GRADUATE ADMISSIONS GAC Kick off meeting
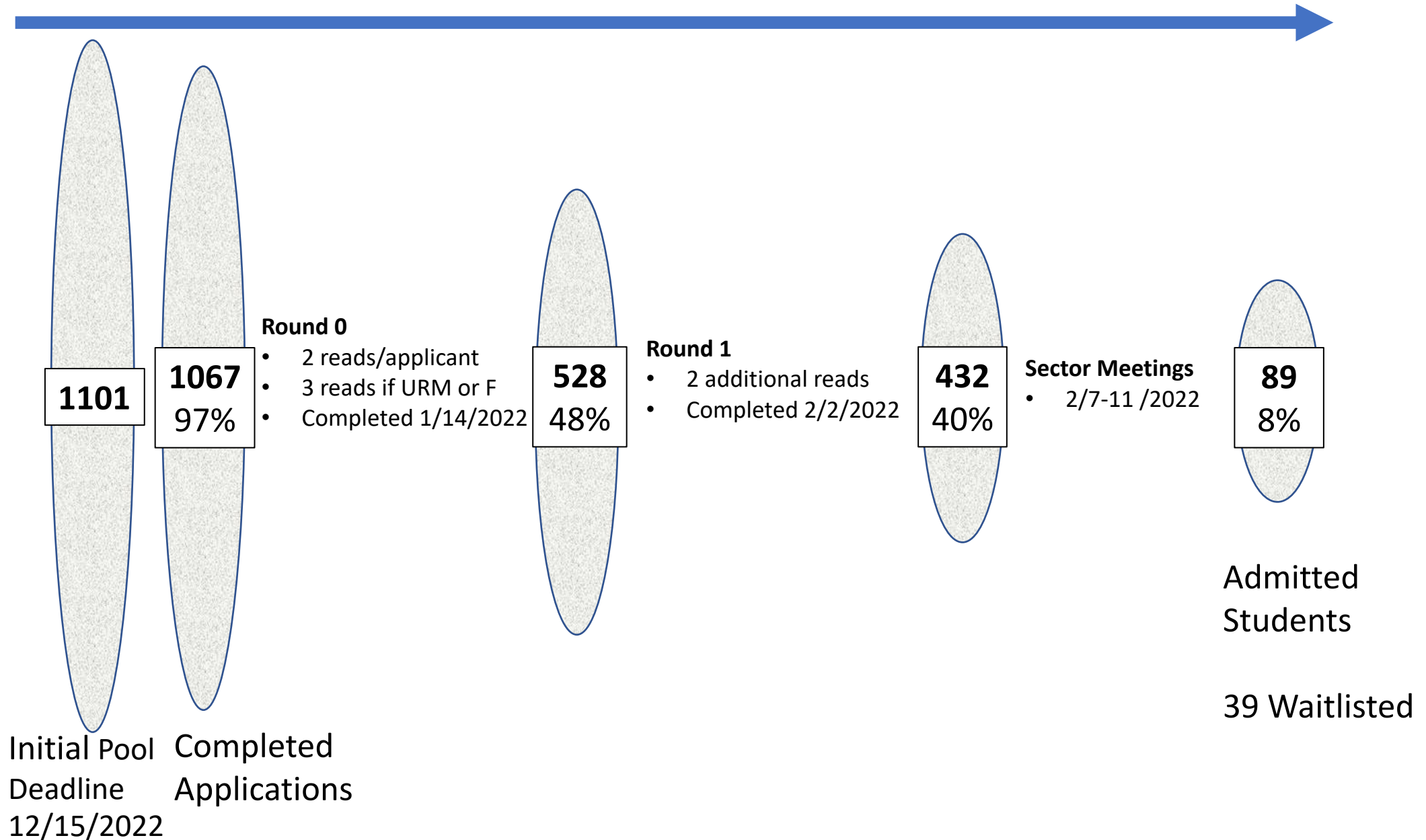
December 15, 2022

OUTLINE

- Review GAC Membership and Organization

- Review Timeline/Process

- Questions?

