewaivers@vanderbilt.edu

- For faculty, staff, applicants All questions related to application fees, application fee waivers, and events or programs which qualify applicants for fee waivers
- Graduate School policy on application fees & fee waivers: <u>https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/application/index.php</u>

Graduate School web site:

https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

- Course catalog in PDF format
- Departmental contact information
- Starting point for online applications to graduate programs
- Policies, administrative processes, administrative forms, various deadlines
- Office of Postdoctoral Affairs & information on the Academic Pathways Program
- COMING SOON: Best-Practices & Training page for faculty/staff