

# Grad School Resources

May 29, 2018

Previously, I wrote an [article](#) on GRE and TOEFL preparation. This is my second blogpost on graduate school admissions. I have tried to compile all the online resources I used to prepare my graduate school application.

Most of this advice is **written by professors** and is focused towards PhD applicants. Several webpages shared in this blog contain a wide-spectrum of advice articles, many of which are relevant to undergraduates and graduate school applicants.

**Students' Perspective on Grad School Applications** - Most recently, we have surveyed twelve recent NLP PhD applicants on their experience while applying to graduate school. Unlike the remainder of this article, this article was written by young PhD students who applied to graduate school in the last 3 years. Check it out [here](#)!

## PhD Application Guides

- [Mor Harchol Balter's Guide](#) - An excellent but slightly out-dated guide on writing good PhD applications by a CMU professor. This is a very comprehensive article which starts with the pros and cons of a PhD degree, moves to the application process and ends with some advice on choosing the correct graduate program.
- [Philip Guo's Five-Minute Guide](#) - A short guide describing the initial screening process during PhD admissions. Lots of interesting videos / articles in the "related pages" section at the end of the guide. You might find the Statements of Purpose linked in this article useful. Philip Guo also has a Vlog on [finding computer science PhD programs](#) to apply to using [CSRankings](#).
- [Philip Guo's Older Guide](#) - A more comprehensive article listing the best strategies to maximize your chances of selection. This was written while Philip Guo was still a graduate student.
- [Jean Yang's Guide](#) - A seven-part comprehensive article on the whole PhD admission process. Jean Yang's Statement of Purpose is very well-written, and helped me considerably. This guide also contains details about what to look for during visit days.
- [Jason Eisner's Guide](#) for JHU / CLSP - A very nice article on graduate admission process, with a focus on JHU admissions into the [Center for Language and Speech Processing \(CLSP\)](#) (a top research group for prospective NLP / Speech students). This article contains an important section on school rankings (and why they should be taken

with a grain of salt). Prof. Jason Eisner has written several excellent advice articles [here](#), some of which are relevant to graduate school admissions. He is also quite active on Quora.

CLSP has also written a broader PhD admission FAQ [here](#).

- [CMU LTI Admission Guide](#) - This Quora answer by Scott Fahlman is very specific to to MLT / PhD admissions at LTI (Language Technologies Institute) at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). There is another answer by Alex Rudnicky [here](#). Scott Fahlman has written several interesting Quora answers on NLP and academia-related topics [here](#).

Finally, [here](#) is an article by Danish Pruthi discussing the conversion statistics from an MLT degree to a PhD degree, an important question many NLP PhD candidates have.

- [Matthew Might's Guide](#) - An excellent blog focussing on the importance of good recommendation letters and prior research experience (preferably publications). Has some nice examples of accepted and rejected applications towards the end. Matthew Might has written many comprehensive advice articles (see "Related posts") on sending emails, doing research etc. One celebrated article (rather, a collection of pictures) is [An Illustrated Guide to A PhD](#). He also has an article on [asking for a recommendation letter](#).
- [David Evan's Guide for Writing Emails](#) - A popular article on the optimal strategy to emailing prospective PhD advisors. A must-read if you are planning to send out emails to professors.
- [Micheal Ernst's Guide](#) - You can see all the advice articles written by Micheal Ernst [here](#).
- [Justine Sherry's Guide](#) - A University of Washington CSE student's guide on graduate school applications. A bit specific to UW.
- [Christopher Fletcher's Guide on Personal Statements](#) - This guide includes his personal statements as well. He has shared some more advice articles [here](#).
- [Noah Smith's Advice](#) - A post-selection article summing up the factors one should consider while choosing between graduate schools. This article advises against using college rankings and focusing on the prospective advisors instead. Noah Smith has also written some advice for undergraduates considering graduate school [here](#).
- [Tim Dettmer's Guide on Successful PhD applications](#) - A new guide by a successful 2017-18 PhD applicant in natural language processing. Has some interesting statistics on the track record of people selected at top PhD programs.
- [Tim Dettmer's Guide on choosing a graduate school](#) - An excellent guide on the thought process involved while choosing a graduate school after receiving admits.
- [Vijay Chidambaram's Tweet](#) - A detailed tweet on best practices while writing SOPs. He also has an article on [choosing the right graduate school](#).

- [Mark Corner's Admission Notes](#) on requirements and common mistakes made by international students applying for PhD programs in USA.
- [Andreas Madsen's Experience](#) on becoming an independent researcher. While this is not a strict application guide, it talks about the competitive nature of today's PhD admission process in machine learning, and the steps he took to become an independent researcher.

## MS Application Guides

- [Karthik Raghunathan's Guide](#) - An article describing the admission process in Stanford's MS in Computer Science program. This article after his own experience reviewing applications in the Stanford admission committee. It gives a nice idea about what application reviewers are looking for.
- [Shriram Krishnamurthi's article](#) on financial aid in computer science master's programs.

## PhD Experiences

- [Philip Guo's Experience](#) (*PhD Grind*) - A first hand account of Phillip Guo's experience completing a PhD in Computer Science. This article describes (in utmost detail) the highs and lows during a PhD in Computer Science, and ends with a few reasons describing why a PhD might be worth it. A **must-read** if you are confused between an MS and a PhD.
- [Jean Yang's Experience](#)

## PhD Advice

These articles are guides for having a more successful PhD (*after* joining a PhD program).

- [Mark Dredze and Hannah Wallach's Guide](#) - A guide with a number of tips to have a successful PhD in NLP / ML. It is quite comprehensive and contains very good advice written by two top NLP researchers.
- [Kevin Gimpel's Advice](#) - A gem of an article with a unique perspective on the PhD experience. Titled "How to be a Happier PhD Student", it's a motivating read to recover from bad, unproductive days.
- [Andrej Karpathy's Guide](#) (*A Survival Guide to a PhD*) - A famous blog by an ex-Stanford PhD student. Andrej Karpathy's articles are quite famous in the machine learning community.
- [H.T. Kung's Advice](#)
- [Phillip Torr's Guides](#)

- [Phil Agre's Guide](#) on professional skills for PhD students
- [Karl Stratos' article](#) on being a successful PhD student




## Research Advice

These articles are more general pieces of advice to have a more impactful research career.

- [David Patterson's slides](#) on how to have a bad career in research. Here is a newer [video](#) with the talk.
- [Emery Berger's article](#) on having real-world impact via your research.
- [Richard Hamming's talk transcript](#) on how to do world-class research. Here is a [video](#) for the talk.
- [John Schulman's guide to ML Research](#)
- [Michael Nielsen's article on Effective Research](#)
- [Jordan Boyd-Graber's advice](#) on style conventions while writing articles and preparing for conference presentations. Also has some useful tips on compiling a thesis document.
- [Arka Sadhu's compilation on research advice articles](#): a compilation of research advice articles. While there are some overlaps between this document and Arka's list, this document focuses on graduate school admission whereas Arka's compilation focuses on the actual process of doing research.

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