

# "How To Prepare For Graduate School"

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# How Will Graduate School Help?



- Graduate school training is fast becoming an entry level requirement
- A masters or doctoral degree can increase opportunities and provide career flexibility
- “Open doors” with which we are familiar
- It can help identify doors that prior to the journey were never imagined
- Address the critical shortage of persons with advanced degrees

# How Do I Prepare?

- **Make good grades**
- **Talk with faculty and others in your field of interest**
- **Search your heart and make sure of your choice**
- **Explore graduate options (via websites, Petersons,...)**
- **Conduct research (SRQP, REUs, MARC...)**



# When Do I Prepare?

- **It's never too early to start thinking about graduate school**
- **As freshmen and sophomores take courses that lead to graduate study**
- **Conduct research as soon as you can**
- **Talk with people who do what it is you want to do**
- **Take the GRE at the end of your junior year**
- **Complete applications at the start of your senior year**



# How Do I Apply?

1. create a list of potential schools
2. visit graduate programs
3. register, practice, and then take the GRE;
4. ask faculty members for letters of recommendation;
5. write a statement of purpose and have it critiqued;
6. complete and submit applications for admission and financial support



# Funding Options



## Fellowships

- Stipend awarded based on academic merit; does not have a work requirement; apply early in senior year

Types: (external) NSF, Fulbright, Mellon, ...

(internal) Offered by Graduate Program

## Assistantships

- Stipend awarded based on need/merit; work required;

Types: Research, Teaching, and Graduate

## Tuition waivers

- awarded based on need/merit; usually accompanies internal fellowships and assistantships

# The Graduate School Process



- **Coursework (1-3 years) (major area, stats, methods)**
- **Qualifying Exams (tested over major coursework)**
- **Research (can be conducted throughout program)**
- **Thesis/Dissertation (original research presentation)**
  - committee formed of faculty who guide your research
  - preliminary exam - first couple of chapters of dissertation presented for approval to continue work on dissertation
  - final defense - dissertation presented to committee and defended

# How to Write a Good Statement of Purpose

*A good statement will be:*

- **concise** - say what you have to as efficiently as possible; most are limited to 1 - 1 1/2 pages
- **organized** - your essay should be well thought out and structured; work from an outline;
- **clear** - it should say exactly what you want it to say; no ambiguity; no grammatical errors; no contractions
- **honest** - do not pretend to be who you are not; but, do not sell yourself short, either
- **personal** - this is uniquely yours, it is a statement about you; write about you; avoid using too many personal pronouns "I"s
- **positive** - sell yourself using positive attributes; do not dwell on negatives like low grades



# How to Write a Good Statement of Purpose (cont.)

*A good statement will include:*

- **What you have done to prepare for graduate school (i.e. research, work in the field, publications)**
- **With whom do you want to study and why (identify faculty who are conducting research in your area of interest)**
- **How you plan to utilize your graduate degree upon completion of graduate school**

**Graduate School Is More  
Than Just A Good Idea...**



**...It's A Chance To  
Determine Your Future!**

*Thank You!*  
*May God Bless*  
*Your Future!*

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