Choosing A Graduate Program: Making a Short List

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OUTLINE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Understand your potential

• Assess your options in concert with your career objectives

• Determine the academic environment that optimizes your chances to succeed

• Preparing a competitive application packet

• Understanding GRE scores

• Review of the Graduate Admission Process
LEARNING OUTCOMES

• When Choosing a Graduate Program, you should be able to match your potential with institutions that best meet your needs.

• Understand the nature of access that the chosen environment provides especially with regards to mentors as well as collegiality.

• Prepare to meet the challenges of the chosen program if you are to succeed.

• Knowledge of the importance of the GRE.

• Understanding the components of a graduate application packet.
UNDERSTAND YOUR POTENTIAL

• Understand the time and financial resources investment required

• Ensure that the investment will advance your career in the desired direction

• Look within yourself to determine where you are and your proposed destination

• Analyze your strengths, weaknesses, financial, and social situation
UNDERSTAND YOUR POTENTIAL

• Then set short- and long-term goals to help you focus on achieving them

• These form the basis of your decision-making process – whether to do online or traditional graduate studies
SELECTING AN INSTITUTION

• Look at different institutions and the benefits of each

• Identify specific schools that have the degree programs and specialization areas of interest

• When is the right time to begin the process?

• Internships
SELECTING AN INSTITUTION

• Ask yourself the following questions:
  • Does the structure of this program fit my personal academic style?
  • Are my study skills appropriate to the chosen program’s level of difficulty?
  • Are the level of my social skills and self-confidence appropriate to succeed in this program?
  • Is my intellectual development advanced enough to succeed in this program?
  • What qualities do the professors possess that would make them to be good advisors?
  • Do I have a good knowledge of my strengths and weaknesses?
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS) - MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS) - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

• Some programs admit for direct Ph.D. without an outlet for a Masters

• Know your limitations and plan for alternatives

• Understand the options available to you as it relates to course variety and the numbers of Professors in the area of your interest
FIND AND UNDERSTAND THE DEGREE PLAN

• See how prepared you are by aligning the courses you have taken with the course description and degree plan

• What additional requirements will you need before starting the program

• Examine if the structure fits your study style

• Improve on your writing skills as this is expected of you
PREPARING A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION PACKET

• Writing a successful Statement of Purpose
  • Be very clear about your goals and how the specific program you are applying to is the best place to achieve them
  • Address the anticipated impact your research on the field of relevance to you
  • If you have significant research experience, your statement of purpose should demonstrate your abilities

• Letters of Recommendation
  • The most effective recommendation is one from a faculty member who knows your work and can describe your performance relative to your classmates
  • Choose a professor who can speak specifically about why you will make a good researcher
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GRE

• GRE is the Graduate Records Exam
• GRE Tests and Scores
  • GRE Revised General Test (changed in August 2011) measures your verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking and analytical writing skills
    • Verbal Reasoning score is reported on a 130–170 score scale, in 1-point increments.
    • Quantitative Reasoning score is reported on a 130–170 score scale, in 1-point increments.
    • An Analytical Writing score is reported on a 0–6 score level, in half-point increments.
• GRE Subject Test measures your knowledge of a specific subject
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GRE

• GRE Revised General Test is a computer-based test and in most regions of the world is available on a continuous basis

• GRE Subject Test are paper-based test given at centers worldwide three (October, November, and April) times per year

• Aim to achieve higher than the required minimum

• For more information on the GRE Revised General as well as the GRE Subject Tests, go to www.ets.org
REVIEW OF THE GRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS

Your Academic and Professional Environment

Full Time

Program Requirements

Degree Requirements

Access Issues
Lack of Face to Face Communication

Prepared to Meet the Challenges

Strive to Succeed

Funding Opportunities

Research Interest

< Full Time

Full Time

100%

<100%

Online

No

Yes
CONCLUSION

• Assess your options as they relate to your career objectives form the basis to pursue online versus traditional graduate programs

• Become familiar with the academic environment that will best optimize your chances of succeeding

• Understand some key components to a competitive graduate application

• Better understand the importance of the GRE
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