

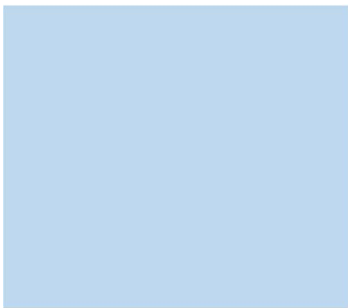


Assumption University

Career Development and
Internship Center



Graduate School Guide





Assumption University

Career Development and
Internship Center

Table Of Contents

Weighing your Options	page 2
Letters of Recommendation	page 3
Personal Statements	page 4
Financial Aid	page 5
Graduate School Exams	page 6
Timeline	page 7



Is Graduate School Right For Me?

Deciding to go to grad school is a big decision and should be not be taken lightly. It is a serious commitment that requires careful thought and consideration.

There are many factors to consider when making your decision :

Your Career Goals

- Does the career you want to pursue require an advanced education? What area will you specialize in? Decide early as your choice will help you determine which programs to apply to.

The Amount of Time to Complete

- Graduate Programs are often more rigorous than undergraduate programs and require many hours of preparation and studying. Be sure you are motivated enough to dedicate 2 to 6 years to the program you choose.

Financial Considerations

- Graduate programs are expensive! Luckily, many colleges and universities offer fellowships and graduate assistantships. Be sure to research these opportunities on your program's website.

Opportunities in Your Field

- Be sure to seek advice from professors about the differences among the specialties within a given field and the employment opportunities of each.

Your Motivation

- Graduate school should not be a fall back option. You want to be absolutely sure about the field you're going into before deciding on grad school. Grad school is not a good option if your motivation for going is because you haven't found a job yet and you don't really know what else to do.





Requesting Letters of Recommendation

What is a Letter of Recommendation?

- A good letter will discuss both your academic competencies and aptitude as well as personality characteristics that will contribute to your ability to succeed in graduate school.
- It is essential that the person providing the recommendation knows you well enough to make a good assessment of these abilities.
- Most Graduate Programs require 2-3 letters of recommendation.

Keep in mind...

- Choose well! When thinking about who to ask, consider professors that can speak to both academic and work abilities.
- Start early!! Give writers four weeks (minimum) to write a letter for you.
- Provide necessary information – about the program, about yourself
- Ask for a Letter of Recommendation:
 - DO: Do you feel comfortable and/or do you know me well enough to write a POSITIVE letter of recommendation for me?
 - DON'T: Will you write me a letter of recommendation?
- Do not get discouraged if they say no. You want to make sure that you have the best recommenders possible.
- Follow up with the recommender approximately one week before the deadline.
- Thank the person who has written your letter.
- Keep the recommender informed throughout the process and let them know whether or not you have been accepted.

Letter of Recommendation Checklist:

- Provide information about the program(s) to which you are applying.
 - Name & brief description
 - List of application deadline(s), preferably in an Excel spreadsheet
 - Recommendation Form, if applicable
- Provide information about YOU.
 - Why are you interested in this program(s)?
 - Up-to-date resume & what you would like included in your letter
 - Transcripts, if necessary
 - Why are you asking this particular person for a recommendation?
- Provide means of submitting letter.
 - Either a stamped, addressed envelope or the appropriate website to submit the letter



Personal Statements

What is a personal statement?

Almost all graduate schools require candidates to submit a personal statement, letter of purpose, or an admissions essay with the application. It is used as a supplement to your application and gives the admissions committee a look into your motivation for attending graduate school.

A personal statement is your opportunity to describe who you are, your professional goals, and the ways in which you match the graduate program to which you are applying. If written effectively, a personal statement expresses how your background and experiences have shaped your career goals and interest in the field of study to which you are applying. Moreover, a well written personal statement will address not only how the program will benefit you and your career goals, but also how your skills and experiences can benefit the faculty within it.

Simply put: **What do you offer???**

What should I write about?

Many graduate applications ask the applicant to write in response to specific statements or prompts, while others may give you no direction. Check the admissions information for each school carefully to ensure you provide the correct information and in the correct format.

Typically, personal statements should address the following three areas:

- Why do you want to attend graduate school and what are your professional aspirations?
- Why do you want to attend the particular graduate school to which you are applying?
- What makes you a good candidate for the program/school to which you are applying?

Tips for writing a personal statement that will set you apart:

- Be sure to answer what the prompts ask of you.
 - You want to make sure you respond to the prompts honestly, but be careful of disclosing too much information. Remember, this is a professional document.
- Form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself, your field and your future goals.
 - Draw your conclusions from the evidence your life provides.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!
 - Ask friends, family, faculty, the Academic Support Center, and the CDIC to proofread your personal statement for spelling and grammatical errors.
 - Be sure to include a copy of the prompts and the CDIC would be happy to make sure you have addressed each prompt completely.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT & INTERNSHIP CENTER

Financial Aid

You have decided that graduate school is the right next step for you. Now comes the hard part: how to pay for grad school. Do your research and start early to learn what types of financial assistance might be available to you. Be sure to speak with a financial aid counselor to better understand your options.

Fellowships

A fellowship is a monetary award based on academic, athletic or personal achievements to support graduate studies, academic research or specialized training of particular interest to the granting organization. In addition to the financial award, the recipient will sometimes receive a tuition waiver for up to five years of study. Fellowships are awarded by graduate schools, and government or private agencies.