- Video: Unconscious Bias (34 m)

2022-2023 GAC Membership

- Katya Arquilla, S
- Steven Barrett, A
- Kerri Cahoy, S, (DE&I Space)
- Zack Cordero, S
- Faith Crisley, (GPA)
- David Darmofal, C, (SH Computing)
- Oli de Weck, S, (SH Systems, after 1/16/23)
- Chuchu Fan, C
- Carmen Guerra, A
- Ed Greitzer, A
- Wesley Harris, A, (DE&I Air)

- Daniel Hastings, S
- Jon How, C, (GPC)
- Nancy Leveson, S
- Richard Linares, S
- Eytan Modiano, C, (DE&I Computing)
- Jaime Peraire, C, Chair (GACC)
- Lonnie Petersen, S
- Beata Shuster, (GPA)
- Zoltán Spakovszky, A, (SH Air)
- Qiqi Wang, C
- Moe Win, C

The Process/Timeline 2021-2022

1101

1067
97%

Round 0
- 2 reads/applicant
- 3 reads if URM or F
- Completed 1/14/2022

528
48%

Round 1
- 2 additional reads
- Completed 2/2/2022

432
40%

Sector Meetings
- 2/7-11 /2022

89
8%

Initial Pool Deadline 12/15/2022

Completed Applications

Admitted Students

39 Waitlisted

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Can we make the process more efficient?

- Too much time is going into multiple full reads of non-viable candidates – we need to shift that investment to viable and diverse candidates
  - One low score makes it impossible to get through anyway

- This year there are short-form answers to targeted questions
  - Reviewers can extract information without wading through lengthy personal statements
  - Applicants are asked for specifically what is needed rather than having to know what to say (harder for some, e.g. first generation/low income)
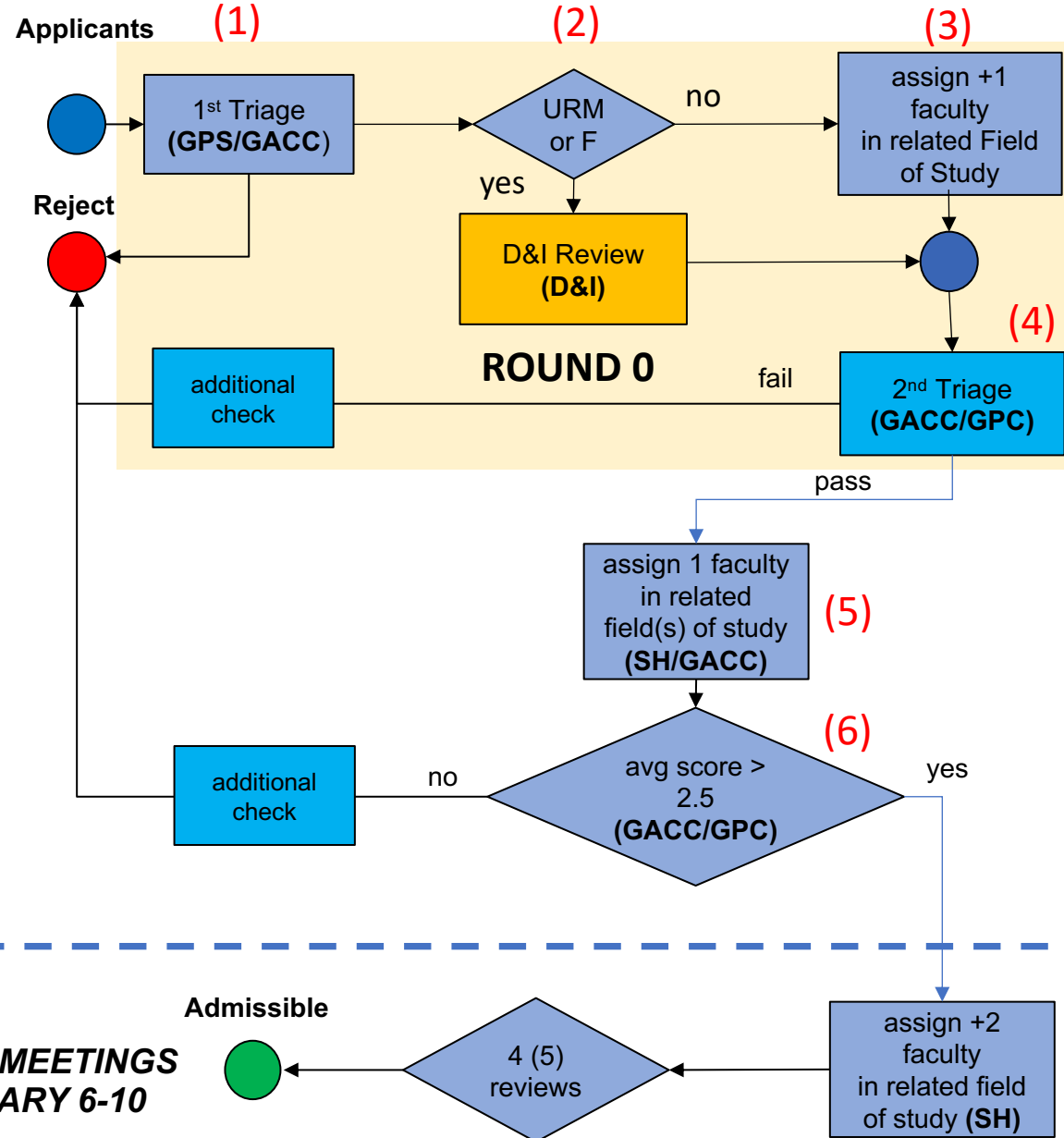
Proposed changes

