Ph.D. in Geography Graduate Admissions Process- Frequently Asked Questions

GRE:
Institution Code for Clark University is 3279.
Department Code for Geography is 2203.

TOEFL:
Institution Code for Clark University is 3279.
Department Code for Geography is 70.

What is the deadline and is there any chance it can be extended?
The deadline, when materials must ARRIVE at Clark, is December 31. This is a firm deadline and prospective applicants should begin to assemble their materials early enough to meet it. We reserve the right to reject any applicants whose application materials arrive after December 31.

Do the letters of reference have to meet the deadline?
The answer is yes, letters of reference must meet the deadline. We recommend that you ask your referees to give you their letter in a sealed envelope that the referee has signed on the seal so that you can include them with the other materials in your packet. Whether you submit it this way or the referee sends it directly to us, you are responsible for making sure we receive your letters of reference by the deadline. If one of the required three letters is missing we will still consider the application, but your chances of acceptance will be diminished.

Who are the best people to have as referees?
Since your academic background is an important predictor of your success in a Ph.D. program, we look for letters from former professors or others in a position to knowledgeably evaluate your academic accomplishments and your promise to succeed in a demanding program.

How important is the statement?
The statement is your opportunity to present yourself to us. We read it carefully and a weak statement will harm the prospects of an otherwise impressive application.

What do you look for in the personal statement?
We want to have a clear idea of your achievements and goals and why you want to come to Clark (rather than some other geography program). While we do not expect or want applicants to have a dissertation topic in hand we are very interested in what field or fields of geography interest you and why. If you do not have a background in geography, we want to know what topics or research questions interest you and why you believe a geography program is the place where you want to pursue them.

Do you recommend that I visit Clark before applying?
Although we welcome visits by prospective students, a pre-application visit is not required and failure to make such a visit will not penalize your application. That said, if you can make such a visit, we recommend it. Visiting the campus for a day or two is an efficient way for you to evaluate our faculty, program, and university/town environment and for us to get to know you and assess how your interests might fit with our program.

It is essential that your visit be arranged as far in advance as possible to work out the best timing for appointments to be set up with faculty relevant to your interests and graduate students. Please note that the academic calendar is too busy for us to accept visitors between December 1 and January 15. Contact Brenda Nikas-Hayes, Graduate Program Administrator (508) 793-7337), BNikasHayes@clarku.edu.

Do I have to submit GRE scores?
We require Graduate Record Exam results for United States and Canadian applicants. If we do not receive a GRE score we will still review your application, but your likelihood of acceptance is much diminished. We also strongly encourage foreign students from other countries to take the GRE exam and have the scores mailed to us. In past years most foreign student applicants have been able to do this. If you have not yet taken the GRE, you must allow sufficient time between the exam and our deadline for us to receive your results. Information about taking the GRE exam can be obtained from the ETS web site or, by mail, from Graduate Record Examinations, Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6000, Princeton, NJ 08541-6000.
Do you accept older GRE scores?
While recent GRE test scores are preferred, we will accept older GRE scores although not longer than 2 years old is preferred. If the testing service will not issue a GRE score and send it to us because it is outdated, we will accept a photocopy of your old score. Also, if it is not possible for the Testing Service to get your scores to us by December 31, and you have a copy, please send us a photocopy with your application. We will expect the official copy from the testing service as soon as possible.

I am a foreign student. Do you require TOEFL scores?
Ph.D. level graduate work requires a high level of proficiency in reading, writing and speaking English. With one exception, we require all students from countries where English is not the FIRST language to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam (or another equivalent English proficiency test) and TOEFL test of spoken English (TSE) sufficiently in advance of December 31 so that we can receive your scores in time to consider your application. The exception is those foreign students from non-English speaking countries who are currently studying at the university level in the United States, Great Britain, Australia or Canada or foreign students who have earned a university degree in one of these countries within the last ten years.
Information about taking the TOEFL exams, including a list of all sites where it is administered worldwide, the examination dates, and advice about how to register locally, can be obtained from the ETS web site. The ETS advises students to register early as number of places at some test sites can become filled in advance of the test. Their U.S. mail address is: TOEFL, Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6151, Princeton, NJ 08541-6151.

I need financial aid to come to Clark. Do I need to fill out a financial aid form?
We do not require the completion of financial aid forms. International students do need to fill out a Financial Statement Form, however. This is a requirement of the United States Immigration Service who need bank certification that the student or his or her family have sufficient resources to support the student, if necessary, during the summer months and or beyond the three-year funding base.

I am from a country where photocopies are very expensive to obtain. Can you waive the requirement to send two copies of the application form and statement?
We routinely waive the photocopy requirement for applicants from countries where this is a heavy economic burden or where it is very difficult to obtain photocopies.

I have further questions. Whom should I call or email?
Call the Graduate Program Administrator, Brenda Nikas-Hayes, if you need additional information or want to arrange a campus visit. The telephone number is (508) 793-7337; email is BNikasHayes@clarku.edu