

## Applications

Applications are typically not reviewed until your file is complete, and missing or late materials can result in your application being overlooked—so be sure to get started well in advance! After submitting, contact the program to confirm that they have received all your materials, and make a note of the date and the representative's name. If you're using a centralized application system, remember to save any completion confirmation notices you receive.

### Graduate School Application:

**Application Form:** As soon as you decide you're interested in a program, obtain the correct application form. It's usually available online, or you can request one directly from the school. The form will include standard questions designed to help the program track your application and verify that you meet the basic requirements. Ensure your responses are clear, consistent, and accurate. Keep in mind that most programs receive a high volume of applications and may use small errors or an unprofessional-looking application as a reason to dismiss yours. Take extra care to avoid mistakes, as they could push your application to the bottom of the pile.

**Application Fee:** You should budget around \$300 to \$500, as application fees can range up to \$100 per school. These fees are usually non-refundable, so it's important to thoroughly research each school and be certain of your interest before submitting your application.

### Applications will also include:

- ❖ **Official transcripts** - With few exceptions, most graduate programs require an official transcript from every post-secondary institution you've attended, even if you only completed a single course there. An "official" transcript includes the university's seal and the registrar's signature. You will need to request these transcripts, typically for a small fee per copy.
- ❖ **Admission Essay** - Also known by other names such as a personal statement, letter of intent, or statement of purpose, the admission essay gives you an opportunity to present yourself to the admissions committee in a way that goes beyond your transcript or resume. While most schools will ask fundamental questions like "Why are you interested in this field?", "Why this program?", and "What makes your experiences qualify you as a candidate?", the phrasing of the essay prompt can vary from one institution to another. It's important to carefully read the question and ensure your response directly addresses what is being asked.
- ❖ **Resume** - Graduate schools typically request resumes or a list of experiences alongside your GPA and test scores. While like a job search resume, it's important to tailor it to highlight skills and qualifications relevant to the program, such as research experience or related work and activities.
- ❖ **Curriculum Vitae**

- ❖ **Letters of Recommendation** - While your grades, test scores, and experience are the primary factors in admission decisions, strong recommendations can be a key differentiator, especially if you have any weaknesses in your qualifications. Typically, two or three recommendations are required, though this varies by program. Some schools may provide a form, while others simply ask for a letter. When choosing recommenders, consider:

- A professor in your field who knows you well and can speak to your academic or research abilities. Build relationships early so they can provide more than just a grade reference.
- Someone in your field with an advanced degree who has supervised you in an internship, job, or fieldwork.
- Avoid using family members, clergy, or politicians as recommenders, as their references are less relevant and could hurt your application.

Remember you are asking for a favor, keep these in mind:

- Start thinking about potential recommenders early.
  - Visit professors during office hours, engage in research or community service, and connect with supervisors.
  - Reach out for recommendations early in your senior year, allowing plenty of time before your deadline.
  - Schedule a meeting with each recommender to discuss how the program fits your career goals and why you're a strong candidate.
  - Provide a list of schools, submission instructions, recommendation forms (if required), deadlines, and your contact information.
- ❖ **Entrance Exams** - Most graduate and professional schools require standardized test scores as part of the admission process. While meeting the minimum score may make you eligible for consideration, it doesn't guarantee admission. It's advisable to research the average test scores of applicants who have been admitted to the program you're interested in.
  - ❖ [Interviews](#)