



GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL CHECKLIST

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROGRAM

A decision about a graduate or professional program should take into consideration personal values and goals as well as career and academic considerations. Information about the strength and reputation of programs can be easily found by talking with professors and looking at ranking sources for various professional associations, but you must also consider the impact of a program on the next few years of your life and its impact on your professional development in the future. When you are evaluating your decision, ask:

- What is most important to me about a graduate program? Academics, prestige, location, cost, proximity to family, etc.?
- What is the emphasis of this program (theory, application, hands-on learning, etc.)?
- When I finish this program, how will it change my employment options? Will it open or close certain types of opportunities?
- How will my potential future salary and future debt compare? Is there an alternative to achieve my career goals?

APPLICATION TIMELINES

Application cycles, and therefore timelines, vary depending on the type of program to which you are applying. It will be your responsibility to track all deadlines so that you can pursue your graduate goals on your ideal timeline. Have you checked:

- Is the program on a one-year application cycle or admits more frequently throughout the year?
- When must you complete certain prerequisites to be eligible to apply?
- What entrance exam do you need to complete for each program or school?
- When are the entrance exams offered? What are the registration deadlines and costs of the entrance exams?
- Is the application deadline is a “postmarked by” or “received by” date?

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The personal statement is your opportunity to present your qualifications and reasons for choosing a particular graduate school or professional school. Your statement should persuade the selection committee that you will be successful and that you have the potential to contribute to the profession. It should illustrate that you have thought about the career, profession and your life experiences. Does your statement:

- Describe what makes you right for this school or program?
- Show evidence (through examples) of qualities and skills you possess that would be valuable to the program?
- Catch attention without feeling “gimmicky”?
- Follow an organizational outline ending with what you most want the reader to remember about you?
- Identify future goals, ideals, or objectives within the profession? Identify goals within the graduate or professional program?
- Reflect the research you have conducted about the program?

REFERENCES

When considering potential references, consider the type of program to which you are applying. An academic recommendation from a professor will be very different from a reference by your former internship supervisor or other employer. You may want multiple perspectives on who you are. Did you:

- Send a request to a potential reference with an explanation of what the reference is for?
- Include your information (resume/CV, personal statement, background on the program, career aspirations, etc.) so they could write an informed letter?
- Provide clear instructions for the process of sending the reference letter?
- Request the reference in a timely manner (allowing about a month for them to complete the reference before your self-imposed application goal)

STAYING ORGANIZED

Following is an example of a way to track deadlines and information about cost and information necessary for an application. If you are applying to multiple programs, a document like this is highly recommended so you don't lose track of a requirement. See the examples below.



School	Website	Deadline	Application Fee	Application Via	Entrance Exams	Exam Registration Deadline	Exam Fee	Required Application Content
UNTHSC– Med School	web.unthsc.edu	Oct. 1, 2014	TMDSAS \$140 flat fee for all applications	TMDSAS and TCOM	MCAT	Offered all year, but need to take before Sept. 2014 for application deadline	\$275	Official transcripts from ALL institutions, letters of evaluation (HPAC), MCAT score from before Sept. 2014, TCOM secondary application, personal statement (2500 words) Rev. 7/14
SMU – Law School	law.smu.edu	Nov. 1, 2014 (all materials RECEIVED by)	LSAC fee?? SMU \$75	LSAC and SMU	LSAT and CAS	June 2014, September 2014, December 2014, or February 2015	\$170 and \$165	LSAC application, resume, personal statement, motivation for SMU law school, CAS report *optional up to 3 recommendation letters (mailed in)
UT – MBA	mcombs.utexas.edu	Oct. 14, 2014, Jan. 6. 2015, Mar. 24, 2015	\$175	UT IED	GRE or GMAT	GRE and GMAT year-round continuous	GRE \$195 or GMAT \$250	Official transcripts from ALL institutions, application, GRE or GMAT scores, (2-3) essays (250 words), 2 letters of recommendation (emailed in)