- Fellowships.GradSchools.com

Assistantships

Assistantships provide full or partial tuition and sometimes a stipend and health insurance in exchange for part-time employment. Most graduate assistants work between 15 and 30 hours per week. Deadlines for graduate assistantships are usually before admission into the program. Contact the Office of Graduate Admissions or your department early for information on where assistantships are available. There are three different forms of assistantships: teaching, research and graduate assistantships.

Graduate Loans

Need-based financial aid is also available at the graduate level. Because graduate students can file their FAFSA as independents, you may qualify for aid, even if you did not qualify as an undergraduate. You must complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) to determine your eligibility for federal aid.

Keep in mind that financial assistance varies by school, so make sure to check with each school's financial aid office.

Scholarships

Scholarships are offered on a limited basis for graduate study. Contact each program individually to inquire about scholarships offered. Deadlines are often early so do your research now. When researching scholarships, be wary of scams. You should never have to pay for a scholarship application. Some good resources include:

- [FastWeb](#)
- [Peterson's Graduate Scholarship Search](#)

Loan Deferment

A deferment or forbearance allows you to temporarily stop making your federal student loan payments or to temporarily reduce the amount you pay. However, during a forbearance you are responsible for paying the interest that accrues on all types of federal student loans. For more information, see the [U.S. Department of Education's website](#) and talk with Financial Aid.

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Depending on what field you enter and your professional pursuits after school, some loans can be partially or fully canceled. For more information, check out these sites:

Helpful Sites:

- [Studentaid.gov](#)
- [College Affordability Guide](#)
- [FinAid](#)
- [Peterson's](#)



Graduate Entrance Exams

Almost all graduate programs will require you to take some type of standardized exam to be considered as a potential candidate. As the entrance exams required are based on your area of study, be sure to check your program's application requirements. Here some of the most common graduate entrance exams.

General Record Exam (GRE) — This is the most common test required by graduate schools. The GRE covers three major areas: analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning. The GRE is offered on an ongoing basis throughout the year and is available in a computer version as well as a paper version. You can take the GRE up to 5 times within any continuous rolling 12-month period (365 days).

GRE Subject Test – Not all programs require a subject test, but many may be required or recommended by the department you're applying to.

For more information, visit the [ETS/GRE](#) website

Miller's Analogies Test (MAT) — The MAT is a high-level test of analytical ability that requires solving problems stated as analogies. The MAT is not accepted by all graduate programs, so verify with your program of study.

For more information and study materials, visit the [Pearson](#) website

Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) — Nearly all American Bar Association (ABA)-approved law schools require the LSAT as one component of an admission file. The LSAT covers three major areas: reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, and logical reasoning.

For more information and study materials, visit [The Law School Admission Council](#) website

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) — Developed and administered by the AAMC, the MCAT is a standardized, multiple-choice examination created to help medical school admissions offices assess your problem solving, critical thinking, and knowledge of natural, behavioral, and social science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine.

For more information, visit [The Association of American Medical Colleges](#) website

Additional Information

To help Assumption students prepare for the GRE, LSAT, and MCAT exams, the College has partnered with Kaplan. If you would like to learn more about Kaplan's prep courses, please visit [Kaplan's](#) website.

[The Princeton Review](#) offers test preparation for the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT exams online and in person. They also provide free practice tests and webinars for most entrance exams when you register on their site.



Application Timeline

Junior Year
Fall &
Spring
Semesters

- ⇒ Consider your GPA. It's not too late to improve it if needed.
- ⇒ Research programs and schools that coincide with your interests and career goals.
- ⇒ Consider financial aid options that might help you decide when choosing.
- ⇒ Register and prepare for the appropriate graduate admission test.
 - Study sample test questions for the appropriate entrance exam & enroll in a test prep course if needed.
 - You may choose to take your exam during the spring of your junior year through the fall of your senior year.
- ⇒ Do an internship or REU that offers relevant experience in your field.
- ⇒ Speak with alumni, faculty, parents, and friends about their graduate experiences.

Summer
Prior to
Senior Year

- ⇒ Request applications and financial aid materials.
- ⇒ Create a short list of schools.
- ⇒ Check application deadlines and rolling admission policies.
- ⇒ Register for a summer or fall graduate admission test.
- ⇒ Begin writing your application essay (personal statement).

Senior Year
Fall
Semester/
Winter
Break

- ⇒ Obtain all transcripts & ask faculty and supervisors for letters of recommendation.
- ⇒ Re-take graduate admission test. (*if necessary*)
- ⇒ Have the CDIC and faculty review your written statement & resume.
- ⇒ Fill out your applications. Be thorough and take your time.
- ⇒ Submit applications according to the deadlines of your target schools.
- ⇒ Submit your FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
 - Your FAFSA can be submitted as early as October.
- ⇒ Have transcripts and letters of recommendation mailed.
- ⇒ If offered an interview, prepare and consider attending mock interviews.
- ⇒ Apply for assistantships, fellowships, grants, etc.
- ⇒ Consider visiting select institutions during winter break.

Senior Year
Spring
Semester

- ⇒ Confirm that graduate programs have received all application materials prior to deadline.
- ⇒ Once accepted, let the school know you plan to attend, and as a courtesy inform your other schools that you will not be attending.
- ⇒ Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your decision.

Please Note: This timeline is just a guide. It's never too late to begin preparing for your future. Schedule an appointment with your advisor and the CDIC to discuss graduate school programs at any time.