

Hello

Here is some information about applying to universities for MS/PhD. Hope it helps. Ashish Goel, EP Senior, now doing Aerospace Engineering MS+PhD at Stanford has written some answers. Others are factual.

0. We all need to get **Credit Card**.: Will need to do all applying/paying for forms with them.

1. We need to give, **GRE, GRE Subject, IELTS, and TOEFL**.

(i) GRE subject happens only in October, once.

(a) How early should we register to make sure we get a seat?

Info: Get it done now. The earlier the better.

(b) Syllabus: HCV JEE Physics. Do lots of practice tests. Also revise your entire first, second and third year Physics. Read up particle physics and other topics not covered at IIT. The complete syllabus is given at GRE's website.

(ii) IELTS and TOEFL:

(a) Till when to be booked?

(b) How much time to study?

(c) Respectable Scores.

Info:

TOEFL: Book as soon as you can else you will get a crappy venue. Try to get the ETS Prometric venue (where you gave your GRE) if possible. Venue is very important. You will be distracted significantly if your venue is not good. Try to get a minimum of 25 in every section of the TOEFL. There are universities that have a cut-off of 26 for TOEFL. Two weeks of preparation should suffice. Usually people screw up in the Speaking section. So practice that well. Use the Princeton Review textbook.

IELTS: During my time, only MIT and British Universities demanded it. Find out what the situation is like right now. If you are not planning to apply to MIT/UK and if other universities don't need it, you might as well skip IELTS.

**(iii) GRE Scores : >1400 don't need to worry. 1350 Borderline. <1250 Reconsider.**

2. SOP(s):

(i) Is it the same SOP for all universities/a few each with some points about the universities/lots?

INFO: Depends on you. If you are applying in completely different areas in two different universities, then yes, the SOP does change a lot. But otherwise, it largely is the same for all universities.

(ii) How much time it takes? How many drafts?

Ashish: It took 4 hours to write my first version. I stopped at the second version (apparently, my first version was very good). But people usually write 5-6 versions before finally settling on one. The problem is that seniors will take around a week to give you feedback. So from starting your first draft to finalizing, it might take 5-6 weeks.

(iii) How much opinion?

(iv) Narcissism: Comment.

INFO: It has to be a balance between narcissism and humility. It's an art. Can't describe :)

### **3. Recommendation Letters:**

(i) To be taken in the following order preferably: (Internship Prof., BTP/Seminar), (2 or More courses Prof., Course Prof.)

(ii) Is it to be sent online or handwritten necessary? In case of Professor being from outside India (foreign Internship professors), do we ask them to give us now?

INFO: Some stupid universities still ask for handwritten recommendation letters. But most of them are online. You cannot ask your intern Profs to give the recommendation letter now because each university requires it in a different format. However before you leave, make sure you mention it to them that you will be bugging them for the recommendation letter. Also remember that if your university requires hand-written recommendation letter, then you better start the process early. Also, send all the recommendation requests to a professor at the same time. Else they get pissed off.

### **4. Time management:**

With End Semester Examination, BTP report and courses, anything particular to be kept in mind?

INFO: Start everything early. Ideally, you should start doing all that right now during the internships rather than spending all your time uploading your pictures on social networking sites.

### **5. Time of applications:**

(i) What is the last date of application for most universities?

Varies from 1st December to 1st Jan. Some of them even go all the way up to February. Make a nice spreadsheet with columns for , university name, application deadline, SOP requirements, number of recommendation letter, online/hand written recommendation letter, contact person, Institute code for sending GRE/TOEFL scorecards with checkboxes to indicate whether you've finished doing that, special

comments etc. Will be very useful later on.

(ii) Do things clash with End Semester examination week?

Usually they don't. It might for one or two universities. But do you really care about end semester exams in your 4th year.

5.5 Resume Making:

(i) Size, Content, Important and Unimportant stuff?

(ii) Requirement.

INFO: Follow the following resume from Stanford.

<http://cardinalcareers.stanford.edu/guides/handbook/08%20Resumes%20Cover%20Letters.pdf>

NOTE: I of course take no responsibility for any of the above said things. But I think it should be really useful. If people can get stuff about SOP's, content, what is to be written, how much is to be written about what, I could add it here.

Hopefully this was helpful.

Regards

Pranjal Bordia

P.S. Making a spreadsheet now and starting to write the dates of various exams we're going to take should be a good starting point. One can also keep then adding about various groups one is interested in.