



## Graduate School Action Plan

---

### APPLICATION MATERIALS & GUIDELINES

---

#### Application

- Read the entire application first, then gather needed information
- Convey your interest in the program, future goals, direction, and strengths
- Always be truthful; fabricating information will come back to hurt you
- Never leave anything blank on the application
- Use working titles to refer to research projects on the application and in personal statements
- If possible, attach a high quality writing sample related to your future program of study
- Proofread your application to ensure that it is complete, accurate, and error free
- Apply as early as possible; prompt applications have a slight advantage
- Common deadlines occur from December to March for the following fall
- Enhance likelihood of admittance by applying to schools with rolling admission early

#### Personal Statements

- Utilize writing prompt provided; if no prompt is provided, discuss career goals, interest/enthusiasm for the field and program, and relevant experiences
- Use at least .5 inch margins and 10-point font (refer to application for length/formatting specifics)
- Have someone in the LRC or ACPC review your personal statement

#### Letters of Recommendation

- Typically need 2-3 letters of recommendation from faculty members, advisors, employers, etc.
- Ask the recommender if he or she are able to write a strong letter of recommendation for you
  - If not, consider asking other individuals who can attest to your interests and skills
- Give the recommenders plenty of time and provide them with the following:
  - Copy of your resume/CV
  - Draft of personal statement or goals for graduate study
  - Graduate program information including submission deadlines and instructions
- Check the status of your recommendation – it is up to you to make sure deadlines are met

---

### PARALLEL PLANS

---

- Start the job search process as well in case you are not accepted to graduate school
- Attend career fairs and apply for positions that will give you relevant experience
- Prepare tailored resumes and cover letters for each opportunity
- Some employers will help pay for graduate school, so mention that you are interested in attending

---

### DECISIONS

---

#### Offered Admission

- Evaluate offer(s) for fit; consider program reputation, cost to attend, assistantships, health care, etc.
- To accept offer, return required forms or write an acceptance letter (be mindful of deadlines)
- Decline other offers immediately after you make your decisions so open seats can be offered to others

#### Declined Admission

- Request feedback on your application and how to become more competitive
- Gain relevant experience by taking a gap year, volunteering, or taking additional courses