



GRADUATE SCHOOL

Tips for Applying to Graduate School

Letters of Recommendation

1. Select writers who know you well, who can comment on your potential as a researcher and a scholar.
2. Choose writers who can also speak to your goals, your motivation, and your commitment to graduate study.
3. Even better, select individuals who are known to the people at the institution where you are applying.

Personal Statements

1. Convince your audience that you have what it takes to succeed in graduate school.
2. Demonstrate that you have the ability to be a good follower (someone who takes directions and criticism well) and a leader (someone who can work independently and guide others).
3. Provide evidence that you are motivated and eager to learn.
4. Show that you are familiar with the program to which you are applying and that you are a good fit.
5. Prove to your readers that you will be successful and that you'll complete the program on time.
6. Proofread: Typographical errors and grammatical mistakes can undermine your best efforts.

General Advice

1. Take the GRE early, in case you need to take it again.
2. If possible, gain undergraduate research experience. The experience will make you more competitive, and the professor you work with can write one recommendation letter.
3. Apply as early as possible. Many departments will consider early applications first for assistantships. For Fall admission, apply the previous December – or even November.
4. Make contact with a professor you want to work with, especially in Engineering and the Sciences. Personal contact will make sure you are remembered when assistantships are awarded.
5. Talk to the departmental GPO (Graduate Program Officer) about the department's specific admission standards.
6. Research graduate programs, making visits or talking to graduate students if possible.