Crafting a Competitive Graduate School Application
Presenter

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Research Programs

**What:** Careful review of potential graduate programs

**When:** Sophomore/Junior year of UG

**Why:** Narrows school choices to your interests
Components of an Application

Typical
✓ Application
✓ Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose
✓ Resume or CV
✓ Letters of Recommendation
✓ Transcripts

Additional
✓ Standardized test scores (GRE, GMAT)
✓ Portfolio
✓ Audition
✓ Writing Samples
✓ Departmental Application
What is a Personal Statement?

• A personal statement is a general statement of your background, preparation, and goals.

• An effective personal statement conveys how your background and experiences have shaped your career goals, how you are well matched to your chosen career and provides insight into your character and maturity.

Types of Personal Statements

Personal statements generally fall into two categories:

- Broad, comprehensive statement
- Response to specific questions
Seven tips to write your personal statement

1. State your purpose
2. Personalize the essay
3. Discuss specialization
4. Connect to future goals
5. Program Fit
6. Special conditions
7. Conclusion
Ten Questions to Consider

1. What is special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?

2. What details of your life (personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?

3. When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
Ten Questions to Consider

4. What are your career goals?

5. Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain (e.g., great grades but mediocre LSAT or GRE scores, or a distinct pattern to your GPA if it was only average in the beginning)?

6. Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (e.g., economic, familial, or physical) in your life?

Ten Questions to Consider

7. What personal characteristics (e.g., integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you posses that would improve your prospects for success in this field or professions. Can you document or demonstrate that you have these characteristics?

8. Why might you be a stronger candidate and more successful and effective in the profession or field than other applicants?

9. What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess?

Ten Questions to Consider

10. What are the most compelling reasons you can give the admissions committee to be interested in you?
BRAINSTORMING

5 min
General Advice

Do

• Tell a story
• Be specific
• Concentrate on your opening paragraph
• Tell what you know
• Research the program
• Write well and correctly
• Proofread!!!!
• Have someone else read your statement and offer feedback

Don’t

• Use the same statement for all your applications
• Reference experiences or accomplishments from high school or earlier
• Mention potentially controversial topics
• Don’t overshare

Resume or CV

- 2 pages max
- Highlight any relevant experiences (internships, jobs)
- Publications
- Presentations

NOTHING from high school
Recommendation Letters

- Check for number required – typically 2 or 3

- Ask recommenders EARLY
  - Professors/advisors, etc. who can speak to your academic achievements
  - Who will write a positive letter
  - You’ve worked with directly for a meaningful amount of time
  - Can speak to your specific strengths and describe how these strengths will serve you well in the graduate program
Transcripts

- Carefully read the instructions on the institution website to determine how and what to submit.

- Ohio State requires official transcripts from all institutions where an applicant has earned post-secondary credit, even if the credit was earned in high school.

- Plan for cost of ordering transcripts.
Final Thoughts

Getting accepted into a graduate programs is a combination of:

- Compelling personal statement
- Cumulative GPA
- Strong recommendation letters
- Test scores, if required
- Program Fit

Know your deadlines and submit materials early!
Questions??

How to Find OSU Information

Graduate and Professional Admissions

http://gpadmissions.osu.edu/

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