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Making Yourself a Good Candidate

- What makes a good candidate?
  - Do you show promise of being a good investment? I.e., does your application indicate that you are a person who has what it takes to make it through to your masters or PhD? What is the relative importance of GPA, GRE scores, research experience, extracurricular activities?

- Application packet:
  - Online application with basic information: on time & complete
  - Transcripts
  - GPA
  - Resume
  - Graduate Record Examination Score (GREs)
  - Letters of Recommendations
  - Cover letter
  - Statement of Purpose or Research Statement
Application Packet

- **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)** Score has three test sections – Analytical Writing, Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning (General).

1. What is required for your schools of interest? Do they require GREs?
2. Know what your weaknesses are & address them months before taking the exam.
3. Timing: Take the General GRE 2-3 months, and the Subject GRE 1-2 months before your application(s) are due.
4. Do practice exams, each test cost money. Practice the writing!
Application Packet

• **Letters of Recommendations**

  1. Who should you ask?
     a) Professors, employers, RESEARCH MENTORS
  2. When should you ask?
     a) 2-3 months before the application is due
  3. What do you need to supply your recommender with?
     a) Resume
  4. When do the letters need to be sent and who should send them?
     a) Online portals are typical with a link sent to the recommender
  5. What is the review committee looking for?
     a) Details about you as a reliable student.
Application Packet

- **Cover letter**

  1. Typically addressed to the chairperson of the department or the admissions committee.
  2. Opportunity to point out your major strengths.
  3. First, say something of substance: introduce yourself and where you found their program (website, friend, family, etc.)
  4. Second, highlight several strengths that you want the committee to be aware of
  5. Third, thank them for their time and consideration.
Application Packet

• **Statement of Purpose – could be a personal statement and a professional statement**

1. A brief description of who you are as a person.
2. A brief description of who you are as a scholar, with a link between you as a scholar and your application to their program.
3. A paragraph or two about how you can fit in, learn from, and contribute to their program.
4. A view of the career you see yourself after your graduate degree. Show them your vision.
# Application Packet

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<td>Statement of Purpose or Research Statement</td>
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What Are They Looking For?

- Maturity
- Capable student
- A good match with their faculty’s interest and research.

1. Do your homework on the institution
2. Does your interest fit with the faculty? (Tailor your cover letter and statement.)
3. Study their catalog of course work, what excites you?
4. Make each statement specific to the institution and program.
5. Follow up to ensure your materials have been received!
Searching for Schools

General

• Don’t put all your eggs in one basket – apply to a range of schools.
• Do they offer funding opportunities? Teaching/Research Assistantships (required?)
• Lab/office space?
• Pre-requisite courses?
• What is the cost of living?
• What is student life like?
• What is the climate like?
• Transportation: local & back home?
Searching for Schools

Program Specific

- Who is active in the areas of research that interest you?
- What is their specialty in this area, and what is its future?
- What are their qualifications in this area?
- What are the core classes that the department requires of all students? Who teaches them, what is their reputation with the present students?
- What are the PhD qualifying and/or comprehensive exam structures?
- What electives are offered in the area of research of interest to you?
- What do the present students think of the atmosphere in the department?
- Is the grad student support sufficient (academic year only, year-round)?
May
- Research schools & take GRE practice test

June
- Sign up for a GRE test prep

July
- Request information from schools and programs (look for separate due dates)
- Take the GRE general test

August
- Register for the November GRE subject test, finalize list of schools, contact recommenders, start statement

September
- Request official transcripts, send recommenders supplemental info (resume, personal statement, etc., list of schools)
- Complete and submit all applications. Verify materials have arrived.

October
- Bring application materials to a writing center & take the GRE

November
- Bring application materials to a writing center & take the GRE

December
- Complete and submit all applications. Verify materials have arrived.
Timeline

7+ months out

Research schools & take GRE practice test

6 months out

Request information from schools and programs (look for separate due dates)

5 months out

Request for the November GRE subject test, finalize list of schools, contact recommenders, start statement

4 months out

Take the GRE general test

3 months out

Register for the November GRE subject test, finalize list of schools, contact recommenders, start statement

2 months out

Request official transcripts, send recommenders supplemental info (resume, personal statement, etc., list of schools)

1 month out

Bring application materials to a writing center & take the GRE

Due

Complete and submit all applications. Verify materials have arrived.
GRADUATE SCHOOLS INVEST A LOT TIME, ENERGY, AND MONEY IN A STUDENT.

THEY ARE ENSURING QUALITY GRADUATE STUDENTS = REPRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAM’S REPUTATION.

THEY MAY WANT TO ASSESS STUDENTS PRIOR TO ACCEPTANCE FOR SUITABILITY AND FUNDING ALLOCATION.

REVIEW THE INTERVIEWING MATERIALS FROM PREVIOUS WEBINAR.
Choosing Where to Accept

You might get accepted to more than one graduate school. How do you make that choice?
Wait, But There’s MORE

More?!
• Coursework
• Choosing a mentor
• Mentor – Student Relationship
• Cultural norms
• Authorship
• Comprehensive exams
• Thesis/Dissertation types
• Implicit rules

That’s too much to put into this presentation.
Looking Back and Forward

**Back**

We will have NO more summer webinars left!

- ✅ Networking & Final Report
- ✅ STEM Resumes
- ✅ Interviewing
- ✅ Graduate School Planning

**Forward**

Final Report & Presentation

- ❑ Final Report: Due 2 weeks after your internship ends.
- ❑ Final Presentation: Due by September 30th
- ❑ STEM Student Professional Development Skill Symposium
Thank You

- Remember to record this hour towards your research time
- Reminder: Please fill out the anonymous, end of the internship survey:
  - [https://umt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cGhKIHpNOFHnY1w](https://umt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cGhKIHpNOFHnY1w)

- We will be sending out an email with more information
- Questions for us?