

Applying to Grad School

Applying to Graduate School: the process, planning and requirements.

Applying to graduate school can be filled with a mixture of emotions, from nervousness to happiness, to relief. It is a big accomplishment to have finished college and earn your Bachelor's degree. Now you are ready for the next phase in your education. It can be confusing with all of the requirements that are needed, but with a little planning and organization, you can get through the process with ease.

PLANNING

In order to better your chances at being accepted into a graduate degree program, there are a few things that you should be doing before you fill out the application.

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Check your GPA. The higher your GPA, the better your chances are of acceptance.

- Study for the standardized testing. Most graduate programs require a pre-admissions test such as the GRE (Graduate Record Exam). If you are applying for a Law or Medical program you will need to study for the LSAT or MCAT. It is important that you pass these tests for acceptance into a Masters program. You can obtain study books at your local bookstore to give you a head start on the test.

- The graduate application will most likely ask you for a personal statement such as why you want to further your education or your career goals, so you should want to be prepared to answer these questions thoroughly.

- Brush up on your interview and communication skills. Should you be accepted, you will most likely be interviewed, therefore you should be able to communicate effectively.

PROCESS

The admission application process varies from school to school and even by major so check with your intended school of admission for their exact requirements.

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Decide if graduate school is right for you and if it is something you have the time commitment for.

- Research different schools to see which subject area you would like to obtain your Master's degree.

- Check for specific application requirements within the school such as letters of recommendation, field work, internships, personal statements, etc.

- Take the GRE, MCAT, LSAT or whatever test is applicable to your field of study.

- Have your scores sent to the top schools of your choice that you plan on attending.

- Apply for financial aid, grants, and student loans to cover the cost.

If you are in your first or second year of school, check to see if your school offers an accelerated Master's degree program. A lot of schools offer a program for certain majors where you go to school for five years instead of the traditional four. You would take on a higher course load throughout the first four years and your fifth year would be the actual graduate program.

Do not be intimidated by the process. Just take it one step at a time and keep it in the back of your mind that you are not only furthering your education, but you are furthering your future career as well.

