



CAREER SERVICES

Graduate & Professional School

Purpose

Graduate and Professional School affords the opportunity to expand knowledge of a particular area of study, enter academia as a profession, or prepare for a specific career.

Making The Decision

Is Graduate or Professional School the Right Choice?

- ◆ Do you feel that it will make you more marketable? How?
- ◆ Is a graduate degree required for entering your field of choice?
- ◆ Should you go straight to graduate or professional school or take time to test your interest or prepare for graduate school by working in the field?

Funding your Advanced Degree

What financial aid options are?

Most awards are given by the academic department under your plan of study. Nevertheless, there will also be general assistantships throughout the university.

Graduate Assistantships: 10-20 hours work/week; typically pay full or partial tuition and offer a stipend

Teaching Assistantships: Teaching, recitation courses and/or assisting a professor with office hours, half time

Research Assistantships: Assist professor with research; may lead to own research project

Residence Assistantships: Room (in college residence hall), board and stipend are often offered

Admissions Exams

- ◆ Graduate Record Examination (**GRE**)
www.gre.org
- ◆ Graduate Management Admissions Test (**GMAT**)
www.gmac.com
- ◆ Law School Admissions Test (**LSAT**)
www.lsac.org
- ◆ Miller Analogy Test (**MAT**)
- ◆ Medical College Admissions Test (**MCAT**)
www.aamc.org

On campus testing and test preparation:

<http://www.nccu.edu/Academics/universitycollege/universitytesting/contactus.cfm>

Researching the Right School

www.princetonreview.com

www.petersons.com

<http://www.napla.org/selecting.htm>

www.mba.com

www.graduateschoolguide.com

Personal Statement

Answer the Question: If the application asks you to state the reason you are applying to a particular academic program or company, do not spend the entire letter talking about your qualifications. Instead, talk about what attracted you to the company or program. To keep yourself accountable to answering the question, keep the question in front of you as you write, and refer to it often.

Consider The “I” Problem: This letter is about you. It is okay to use first person, plus it keeps your writing more active and succinct. However, to demonstrate creativity, do not start every sentence with “I.”

Avoid Unnecessary Duplication: Do not reiterate information that is already seen elsewhere in your application, resume or transcript. If the reader has access to your transcript, you do not need to list your grades and course titles. You can be more general in mentioning these topics. For example: “I was on the Dean’s List” or “I have taken numerous courses in the field of nutrition” and then move on to discuss appropriate experiences in more detail.

Make Your Statement Distinctive: To make your letter unique include at least one detailed example specific to your own experience (e.g. Describe an important family member or personal moment that influenced your decision to pursue a particular career or degree). Be wary of using humor to connect with the reader. Most of us are not very good at making someone laugh whom we have never met before. The safe

Keep It Brief: To keep your essay brief (essays are typically limited to 250–500 words or one typed page) write concisely yet detailed. Focus each paragraph on a single idea (e.g. one paragraph on the strengths of the program, one on your research experience, one on your extracurricular activities, etc.) to keep the essay from becoming too long.

Personal Statement Format

Requirements for personal statements differ, but generally a personal statement includes certain information and can follow the format below:

Introduction: Gain the reader’s attention by starting with a catchy opening, such as the distinctive personal example mentioned earlier. Then, connect the example to the actual program/position for which you are applying. In this first paragraph mention the specific name of the program or company, as well as the title of the position or degree you are seeking. If you have a fine-tuned personal statement, use it. However, it is better to start with a straight forward option than try to create some grandiose personal philosophy. Avoid cheesy clichés and egotism. Avoid using a famous quote.

Detailed Supporting Paragraphs: The next few paragraphs should address specific questions from the application. Each paragraph should be specifically focused and support a topic sentence. You may be addressing your qualifications, why you are interested in the program, etc. Regardless, keep your examples relevant to supporting your qualifications.

*Adapted from Auburn University Career Services