Thinking about Applying to Grad School?

September 28, 2017
Why Grad School?

- You want to expand your knowledge in your field of study
- Your chosen career path requires graduate training
Which Grad School? Selecting the Right School for Your Needs

- Faculty who will support your training
- Research– vs. course–based MA
- Internships, co–ops, career opportunities
- Location, travel distance, livability
The Process of Applying

Sept/Oct
- Draft Your Application
- Ask Faculty for References
- Contact Prospective Supervisors

Nov/Dec
- Apply for Funding
- Complete any Required Tests*
- Order Transcripts

January
- Finalize Application
- Recontact Supervisor(s)
- Submit Application!

Assumes a January 31st Deadline
Finding a Supervisor

- Contact 1–2 potential faculty advisors about supervision
- Have your (draft) statement of interest/transcript ready before you contact faculty
- Ask about whether they will be teaching / willing to supervise during that times
Components of a Grad School Application

- Application Form
- Statement of Interest
- Transcripts
- Faculty Letters of References / Student Evaluation Forms
- CV
- Application Fee
- (Standardized Test Results)
What is the Statement of Interest/Program of Study?

- A statement of what you want to do academically, where, why, and with whom
- Intellectual autobiography that conveys the continuum of experiences and events in your academic life that have led you to pursue graduate education
Style of Your Statement of Interest

- Use purposive and concise writing
- **Do not** include contrivances or gimmicks
- Place central points early
- Use the active, not passive voice
- **Avoid** using words such as rather, quite, somewhat, fairly, pretty much
- Be positive! Emphasize your and your project’s strengths
Contents & Organization

1. **Opening Paragraph** → Define the problem you want to study
2. **Contextualization** of your problem → Show that you are already familiar with the grounding research
3. **Methodology** → How do you plan to tackle this project?
4. **Qualifications & Background** → Why are you a good candidate to undertake this study?
5. (Short) **Conclusion** → Why *this* program is best suited for you
Transcripts

- Stop what you’re doing and order **NOW**!
- Find out whether they need to be in signed, sealed envelopes
- **Online Transcript Ordering** is available online via the [Student Center](#) under Academics > Documentation > Transcripts ($15/copy).
References

- Ask professors for at least 3–4 weeks in advance
- Request references from full-time faculty who have taught you in 1 (preferably 2+) courses
- Ask if they would be willing to write you a strong, positive reference letter
- Provide faculty with clear instructions about how to submit their letter (i.e. links for online submission; King’s letterhead and signature over the envelope closure?)

**SEND FRIENDLY, PROFESSIONAL REMINDERS**
CV

- Certain programs may have a format for you to follow
- Otherwise, standard format
- Emphasize your academic, work and volunteer experience
  - Experiential Learning (In class and out)
  - Clubs, leadership positions
  - Awards, honours
  - Senior level thesis, major research paper
Testing (GRE, GMAT, LSAT)

- If you haven’t already booked these tests, look into them now
- Seek out online courses and study materials
- Take the time to write practice tests
- If possible, you may want to write it more than once
Acceptance

- Drafting the appropriate response to admission offers
- Negotiate your admissions package (i.e. ask for funding through TA- or RA-ships)
- Follow-up with prospective supervisors again; arrange a phone call or Skype meeting
What happens if I don’t get in?

- Don’t be discouraged!
- Ask for feedback from your faculty members and from the admissions committee (politely)
- Evaluate your prospects
- Try again! And use the year to gain more experience