



DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
&
STUDENT EXPERIENCE

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTER



GRADUATE SCHOOL PACKET

APPLY TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

In the next century will bring major changes in higher education and will provide various opportunities and challenges that require increased numbers of persons with graduate degrees. There are several sources of information you should make use of when choosing a specialization and/or a program. Some of these sources are as follows:

1. Communicate with appropriate directories which will tell you what programs exist in the field, or fields you are interested in. You should get information about the degree, research facilities, the faculty, financial aid resources, tuition, and application requirements.
2. Consult with college advisor, faculty or Career Services staff about your area of interest. These professionals might have colleagues at the institution; you are investigating who can give you inside information.
3. Refer to graduate students studying in your field and interest, their advice is also valuable.
4. As you continue to research a field of study, begin to start tapering down your selection of schools. Cost for processing an applicant can get expensive. In order to do this, you will want to familiarize yourself with publications describing your university selection and current research in your chosen field.
5. In judging the educational quality of your program and university the following questions should assist you:
 1. **What type of financial assistance does your university/college provide? (I.e. Stipends, Grants, Loans, Teaching Assistantships and Scholarships)?**
 2. **How much does it cost to matriculate at your University?**
 3. **Do you have geographical information about your school (i.e. location, transportation and weather)?**
 4. **Are students allowed to have cars on campus?**
 5. **What type of on-campus housing is available?**
 6. **Does the University have off-campus housing? If so, do they assist students in identifying off-campus housing?**
 7. **What is the security like on your campus?**
 8. **What is the ration of students to faculty?**
 9. **What are the research areas of the faculty? (This question will let you know who you should select for your committee).**
 10. **Ask about the master's thesis process and, also the doctoral thesis process? (i.e. number of committee members, length of master/doctoral program, oral thesis presentation and written thesis presentation).**

11. Ask about the racial diversity of the university and the particular graduate school that you will be applying to.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

It is essential to start gathering information early in order to be able to complete your application on time. Most individuals should start the process a full year and half before their anticipated date of matriculation. There are expectations to this rule where the time frame will differ if you are applying for national scholarships, law school or a health related program.

Application deadlines range from August (before your senior year) for early decision making programs of medical schools using the American Medical College Application Service to late spring or summer (after your senior). Most deadlines for the fall are between January and March. You should always plan to meet all formal deadlines.

Applying early to a school is advantageous. It shows your enthusiasm for the program and gives admissions committees more time to evaluate your application. Usually applicants are not rejected early unless they do not meet the institutions standards.

The timetable below will give you guidance interns of what you should be doing:

JUNIOR YEAR (FALL AND SPRING)

1. As a college student who is interested in pursuing graduate studies you should have begun exploring different graduate schools in your junior year.
2. Research the area of study that you plan to pursue. Start with a faculty member whose field of study is related to yours. You should also plan to visit the library of the Career Services Office to read the professional journals in your field.
3. Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission tests.
4. Investigate national scholarships.

JUNIOR YEAR (SUMMER)

1. Take required graduate admissions tests.
2. Write for application materials.
3. If possible visit institutions of interest.
4. Write your application biographical sketch.
5. Check on application deadlines. Deadlines for financial aid applications are normally a month or so earlier than regular admission deadlines. To obtain the materials you need, a neatly typed or handwritten postcard or letter, requesting an application, a bulletin, and financial aid information is all that is necessary. Send letter directly to the admissions office. If you want to write to a particular faculty member about your background and interests in order to explore the possibility of an assistantship, you should also feel free to do so. However, do not ask a faculty member for an application, as this may cause a significant delay in your receipt of the forms.
6. For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry or law school, you need to register for the national applications.

SENIOR YEAR (FALL)

1. Obtain letters of recommendations if you haven't already (2-3 Letters)
2. Send in completed applications. You must send undergraduate transcripts. Admissions committees require official transcripts of your grades in order to evaluate your academic preparation for graduate study. Grade Point Averages are important but are not examined in isolation. To have your college transcript sent to graduate institutions, contact your college admissions office.

SENIOR YEAR, (SPRING)

1. Register for Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service, if required.
2. Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
3. Visit institutions that accepted you.
4. Send a deposit to your institution of choice.
5. Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision, so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
6. Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters informing them of your success.
7. **Be patient and make sure that your application is neat and makes a professional presentation. Make sure that you Xerox copies of all documents you submit. GOOD LUCK!!**

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Selecting people to write recommendations can be difficult, and most graduate schools require two or three letters. While recommendations from faculty members are essential for academically oriented programs they also seriously consider non academic recommendations from professionals in the field.

To begin the process of choosing references, identify likely candidates from among those you know through your classes, extracurricular activities, and jobs. A good reference will meet several of the following criteria: they should have a high opinion of you, know you well enough in more than one area, is familiar with the institution to which you are applying as well as the study to which you are pursuing, and has excellent communication skills. Give the individuals you selected to do your recommendation a resume, copy of your biographical essay, and transcript. This will enable them to write a detailed letter on your behalf.

APPLICATION ESSAYS

Writing an essay or personal statement is often the most difficult part of the application process. An essay should include the following:

- a. Why do you want to pursue graduate studies?
- b. What is your motivation for graduate studies?
- c. What are your goals and what do you have to offer the program?
- d. Why did you select this particular school and field of study?
- e. Talk about you skills, work, and educational experience.

Your aim when writing this essay is to be clear and concise. It should show that you have a definite sense of what you want to do and enthusiasm for the field of study you have chosen. Your essay should reflect your writing abilities and reveal the clarity, focus, and the depth of your thinking.

To begin an essay outline your points and what you want to cover on paper. This will lead to a well organized essay. Make sure you get someone to critique your essay. Your advisor, career services staff, or those who write your letters of recommendation may be helpful. Do not be surprised if you get different opinions on the content of your essay. You must decide on the best way to present yourself. Keep your essay positive. All essays should be typed. You can attach pages to your application if space provided is not sufficient. **NEATNESS, spelling, and grammar are important!**

INTERVIEWING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

Some graduate programs will require you to appear for an interview. This can be an important opportunity for you to persuade an institution to accept your request for admission.

Interviewers will be interested in the way you deal with problems and will concentrate on questions that enable them to assess your thinking skills. They will ask questions pertaining to the content of your essay and your personal philosophy.

You should always prepare for a graduate school interview as you should a job interview. Think about the questions you are likely to be asked, review essay and practice verbally your answers. Think about what you want them to know about you so that you can present this information when the opportunity is given. Dress as you would for an employment interview.

ADMISSION DECISION PROCESS

At most schools after you have completed your file and it is received then it goes to the academic department you are seeking admittance to. It is reviewed by a committee who examines closely your grade point average, test scores, and letters of recommendation. However, your completed file and all other content within are also looked at. Few schools base their decisions solely on numbers. A study concluded by Graduate Record Examination Board found that grades and recommendations are considered very important in making the final decision.