

Dept. of Agricultural and Biological Engineering – Purdue University

Frequently Asked Questions

Note: Many frequently asked questions have to do with application requirements. These are listed on our [Application Requirements](#) page. See also the [Graduate School's FAQs](#) page.

General Program Questions	2
'Agricultural and Biological Engineering' sounds like engineering for farming, or making better tractors. Is that what your faculty and students do?.....	2
Application Materials.....	2
What application materials do I need to submit?	2
Do I need to have all my materials ready before submitting my application?.....	2
Do I need to submit all supporting documents at the same time?	3
How will I know when/whether my materials have been received?	3
Do electronic documents need to be sent in hard copy form as well?	3
How long should my statement of purpose be?.....	3
Should I complete the fellowship essay?.....	3
How should recommendation letters be sent to ABE?.....	3
Should I list specific faculty members with whom I would like to study, on the application?.....	3
What is the institution code and department code for reporting test scores?.....	4
I am an international student who is currently studying at a U.S. institution or who previously earned a degree from a U.S. institution. Do I still need to submit TOEFL scores?.....	4
I took the TOEFL previously. Do I need to re-take it?	4
I took the GRE previously. Do I need to re-take it?.....	4
Application Process.....	4
What is the department's application review process?	4
When do I need to submit my application? (What is the application deadline?)	4
Should I contact faculty members? When?.....	5
How long does the application review process take?	5
I am interested in multiple departments at Purdue. How should I apply?.....	5
Admission (Rates, Selectivity, etc.)	5

My GRE scores are _____ and my GPA is _____. Can I be admitted? Can I receive funding?.....	5
What is the department’s selectivity/admission rate?.....	5
My bachelor’s degree was not in engineering. May I still apply?.....	5
Funding	5
May I be considered for funding (assistantships, fellowships, etc.)?	5
What kind of funding is available to Purdue ABE students?.....	6

General Program Questions

‘Agricultural and Biological Engineering’ sounds like engineering for farming, or making better tractors. Is that what your faculty and students do?

Our department encompasses a number of disciplines. Our faculty and students are engaged in research on everything from biosensing for cancer detection to GIS mapping for watershed management; from computer modeling of fluid power systems to heat and mass transfer in food; and much more! To learn more about the breadth and depth of our department, see our [Research Areas](#).

Application Materials

What application materials do I need to submit?

The following application materials are required:

- Online application – which usually includes:
 - Resume/CV
 - Statement of purpose
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Official transcripts for all institutions attended (even if no degree was/has been earned)
 - International applicants:
 - Include degree and/or diploma certificates as applicable
 - Please include original language version(s) and certified English translations if original is not in English
- Official GRE scores (reporting code 1631; no departmental code is needed)
 - International applicants: Official TOEFL (reporting code 1631; no departmental code is needed), IELTS (academic module), or Pearson Test of English (academic module) scores

For further details on application requirements, score reporting codes, etc., visit our [application requirements](#) page.

Do I need to have all my materials ready before submitting my application?

No. You may submit your application any time after the mandatory information from you has been entered (your contact information, degree information, etc.). Letters of recommendation can be

submitted later, either using the SLATE online system or by other means. It *is* recommended, however, that you submit your resume/CV and statement of purpose with the online application.

Do I need to submit all supporting documents at the same time?

No. You may submit each document when ready and we will collect all documents into a complete file.

How will I know when/whether my materials have been received?

We will update your application record in Purdue's online application system as materials are received. It can take up to a week to note items once received—since materials are reviewed and catalogued periodically—so we appreciate your patience in the process. Please do not email to ask if we have received an item unless there has been an unusual delay. These kinds of emails actually slow down the overall process of processing items received.

Do electronic documents need to be sent in hard copy form as well?

No. Anything submitted online (resume, statement of purpose, official test scores, recommendations) does not need to be duplicated in paper form.

How long should my statement of purpose be?

Because our faculty review many applications, we strongly encourage you to keep to the 300-500 word limit for your statement of purpose. The ability to communicate one's ideas succinctly and effectively is an important skill, and your statement of purpose is a good place to demonstrate this ability.

Should I complete the fellowship essay?

All applicants to ABE who received their high school diploma from an accredited U.S. high school, are encouraged to complete the Fellowship Applicant Essay, available on the [Purdue Application website](#).

How should recommendation letters be sent to ABE?

