Graduate School Planning and Processes

Quick Facts

Application: Deadlines vary by program. Make sure you know when applications are due and are complete.

- General Application Form (often needed to be accepted to the university)
- Program Application (needed to be accepted to the specific program)
  - Many programs require admission to both the university and the program; others only require admission to the program. Check your schools of interest for specific policies.
- Resume
- Graduate Admission Essay: Universities and programs vary on what is required. Some programs and universities will require one essay and others multiple. Other names for admissions essays and personal statements are: Statements of Purpose, Writing Samples, Personal Statements or Goal Statement
  - The following are online and print resources to assist you in writing graduate admissions essays:
    - Accepted.com: http://www.accepted.com/grad/default.aspx
    - Quintessential Careers: http://www.quintcareers.com/graduate_school.html
    - Graduate Admissions Essays; Asher, Donald
    - Perfect Personal Statements; Stewart, Mark Alan
    - Peterson’s Perfect Personal Statements: 3rd Edition, Stewart, Mark Alan; Peterson’s Essays That Worked for Law Schools: Revised and Updates; Edited by: Curry, Boykin, Kasbar, Brian, Baer, Emily, Angel Ballantine Books: New York
    - Law School Essays That Made a Difference; The Princeton Review
- Transcripts: Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended. Official means that they must be sent or sealed by the Registrar’s Office. Some colleges charge a fee for processing transcripts; others offer the first 3 or so free.

Standardized Admissions Exams

- Every graduate program has a set of admissions criteria. Many will require a graduate admissions exam, some do not. Some waive graduate admissions exams for students with high GPA. Check each program you are interested in applying to for specific requirements.
- Graduate admissions exams can be expensive and you need to plan accordingly.
  - Below is a list of graduate and professional school admissions tests.
    - Graduate Records Exam, GRE: http://www.ets.org/gre/ (Also listed are subject tests)
    - Graduate Management Aptitude Test, GMAT: http://www.gmac.com/gmac
    - Law School Admission Test, LSAT: http://www.lsac.org/
    - Medical College Admission Test, MCAT: http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/
    - Dental Admission Test, DAT: http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp
    - Optometry Admission Test, OAT: http://www.opted.org/info_oat.cfm
    - Pharmacy College Admission Test, PCAT: http://tpc-etesting.com/pcat/

Preparing for Graduate Admissions Exams

- There are a number of businesses that provide tutoring to students interested in improving scores on graduate admissions exams. These programs can be costly and it is recommend that you purchase a graduate admissions study guide that has sample practice tests to determine how you might do on the official exam and will also tell you where you need to practice and what type of tutoring you might need.
Letters of Recommendation
- Every graduate program will require at least two letters of recommendation to be considered by the admissions selection committee.
- The admissions committees are looking for recommendations that speak to your academic abilities to be successful in graduate, to your career and academic goals and to your integrity as a student and a potential graduate student. Letters of reference from professors, internship sites, work supervisors (depending on the type of job).

Portfolios
- Again, every graduate program has a set of admissions criteria. Some may require a portfolio (art and design students).
- Electronic portfolios are acceptable. Make sure the program receiving your electronic portfolio has the capability to view it.
- A portfolio is a great tool if you are meeting with an admissions counselor face-to-face (highly recommended)

Financial Aid
- Financial aid at the graduate level is very different than at the undergraduate level. Talk with admissions counselors and the financial aid offices to determine what you are eligible for and how to apply for aid. Some schools offer special programs that pay for your tuition (or partial) if you commit to be a Residence Hall Director of other types of campus work.
  Sample website and Career Services Office resources on Graduate Education financial aid:
  Fast Web: http://www.fastweb.com/
  The Smart Guide to Financial Aid: http://www.finaid.org/
  Federal Student Aid: http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/
  Graduate Guide: http://www.graduateguide.com/
  Grad School.com: http://www.gradschools.com/
  Grad View: http://www.gradview.com/index.jsp
  Scholarsite: http://www.scholarsite.com/