Round 0

- Change first round to 1 full read for viability + 1 rejection check

- 2 full reads for all W/URM (and possibly FG/LI)

- Guidance that a viable candidate unlikely if GPA < X/4.0 in a relevant area from a good school, suggest X = 3.6 (for MIT GPA < 4.7/5.0)
  - HQ has declined requests to admit students with low GPA

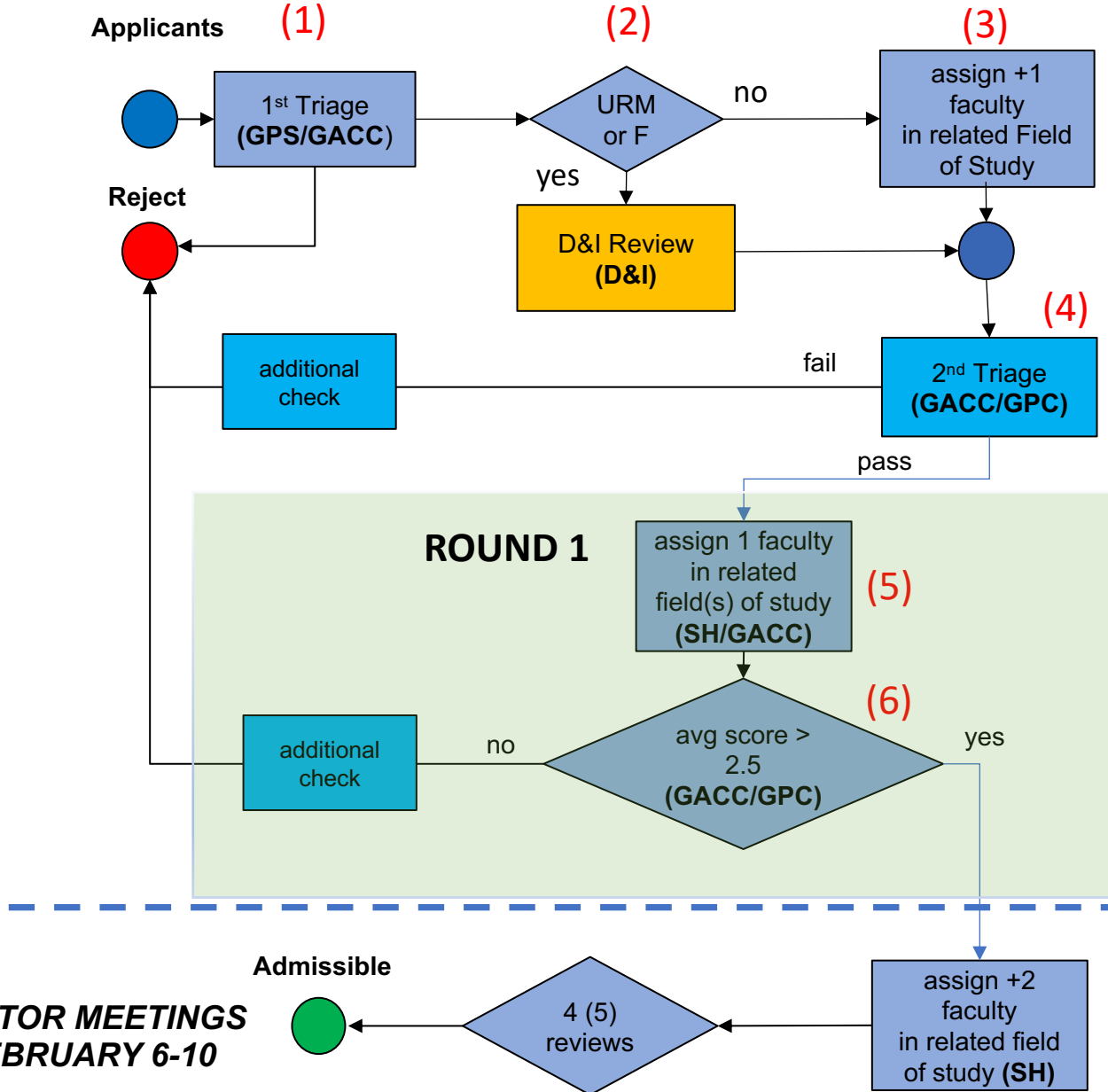**Round 1**

- No change

ADMISSION PROCESS: Round 0

1. (GPS/GACC): select completed applications that are ready for review (e.g. letters, transcripts etc.).
   - Assign primary sector (add tag **A/C/S**)
   - Add **Round 0** tag

2. (GPS/GACC): if URM/F (possibly FG/LI) assign D&I primary sector reviewer – review focus is diversity and inclusion

3. (GPS/GAAC): assign faculty round 0 reviewer based on field of interest

4. (GAAC/GPC): Triage. Guideline:
   - score <=2 reject and write short review (add **Probable Reject** tag)
   - Score >2 pass (replace Round 0 by **Round 1** tag)

ROUND 0 completed by Jan. 3

GAC

SECTORS

GPS: Graduate Program Staff (Crisley, Shuster))
GACC: GAC Chair (Peraire)
GPC: GC Chair (How)
SH: Sector Heads (deWeck, Darmofal, Spakovszky)

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ADMISSION PROCESS: Round 1

5. (SH/GACC): assign 1 round 1 reviewer within sector or outside based on the field of interest. If necessary, add a secondary sector (i.e. add tag **A/C/S**)

6. (GPS/GACC): monitor scores and if low scores appear evaluate viability:
   - if not viable add a **Probable Reject** tag and de-assign non-completed reviews)
   - If viable, add an **Admissible** tag

