To: Engineering Communications

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Subject: Graduate School Essentials Video Series A - Professional Development

Graduate students should be self-motivated in choosing and applying to a graduate program. Graduate school should be looked at differently compared to undergraduate school because the at the time of being accepted into a program, a graduate student is pursuing learning as a career. Graduate school is very focused on the material that interests the student in that field. In graduate school professors prep graduate students to become their colleagues. Graduate school entails not only the requirements of education that undergraduate students deal with such as going to class and taking exams, but also a certain amount of required work. Being able to research independently allows graduate students to feel more a part of their field. Feeling prepared upon entering graduate school is imperative for success in graduate school. A graduate student who is acquainted with who they will be working under will feel more prepared.

A personal statement is required for everything from applications to colleges, graduate schools, scholarship programs, and research internships. It allows students to show why and how they are compatible with a program or organization. It should not repeat the exact information detailed in other application materials. When writing the statement, a student should consider who will be reading it. Learning about the organization through a website or knowing and consulting with people in the organization can help you focus on what you should write about in the statement. When given a personal statement prompt, students should carefully consider what the question is really trying to learn about the applicant. In responding to prompts, using keywords and active language can help show an applicant’s experience in communication.

Letters of recommendation are commonplace in professional settings, especially when applying to graduate schools. Recommendation letters should be sought after some relationship has already been built with the professional. On the fourth communication, a recommendation can be asked for. If asked for too early, the person might write the student a letter which lacks the personal connection and familiarity employers and colleges are looking for. After using a letter of recommendation, following up with the person who wrote it can be beneficial. If they write a letter for someone and receive feedback, they are now committed to that person’s success.