When choosing the right graduate school, there are many aspects to take into consideration. The first step is investigating schools that offer the program of interest. A helpful tool in researching schools and programs is https://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school.

**IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

First, consider why you are pursuing a graduate degree. If the root cause is that you want to postpone making a career decision, delay entering the job market, or to avoid leaving the school environment, it may not be the best time to pursue graduate education. However, if further education is necessary in order to attain your career goal, an advanced degree will enhance your career opportunities, or the additional education would provide you with personal satisfaction, then it may be wise to consider attending graduate school.

- Investigate the school’s website to learn more about what they offer.
  - Determine if the classes/program are in person, online, or hybrid.
  - Would the program allow you to work while you attend graduate school?
  - Consider financial aid. Do they offer assistantships or fellowships?
  - Some companies will pay for graduate school once you have been with them for a certain amount of time. Is it necessary to obtain a degree right after undergrad? Or could you get a job and then consider furthering your education?
- Professors have a large influence on the focus of their graduate program. Research the professors in the program to learn what their area(s) of research is within the field and what their focus is for the program.
- Try to get an on-campus or virtual campus visit to better gauge fit. During this visit, set up a time to conduct and informational interview with a professor about the program and the future of most of their graduates.
- Plan to pay application fees as well as fees for any tests that are required for admission. Some schools may offer an interview in place of test scores.
- Reach out to the department contact throughout the application process. It can be helpful for them to become familiar with your name. This may stand out to them as they sort through applications.

**TIMELINE**

Application deadlines vary based on the school and program, so be sure to research the deadline for both. Be mindful that these application deadlines may affect your start date, so research the deadline for each school of interest based on your intended start date. Common deadlines fall in October and March.

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Although application requirements will vary depending on the program, it is common for the following to be required. Check with the program to learn more about what is specifically required for you.

- Transcripts
GPA will be displayed through your transcript. Do your best to achieve a high GPA in all your courses. However, the last two years of your education will receive more attention since you will likely have a majority of your major specific courses during this time.

- **Test Scores**
  - The most commonly used test for admission to graduate school is the GRE, although some fields have their own test. (Others include: LSAT, PRAXIS, MCAT, DAT, etc.).

- **Curriculum Vitae**

- **Personal Statement**
  - Typically, and depending on the school/program, they will ask you to write about your reasoning for pursuing this degree, your experience in that field thus far, and what you hope to gain from this educational experience in the program.

- **Letter(s) of Recommendation**
  - Usually, 2 faculty recommendations and 1 other/personal are required.
  - Strategically choose individuals you know will write a strong recommendation for you. If you reach out to a faculty member you did not engage with, your recommendation will likely be vague rather than strong.
  - Reach out to these individuals ahead of time to ask if they would be willing to submit a letter of recommendation for you.
  - If you had these faculty members early on in your undergraduate career, you should provide them with a copy of your resume and/or personal statement so they can gauge what you have accomplished.

*See additional handouts on the Career Center website for tips on creating a Curriculum Vitae and Personal Statement.*