7. (SH) seek additional reviews in preparation for sector meetings – folders become available for all faculty to enter reviews (not part of round 1)
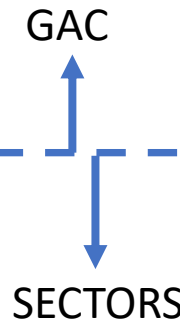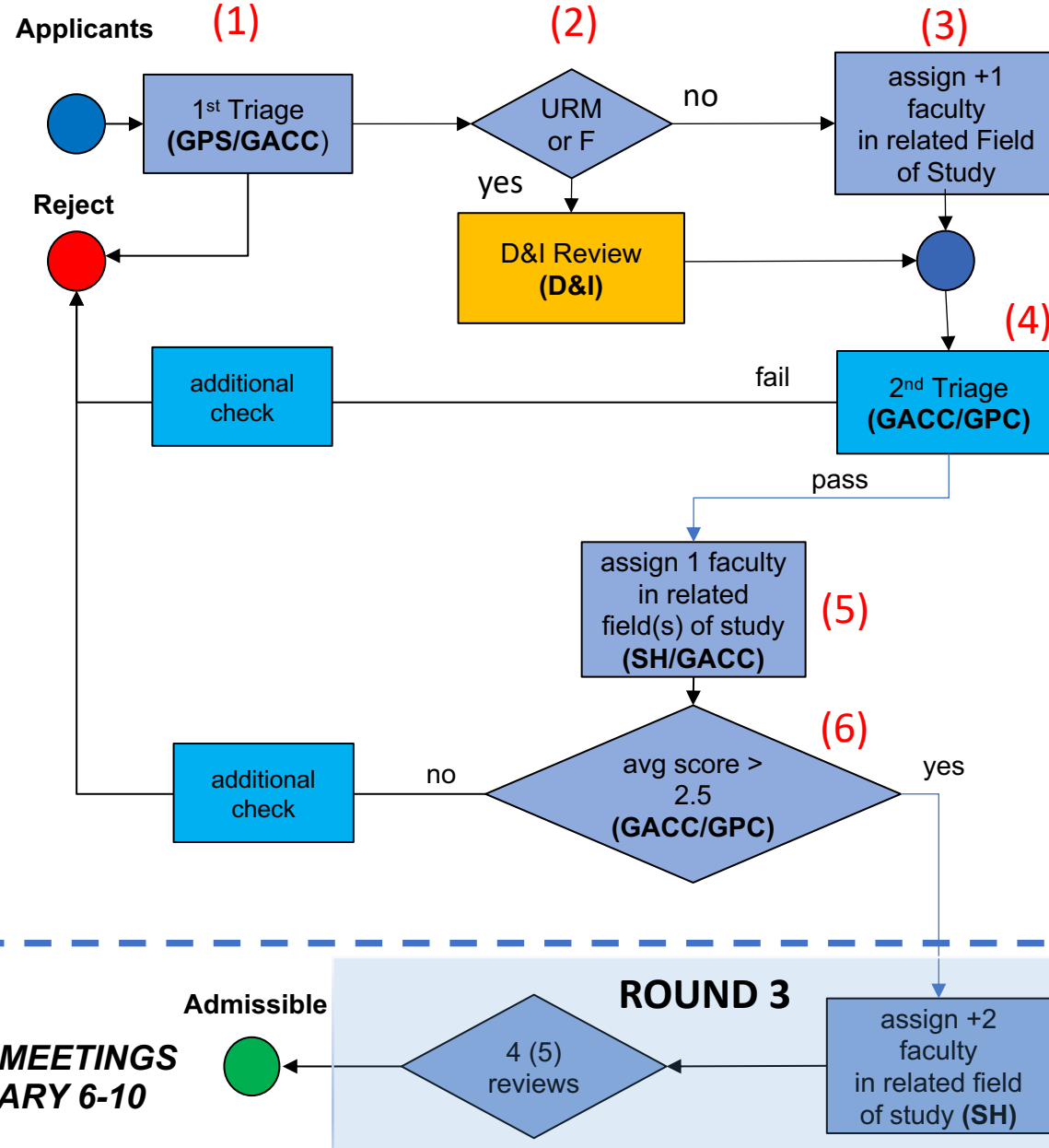
ROUND 1 completed by Jan. 13

GPS: Graduate Program Staff (Crisley, Shuster))
GACC: GAC Chair (Peraire)
GPC: GC Chair (How)
SH: Sector Heads (deWeck, Darmofal, Spakovszky)

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ADMISSION PROCESS: Round 3

Applicants

(1) 1st Triage (GPS/GACC)

