



How to Apply to Grad School

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Topics

How to search for grad schools (less Google)

Finding a professor

Admission process

Expenses

Timeline

Common Challenges

Building relationships with faculty

Essays

Researching grad programs

Timeliness of applying

Timeliness of requesting letters of recommendation



Common Fears

The complicated process

Getting started

Moving to a new city

Fear of making new friends/peers

Fear that you may not be smart enough



Preparation



Process is not quick!

Very different than applying to college

Organization, careful reading, and following directions – very important skills

Starting Point

What's my research interest?

Who and where are the faculty who are doing research in my area of interest?

Finding a faculty advisor

More important than location. They can make or break you.

Bad email:

- I'm so great. You should hire me.

Good email:

- I read these two papers of yours and appreciated...
- My skills in XYZ can help you reach your research goals.

Faculty Advisor Types

Dr. Ima Superbusee

- Has 8 grad students
- Full professor
- Has multiple grants

Less attention for you, but funding is secure. Probably more choices for research topic.

Dr. Bin Heronli Wonyear

- Has 1 grad student
- Assistant professor
- No grants yet

More attention for you, but funding less secure. Probably fewer choices for research topic.

Identifying Graduate Programs

Will require time and
patience.

Google is less helpful.

Better:

www.petersons.com

www.princetonreview.com

Professional Associations

Academic Journals

Faculty mentor recommendations

Information to Look For

Faculty doing research in your area of interest

Degrees offered (Masters, Doctorate, both)

Admissions requirements (GPA, GRE, coursework, etc.)

Size and diversity of program

Whether a professor will accept new students for your term of entry

Organize Your List

School	Location	Degree	Program	Prof.	Deadline	Fee	GRE
U of Wisconsin	Madison, WI	PhD	Soil Physics	Dr. Ace	Feb. 1 st	\$80	Y
Cornell	Ithaca, NY	MS	Crop Prod	Dr. Bee	Jan. 15 th	\$100	N
Arizona State	Tempe, AZ	PhD	Soil Chemistry	Dr. Cece	Dec. 15 th	WAIVED	Y

Admission Requirements

Application

Academic records/Transcripts

Letters of recommendation

GRE scores (probably)

Admissions Essay and Other Essays

Other documents

- Pre-application
- Departmental application
- Resume/CV

Application Expenses

Description	Cost
GRE General Test	\$220 (four schools included) and two practice tests
Additional Score Reports	\$35
Transcripts from all Schools Attended	
Application Fees	Average cost = \$60 - \$150

Some schools pay the application fee.

GRE Fee Reduction Program (U.S. citizens or resident aliens)

Planning Timeline

Summer

- ✓ Research grad schools and finalize list
- ✓ Study for and take GRE
- ✓ Identify and notify recommenders
- ✓ Draft admissions essay

Beginning of fall semester

- ✓ Finalize admissions essay and begin applying

Fall semester (before fall break, semester break, or before application deadlines)

- ✓ Submit all applications

Grad School Funding

Graduate Assistantships to pay stipend

- Research
- Teaching

Tuition support for students with assistantships

- PhD students typically receive 100% tuition
- MS students receive less

Internal and external fellowships

Monthly stipend
minimum probably
\$2400-\$3400
depending on cost
of living



Graduate Research Fellowship Program

Very prestigious. Pays for most of grad school.

www.nsfgrfp.org

Eligible in college or during 1st year of grad school

Unofficial: Need to be a co-author on two academic pubs

Need to work with a faculty member on the application

[Alex Lang tips website](#)