

FAQ

Ph.D. Students (Prospective)

Application Requirement Questions:

Q: Who in the department can I speak with regarding questions about the Graduate program?

A: Contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Nancy Wells, at nmw2@cornell.edu or 607-254-6330.

Q: When is the application due?

A: November 1st.

Q: Can I apply for both a Ph.D. and a Masters at the same time?

A: No.

Q: If I apply to another Cornell department and do not get in, can I switch my application to DEA?

A: Yes, the Graduate School can help with this, but you must still adhere to our requirements and deadlines.

Q: May I apply in the Fall to start in January?

A: No, we only have one admission cycle, applications are due in November for PhD; students start in the Fall semester.

Q: To whom do I send my materials to (Rec. Letters, etc.), and where do I send my payment?

A: Applications are submitted online via the Graduate School's application system (available on the web at: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/applying/apply-now>). Cornell strongly encourages applicants to submit as much material online as possible (by uploading it into the system), but if you cannot upload an item and need to send transcripts, letters, etc., to us, please send them directly to D+EA at the address listed on the field page: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/fields-of-study/field/design-and-environmental-analysis>.

Q: Is a portfolio required?

A: No, a portfolio is not required for the Ph.D. degree.

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum length desired for the writing sample?

A: No, but scholarly writing sample submissions are *preferred* (ex: Master's Thesis; Peer Review Journal Article; Senior Honors Project).

Q: Should only one sample be submitted or do I need to submit a "portfolio" of research, teaching, and/or professional work relevant to advanced graduate research?

A: One writing sample is sufficient

Q: Is funding provided for the Ph.D. in Human Behavior and Design (HBD)?

A: D+EA provides four years of funding to Ph.D. students in HBD, as long as students' progress and performance is satisfactory. This funding could take the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships, or some combination and is typically for the nine-month academic year.

Q: **Is it necessary to have an Master's degree before applying to the PhD program?**

A: No, it is not necessary to have an MS or MA before beginning the PhD. The strongest applicants are those who have a foundation in research (e.g., have completed a research thesis (undergrad or graduate), have participated in a lab as a research assistant, have perhaps taken a social science research methods class).

Q: **Must I have a prior design degree to apply to the Ph.D. program in D+EA?**

A: For the *PhD in Human Behavior and Design*, a background in both design and research is preferred, but students may come from a variety of disciplines.

Q: **Can current D+EA graduate students apply to the Ph.D. program before completing their Master's degree?**

A: Yes, HOWEVER, if substantial progress has not been made on their Master's, then it's a long shot. Applicants should be told the following two things: 1. Their Ph.D. work will take 4 years to complete, and 2. Lack of substantial progress on their Master's Thesis will be viewed as a liability.

Q: **Do current or former D+EA graduate students need to resubmit transcripts, GRE's and TOEFL scores?**

A: Yes. Note that GRE and TOEFL scores must be less than five years old.

Q: **Must recommendation letters come from faculty members?**

A: No. Academic letters of recommendation are valuable and somewhat preferable; however recommendations should be from people who can best assess the qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of the applicant.

Q: **What are the Educational Testing Service (ETS) codes for Cornell and for DEA?**

A: Cornell's institutional test code for ETS is 2098. DEA's department code is 4499.

Q: **What is the minimum GRE score and what happens if my GRE score is lower?**

A: D+EA recommends a combined verbal/quantitative GRE score of 310 (new scoring system effective November 2011) or a combined score of 1200 (old scoring) but this is not an absolute cutoff. Candidates with strong applications, but scores below this level, may be considered. You may submit scores to D+EA more than once if you re-take the test. Your scores may not be older than 5 years.

Q: **Can GRE's be retaken?**

A: Yes GRE's can be retaken, but scores must be submitted by the application deadline.

Q: **Can scores for GRE/TOEFL/IELTS tests be submitted AFTER the application deadline?**

A: We strongly encourage you to take the GRE and TOEFL/IELTS tests early enough in advance that your scores will be received by our application due date. We *may* allow some latitude, however. If your *official* scores have not arrived by the due date, but your *unofficial* scores have, we may hold your application if approved by the DGS. Your scores are automatically reported to Cornell by the testing service (ETS) as soon as they are ready, and the Graduate Field Assistant will automatically add them to your packet.

Q: **Am I required to take the TOEFL?**

A: According to the Graduate School:

"Applicants whose native language is not English must take the TOEFL and have the official score reported to Cornell from the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Only students who have studied full-time for two or more

years at a college or university where English is the language of instruction located in a country where English is the native language are exempt from the TOEFL.” The official link used by the Grad School to determine if a student needs to take the TOEFL is: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>.

Note that if a student has completed a *one and a half year* graduate program in the U.S. (or other English-speaking country) prior to coming to Cornell, he or she must take the TOEFL. However, if at the time of application, a student has completed 1 ½ years of a 2 year program, but will have completed the two year program by the time of admission to Cornell, then he or she is not required to take the TOEFL.