Reject

(2) URM or F — no → **(3)** assign +1 faculty in related Field of Study

yes → D&I Review (D&I)

(4) 2nd Triage (GACC/GPC)

additional check — fail

pass → **(5)** assign 1 faculty in related field(s) of study (SH/GACC)

(6) avg score > 2.5 (GACC/GPC)

additional check — no

yes → **(7)** assign +2 faculty in related field of study (SH)

ROUND 3

4 (5) reviews → **Admissible**

SECTOR MEETINGS FEBRUARY 6-10

7. (SH) seek additional reviews from faculty at-large in preparation for sector meetings – folders become available for all faculty to enter reviews

GAC

ROUND 3 completed by end of Jan.

SECTORS

GPS: Graduate Program Staff (Crisley, Shuster))
GACC: GAC Chair (Peraire)
GPC: GC Chair (How)
SH: Sector Heads (deWeck, Darmofal, Spakovszky)

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Review Form

Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, in particular: (1) qualifications and readiness for our graduate program:

Note: Viable candidate unlikely if GPA <X/4.0 in a relevant area from a **good school**, suggest X = 3.6 (for MIT GPA <4.7/5.0)
HQ has declined requests to admit students with low GPA

(2) demonstrated creativity and ability to carry out research independently:

Would you be willing to advise this applicant? →
A yes answer to this question is understood as an expression of interest (not commitment)
(e.g. it is OK to say NO if application is not in your area of expertise and still give a score of 4)

Name AeroAstro faculty/PI who should review this application: →
Help identify **secondary sector** if relevant and additional reviewers

Rank the quality of the application: →

1	Reject
2	Probably admissible
3	Admissible
3.5	Admit
4	Definite admit

SCORING GUIDELINES

Better →

Letters	Address qualifications, ambition, accomplishments and independence	No	Vague	Good	Excellent
Statement of Objectives	Content	Vague, Lacks depth, Meaning is unclear	Some objectives/Lacks specificity	Clear objectives but lacking depth/details	Clear objectives/ Concise in depth
	Alignment with department's research	None	Minimal alignment	Good alignment	Strong/Strategic alignment
	Clarity	Poorly written/ difficult to understand	Lack of precision and unclear statements	Easily read and understood	Well written and engaging
Academic Preparation	Curriculum	Not relevant or insufficient	Relevant with possibly some gaps	Adequate preparation	Exceptionally well prepared both in terms of quantity and quality
	Transcripts considering school and grades	Insufficient for our graduate program	Concerns about successfully completing graduate courses	Adequate grades and program	Stellar grades and program
Experience	Research/Professional/Internships	None	Some experience but nothing exceptional	Comparable to one of our average/strong UG students	Demonstrated creativity, maturity and independence. Possibly with publications/leadership experience
Values	Alignment with department's values: Community, Succeeding Together, Excellence and Ethics	No evidence	Some relevant activities	Involvement in some community building activities	Demonstrated evidence of leadership/ strong community-building and outreach

Comments on different components of application are helpful to ensure uniformity

TAKE AWAY POINTS

- Do your reviews gradually and on time
  - it is a problem if **all** reviews arrive the day of the deadline
- Complete your round 0 reviews before doing round 1 reviews
  - remember that for round 0, you are the **only** one looking at that folder
- Provide information in your reviews
  - Should another sector be involved ?
  - Who should read the application?
- Only GAC reviews are considered during round 0/1
  - After an application is deemed Admissible (end of round 1), it is open for all faculty to enter reviews (faculty can also look through other applicants and bring them up at sector meetings if they wish)

If you can not do your reviews on time, we need to know now !

RESOURCES

Website:

https://gradapply.mit.edu/aeroastro/review/

Wiki Page:

https://wikis.mit.edu/confluence/display/AAGAC/Home

Unconscious Bias Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLjFTHTgEVU

Questions?

OTHER ISSUES

- Deadline for letter writers (23 Dec vs. 8 Jan) (not made public)
- Student asking for deadline extension due to illness
- Wiki needs to be updated
- Next year MIT wants us to change to Slate