

Application to Graduate or Professional School

Career Connection

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Graduate School is a Commitment

- Time
 - Money
 - Energy
- Consider your options carefully!**

Questions to Consider

- How might graduate school affect my career plans?
- Will a graduate degree enhance or narrow my employment prospects?
- Do I need to attend right away?
- Do I know exactly what discipline I want to study?

Additional Questions to Consider

- Does my past academic record suggest potential for graduate study?
- Is a Master's degree enough, or will I need to pursue a Doctorate?
- Where will I choose to go?
- How will I afford it?

Best Reasons to Go to Graduate School

- The love for a particular subject and the desire to study it in depth.
- The need for an advanced degree to enter the profession of your choice.

Factors to Consider When Selecting a Graduate Program

- Program curriculum
 - Faculty
- Program reputation
 - Cost
- Campus facilities
 - Career services
- Geographic location

Time Table: Junior Year

- Research areas of interest and identify appropriate schools and programs.
- Develop and prioritize a list of programs to apply to.
- Take admissions test(s) if ready. Otherwise begin preparation process.
- Request letters of recommendation.
- Begin writing application statement/essay.

Time Table: Senior Year

- Have application statement/essay critiqued by a faculty advisor.
- Visit top choices if possible.
- Take admissions test(s).
- Mail in completed applications.
- Complete financial aid forms and apply for relevant scholarships.
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation forwarded to programs.

Tips on Letters of Recommendation

- Request letters only from people who know you well enough to write supportive letters.
- Who to ask? Professors in your field of study, previous or current employers, internship supervisors, advisors for student organizations, administrators, doctoral level graduate students.
- Allow letter writers ample time to write your effective letters; do not “rush” your letter writer.
- Leave copies of your resume, statement of purpose, and any other work products you did for your recommender.

Admission Tests

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

Two Categories of Personal Statements

1) General, Comprehensive Statements

- Allows the applicant latitude in terms of what he/she writes.

2) Response to a specific question

- Less latitude in terms of content of your essay, but is still prudent to compose a well-considered and persuasive response.

Sample Questions

- What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the admissions committee to be interested in you?
- What are your career goals?
- When did you originally become interested in this field and what have you learned about it - and about yourself- that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field?

Sample Questions

- “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*” -Plato.

In light of the above quotation, please discuss a decision you have made which, in retrospect, has had a profound influence on your present circumstances. In hindsight, would you have made a different decision? Please explain.

(Haas School/Berkeley)

- How would you characterize the effects of your contributions to the groups or organizations in which you have participated? *(Yale)*

Tips on Writing a Personal Statement

- Determine your purpose in writing the statement.
- Determine the content of your statement:
 - State your purpose in graduate study.
 - Speak to the area of study in which you wish to specialize.
 - Address intended future use of your graduate study.
 - Your special preparation and fitness for your study in the field.
 - Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application (e.g., 35 hour/week workload outside of school).
 - Above all, this statement should contain information about you as a person.

Tips on Writing a Personal Statement

- There are some things that the statement should do:
 - Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you.
 - It should form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself and your field, your future goals, and your future plans.
 - It should get to the point early on and catch the attention of the reader.
 - It often should be limited in length, no more than two pages or less.

What Not to Include

- In general, references to experiences or accomplishments during your high school years or earlier is not a good idea.
- Don't mention subjects that are potentially controversial.
- Any views that might be interpreted as strange or highly unconventional should also be omitted.
- Don't pull something "out of left field" - something that doesn't fit into the story you are telling or the case you're trying to build.

Summary

- Make your decision to go to graduate school for whatever reasons that are sound and beneficial to you.
- Be sure to select the graduate program you want and for which you may qualify.
- Begin a timely application process to give yourself plenty of lead-time to gather all of the necessary documents and meeting required graduate admissions deadlines.

Summary

- Prepare to take the required graduate school admissions exam within a reasonable time before applying for admission.
- Put effort into preparing your statement/essay and proofread it carefully.
- Good luck!