



5 Tips for Your Grad School Applications

1

Create a checklist

One of the best ways to get organized is to create a checklist for each program to which you are going to apply. Include in your checklist each item that you will be required to submit, such as transcripts, research or personal statements, reference letters, resumes, etc. Also, make note of the deadline date for receipt of each item. Use this checklist to help you work back from your deadlines and then check it again just before mailing in your applications to double check that you haven't missed anything. This may seem really simple, but once you start juggling applications to 3 or more programs and each program has a slightly different list of requirements, you may be happy you've taken the time to make these lists.

2

Start with time to spare

Come application deadline time, if there is one thing that students often say, it's "I wish I had started earlier!" The list of required items may look simple, but once you start working on them you may realize they will take far more time than you had expected. Avoid last minute anxiety by starting early.

3

Think *people* not just websites

Many students send in their applications to graduate programs without ever having spoken to anyone there. They do all their research using the program websites. But a mere conversation with someone from the program of interest can have a huge impact on your chances of getting in. You can discover far more information and write a better-informed application. It is a surprise to many students how important relationships with professors can be in this process. Take the extra step and talk with someone (eg. program staff, faculty members, current graduate students, former graduate students) and give your application an added boost.

4

Make your statement shine

Personal statements can seem deceptively simple. How hard can it be to write a couple of pages about yourself? It's often surprisingly hard. To make your statement shine, spend significant time reflecting on your own unique reasons for applying and link them to each program's focus and faculty interests. Give yourself time for several edits, and consider getting feedback from a faculty member or graduate student, or a career counsellor at Career Services.

5

Dot your i's and cross your t's

In other words, proofread. And then, ask a friend to proofread, and then proofread your application again yourself. Now is the time for accuracy.

Applying to graduate school can be a complicated and multi-stage process, but you can wrangle it into something manageable and submit strong applications that are on time and on target.

Got questions?

Come to one of our grad school workshops. Schedules available in MyCareer at careers.queensu.ca