Q: What are the minimum required TOEFL scores?

A: D+EA and the Cornell Graduate School have different minimum requirements. *The overall D+EA minimum is 105 (combined score) for the internet-based test (ibT) TOEFL.* The graduate school minimum is 77; as described here: <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/applying/english-language-proficiency-requirement>: The Graduate School has set the following minimums for individual section scores for admissions: Writing: 20, Listening: 15, Reading: 20, Speaking: 22.

Q: Am I required submit both IELTS and TOEFL scores?

A: As an international applicant, you must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by taking a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam. Please see the requirements on the Graduate School website for more information: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/prepare/english-language-proficiency-requirement>

Q: Do you accept IELTS scores and what is the criteria?

A: The Graduate School requires an overall band score of a 7.0 or higher on the IELTS.

- When you register for the exam, you may select up to five institutions to which you would like to have your Test Report Form (TRF) mailed. You may also submit a request to your test center to have additional TRFs sent to institutions not originally listed on your registration form.
- Have IELTS send your Test Report Form (either by postal mail, or electronically) to *Cornell University -- Graduate Admissions*. Please do not e-mail a scanned copy, or mail a photocopy of your TRF.

Q: What is the minimum undergraduate GPA that you will accept?

A: D+EA recommends a GPA of 3.0 (minimum), but this is not an absolute cutoff.

Q: How are transcripts submitted? Are they copies or “official” transcripts?

A: The Grad School would like transcripts to be uploaded into the applications database by students. Here are the instructions regarding submitting transcripts:

Transcripts - Transcripts from each college or university previously attended are required.

To submit a transcript, applicants must follow the steps below.

1. Scan all transcripts—one from each college or university previously attended.
2. Upload the scanned transcript into the on-line application as part of the submissions process.
3. ****If you are unable to submit your transcript electronically, you must send a transcript from each college or university previously attended directly to the field to which you are applying using the mailing addresses provided on the field of study pages.**

Admitted students who accept the admission offer are **required** to submit an official paper transcript prior to matriculation. This requirement will appear on the “response to offer of admission” form.

Q: How do I check the status of my application?

A: It is advised that you periodically check your application on line to see if your application is complete, especially if you are waiting for letters of recommendation to be uploaded. DEA's Graduate Field Assistant may, as a courtesy, send you a reminder if you have missing information

when the committee begins to review applications. If you have questions, please contact DEA's Graduate Field Assistant at deagrad@cornell.edu or 607-255-2168.

Ph.D. Program Questions:

Q: Does D+EA offer online classes for the Ph.D. program?

A: No, D+EA does not offer online classes for the Ph.D. program.

Q: What are the program requirements (courses, exams, dissertation sequence etc.)?

A: The first two years are dedicated primarily to course work (in your major field and two minor fields). At the end of year 2, PhD students complete qualifying exams ("A Exam"). Arrangements for your A-Exam are made with your dissertation committee. A dissertation is required. Years 3 and 4 focus primarily on research and the completion of the dissertation. The "B Exam" is the dissertation defense.

Q: How long should the Ph.D. program take to complete?

A: Four years.

Q: Do Ph.D. students have to reside on campus during the entire program (residency requirements)?

A: Yes, PhD students are expected to be on campus for the 4-year PhD degree. For more information please see: <https://living.cornell.edu/live/wheretolive/housingoptions/index.cfm>

Q: Will Ph.D. students be required to or have the opportunity to teach?

A: This depends on what sort of funding is awarded to the doctoral student. In most cases, Ph.D. students will be asked to function as a teaching assistant for at least part of their time in D+EA.

Q: Can professors in design, architecture, or other related fields without a Ph.D. co-chair or serve as a minor committee member?

A: Yes.

Q: If I am admitted, but find that I need to defer my admission, do you allow deferments, and if so, for how long?

A: Yes, we allow deferments up to one year, but this must be decided when responding to the department's offer. To request a deferral, by the "reply by" date (typically April 15) an applicant must first accept the offer of admission and then request (and provide a reason for) the deferral. Applicants cannot defer admission after declining our offer; instead the applicant must re-apply.

Q: Can I transfer credits into Cornell? If so, what are the stipulations for doing so?

A: Yes, but this is on a case-by-case basis, and the D+EA Graduate Faculty will make decisions as to what is allowed or not allowed. Typically, you will need to provide a syllabus for your prior course(s).

Q: Should I schedule a campus visit, and if so, how do I go about it?

A: If you would like to schedule a visit, you should first make an appointment with D+EA's DGS. If you would like to meet with other D+EA Faculty, you could also schedule meetings with them while you are on campus. Many students also enjoy taking a walking tour of campus while they are here: http://www.cornell.edu/visiting/ithaca/walking_tours.cfm. Other useful links include the campus map: <http://www.cornell.edu/maps/interactive.cfm> and the Visit Ithaca web site: <http://www.visitithaca.com/>