

Graduate School Preparation

This playbook outlines the essential steps undergraduates should take to prepare for entry into graduate school. It covers aspects such as academic preparation, entrance examinations, and building a strong application.

Step 1: **Research**

Begin by researching potential graduate programs that align with your academic interests and career goals. Consider factors such as program reputation, faculty, location, and available resources.

Step 2: **Prerequisites**

Identify and complete any prerequisite courses required for admission to your chosen graduate programs. Ensure you have the necessary academic background to be considered a competitive applicant.

Step 3: **Entrance Exams**

Determine which standardized entrance exams (e.g., GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT) are required by your selected programs. Register for and prepare to take these exams well in advance of application deadlines.

Step 4: **Academic Records**

Request official transcripts early from your undergraduate institution, and check for any irregularities. Maintain a high GPA and seek opportunities for academic honors or awards.

Step 5: **Letters of Recommendation**

Cultivate relationships with faculty members who can write strong letters of recommendation. Communicate your graduate school aspirations and request their support well before the application deadlines.

Step 6: **Professional Experience**

Gain related professional or research experience. Look for internships, research assistantships, or job opportunities that can strengthen your graduate school application.

Step 7: **Personal Statement**

Prepare a compelling personal statement or statement of purpose that showcases your motivations, academic interests, and future career objectives. This narrative should differentiate you from other applicants.

Step 8: **Finalize Applications**

Complete and proofread your graduate school applications. Ensure all components, including essays, transcripts, test scores, and recommendations, are submitted before the deadlines.

Step 9: **Financial Planning**

Investigate funding options for graduate school, such as scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and loans. Apply for financial aid and budget accordingly for your potential graduate studies.

General Notes

Timeline

Start preparing for graduate school at least 1-2 years before you plan to attend to allow enough time for thorough research, preparation for entrance exams, and gaining relevant experience.

Networking

Attend academic conferences, join professional organizations, and engage in networking opportunities in your field of interest. These contacts can provide advice and potentially assist in your graduate school journey.

Self-Reflection

Regularly evaluate your reasons for wanting to attend graduate school and ensure that it aligns with your long-term goals. Self-reflection can guide you in making informed decisions throughout your preparation process.