Applying to Graduate/Professional School

Large Commitment of…

* Time
* Energy
* Resources

Graduate school process is not something to “figure out along the way”

You may want to ask yourself a few important questions:

* Am I ready for graduate school?
* Do I know exactly what I want to pursue and where the degree is going to take me?
* Can I afford to go to grad school right now?
* Is now the right time for graduate school?
* Is a master’s degree sufficient, or will I need to also obtain a doctorate?
* How will graduate school impact my career plans?
* Will completing a graduate degree improve my employment prospects? Will it narrow them? How so?
* Where do I want to go?

What is needed for grad school?

* Your evaluation of the program
* Timeline
* Admissions Exams
* Academic Transcripts
* Resume/CV
* Statement of Intent or Purpose / Personal Statement
* Letters of Recommendation
* Interviews

Aspects to consider in your program evaluation…

* Research focus
* Curriculum
* Faculty
* Program reputation
* Accreditation
* Assistantships
  + Graduate Assistantships
  + Fellowships
  + Teaching Assistantships
  + Research Assistantships

More aspects to consider in your program evaluation…

* Pipelines
* Practicum/Internship Opportunities
* Cost
* Campus Living
* Career Services
* Geographic Location
  + Research

Junior Year

* Research areas of interest and identify appropriate schools and programs
* Construct a list and prioritize programs of interest to apply to
* Have your admissions test(s) completed by summer
  + You may need to retake if you do not get the desired score
  + Gives you more flexibility
* Reach out to individuals for letters of recommendation
* Understand application process/deadlines for each program
* Reach out to faculty in that program

Senior Year

* Have application statement/essay reviewed by Career Services and/or faculty advisor
* Forward academic transcripts and letters of recommendation to programs
* Mail in/submit completed applications EARLY
* Complete financial aid forms and apply for scholarships, fellowships and assistantships
* Do campus visits of top choices if possible
* Appropriate follow up

Letters of Recommendation

* Who should I ask?
* Only request letters from people who know you well enough to provide supportive letters.
* Professors in your field of study, previous or current employers, internship supervisors, administrators, etc.
* Allow letter writers plenty of time to write effective letters. You do not want to “rush” your letter writer.
* Provide letter writers with copies of your resume/CV, statement of purpose, etc.
  + Coach your references — Remind them of your work — Send them copies of a paper they provided feedback on

Personal Statements / Statements of Purpose

* Statement of purpose/statement of intent
  + Why this field?
  + What is the focus of your studies?
  + Why here?
  + What do you intend to do with it?
* Personal Statement
  + Who are you?
  + What difference will you make to our program?