Recommendation letters can be sent in several ways. First, recommenders may use the SLATE online application system to upload their recommendation. You will have the opportunity to input an email address for each of your recommenders when you complete the online application. Second, applicants may mail sealed, unopened letters of recommendation. Third, recommenders may email or mail recommendations directly to our Graduate Program Administrator. See our [application requirements](#) page for current contact information. *Note: Recommenders using email or mail should include the Purdue Graduate School [Recommendation Form](#).*

Recommendations may be sent by any of the above means, and need not be duplicated (e.g., recommendations sent online do not need to be sent in paper as well).

Should I list specific faculty members with whom I would like to study, on the application?

Yes. While this application field is optional, it is very helpful to us in considering your application, since (in most cases) students are not admitted just to the department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, but to a specific professor's research group.

What is the institution code and department code for reporting test scores?

Exam reporting requirements, options, and codes are available on our [Application Requirements](#) page. Please note that for scores reported to the university electronically, no department code is required. However, if your test administration does not allow for leaving the department code blank, any entry will be fine; regardless of which department code you enter, we will be able to access your scores if received electronically by Purdue.

I am an international student who is currently studying at a U.S. institution or who previously earned a degree from a U.S. institution. Do I still need to submit TOEFL scores?

The Graduate School will routinely waive the TOEFL/IELTS for applicants who have received a baccalaureate degree or graduate or professional degree, within the last 24 months, from a school where English is the primary language of instruction in a country/location where English is the native language.

Note that this policy states that the degree was **previously earned**. For students *currently* pursuing a degree in one of the above-listed countries, admission will be conditional upon receiving, by the first day of classes, either (a) proof of a conferred degree or (b) a letter from the Office of the Registrar or Graduate School (or equivalent offices) indicating that all degree requirements have been met.

In short, the English language proficiency requirement can be waived with the above conditions.

I took the TOEFL previously. Do I need to re-take it?

TOEFL scores are valid for two years after the test date. If your scores are older than this, you will need to re-take the TOEFL (or other approved language exam) and have scores sent to Purdue.

I took the GRE previously. Do I need to re-take it?

TOEFL scores are valid for five years after the test date. If your scores are older than this, you will need to re-take the GRE and have scores sent to Purdue.

Application Process

What is the department's application review process?

Our review process has two stages. In the first stage, a student's application materials are reviewed for overall admissibility. For those approved at this stage, the application is made available to department faculty members. In the second stage, faculty members with open positions review approved applicants (i.e., those who have passed the first stage) to determine if a suitable match is possible. At the same time, approved applicants may contact faculty members whose research interests them.

When do I need to submit my application? (What is the application deadline?)

Our application deadlines are posted on our [Application Requirements](#) page.

Should I contact faculty members? When?

You may contact faculty members at any time, but bear in mind that most faculty will prefer that you first demonstrate serious interest in our department by applying for admission. Therefore, we suggest that you first learn from our website about faculty research programs, then apply for admission.

How long does the application review process take?

Depending on when you apply, once we have received **all your application materials**, initial review of your application takes from two to three weeks—but see also [What is the department's application review process?](#)

I am interested in multiple departments at Purdue. How should I apply?

At Purdue, each application submitted must specify one department or program (i.e., interdisciplinary program). Therefore, if you are interested in more than one department/program, you must submit an application (with application fee) to each department/program.

Admission (Rates, Selectivity, etc.)

My GRE scores are ____ and my GPA is _____. Can I be admitted? Can I receive funding?

We review applications holistically, taking into account not only GPA and test scores but also research and work experience, strength of fit with our department (research interests), and other items. Therefore, there are no set minimums which guarantee either admission or denial. The exception to this principle is that a 3.0 undergraduate GPA is required for admission, with very few exceptions being made.

What is the department's selectivity/admission rate?

The rate of admission varies among our [Research Areas](#).

My bachelor's degree was not in engineering. May I still apply?

Yes. (1) Our Agricultural Systems Management degree is a non-engineering degree and thus does not require an engineering bachelor's degree. (2) In addition, it is sometimes (not commonly) possible to gain admission to one of our engineering degrees with a non-engineering bachelor's degree. This requires additional engineering coursework (see page 4 of our [graduate manual](#)). In addition, you will need strong support from an ABE faculty member in order to be admitted by this path.

Funding

May I be considered for funding (assistantships, fellowships, etc.)?

All applicants to ABE are automatically considered for a variety of funding options as part of the application review process. We do not, however, make “pre-determinations” regarding funding (or admission).

What kind of funding is available to Purdue ABE students?

The majority of funding for students in our program is in the form of research assistantships, funded through research grants obtained and managed by individual faculty members. Additionally, some of our most distinguished students are funded by fellowships. There are few teaching assistantships available, and these are typically awarded to students already enrolled in our department. In addition to these sources, you are encouraged to apply directly to outside fellowship bodies, such as the [National Science Foundation](#).