

GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

The process of applying to the graduate or professional school of choice is a lengthy and often costly one and should begin at the end of the junior year.

PLEASE CONSIDER THESE FOLLOWING KEY STEPS:

I. CHOOSING FIVE OR SIX SCHOOLS

In the spring of junior year begin the selection process while still able to consult with faculty. They are a major source of information and can supply the most dependable advice concerning graduate work in various fields of study. It is advisable to discuss with them choices of graduate schools and to request their suggestions. Instructors know a great deal about the requirements for master's and doctoral degrees and are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of various university departments. Their information may prove very important in helping choose a graduate school. Try not to put off communication with professors beyond May because many instructors are not on the campus during the summer months.

The interview with the instructors can be more profitable if they are acquainted with a student's academic background and specific interests. Don't just state a history major, for example. Rather, be more specific stating an interest in the Tudor- Stuart period of English history. Ask professors about the universities with a strong English history department--or the names of certain professors who are specialists in a field of interest. Consult the biographies of these faculty members if available, or read some key articles or monographs that they have published. This will help applicants decide whether they want to study under them and will help them prepare a more intelligent application to that department.

Follow up the discussion with a visit to the Career Services Center and browse through the graduate and professional school bulletin collection that is available on microfilm.. An extensive selection of professional school bulletins for Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, etc. is available in the Office of Pre-Professional Studies, the College of Arts and Sciences, Marquette Hall, Room 208. These resources provide addresses to request up-to-date information on various graduate programs. Although some information may change yearly, most does not; i.e., foreign language requirements.

It is often suggested that students apply to graduate schools categorized by difficulty of acceptance. In other words, apply to two or three prestigious schools that are "long-shots," two or three that are "competitive but possible," and two or three that are "sure things." The higher one's GPA and test scores, the more flexibility one has in applying to the more selective schools. Choosing schools by tiers is a subjective decision and in some narrow fields of study, there is not a wide choice. However, applying by tiers is a good rule of thumb in many cases.

With this preliminary investigation over, applications can be requested from specific graduate schools. Be accurate in supplying the necessary information and any other required supporting documents.

(Please note: Students interested in Law, Medicine, Dentistry and other health professional schools, contact the Office of Pre-Professional Studies for advising.)

II. PERSONAL EXPENSES

Applying to graduate or professional school can be costly. In the fall of senior year a student applying to several different schools in addition to taking the Graduate Record Examination or other professional examination will need to have extra monies available. Admission fees, transcripts, postage, and examinations can cost a minimum of between \$200 and \$400.

III. GRADUATE RECORD EXAM - (GRE)

The Graduate Record Examination is required for admission to most graduate schools and for many national fellowships. It is therefore a good idea, even if postponing graduate study until later, to take this examination late in the junior year or early in the senior year when the cumulative knowledge of undergraduate years is likely to be best suited for this type of measurement. **The tests are administered by the Educational Testing Service through the Counseling Center on campus.** The General Test is a three and one-half hour test, given in the morning, which provides a measure of overall scholastic ability. Separate scores for verbal and quantitative ability are derived from test items dealing with verbal reasoning and reading comprehension in several fields and various kinds of quantitative-mathematical materials. The Subject Test is a three hour test given in the afternoon on the same days as the General Test. It is designed to measure mastery of knowledge basic to success in a chosen discipline. These field tests have been developed by authorities in various disciplines and attempt to emphasize fundamental concepts and principles, although considerable depth of experience in a field is needed to achieve a high score. Subject tests are not offered in all disciplines, nor are they always required with the General Test. Check on the requirements of the departments and graduate schools being applied to. If intending to enter graduate school in the fall, and/or applying for fellowship competitions, register for the Graduate Record Examination given the preceding **October** at the latest. The exams are also given in **December, and April. HOWEVER THE GRE GENERAL EXAMS ARE NOW COMPUTERIZED AND CAN BE TAKEN ALMOST DAILY AT OVER 250 TEST SIGHTS.** There is a computerized test site in Brookfield, WI. Registration is approximately four weeks in advance of the test date for the written test. GRE booklets containing complete information can be picked up in the Career Services Center, Marquette Hall, Room 01, . **GRE Review Programs are offered through the Division of Continuing Education, Mashuda Hall. Call 288-6360 for information and dates.**

IV. LAW, MEDICAL AND BUSINESS SCHOOL

TESTS: LSAT, MCAT, GMAT

These tests serve much the same purpose as the GRE. All are given at Marquette and further information, applications and instruction books are available from the Counseling Center, the Career Services Library and the Office of Pre-Professional Studies. The dates of the tests change annually so it is important to check these in order to register before deadline dates. **LSAT and GMAT Review Programs are offered by the Division of Continuing Education, Mashuda Hall. Call 288-6360 for information.**

V. MILLER ANALOGIES EXAMINATION

Certain graduate programs such as psychology, counseling, social work, and sociology require the Miller Analogies Examination (MAT). The MAT is conducted by the Counseling Center, Holthusen Hall, Room 204. Call 288-7597 for an appointment or additional information.

VI. FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

It may be that students have been studying one foreign language only. If this is the case and the intended graduate program requires a second language (many do), decide on the optimal second language and begin preliminary work in it during the summer--either formally or informally, but certainly before entering graduate school. The second language may be the "distinguishing factor" which places one candidate ahead of others in admission to the graduate school of choice or in the winning of a particular fellowship.

VII. FINANCING GRADUATE EDUCATION: FELLOWSHIP/ASSISTANTS AND LOANS

Financing advanced study is important. Graduate awards are based primarily on academic accomplishment and scholarly promise; therefore parents' income does not affect eligibility as in loans. Competition for top awards is great, yet with careful planning and determination, worthy candidates can expect to receive some financial aid.

In addition to lucrative fellowship programs administered by outside agencies, there are considerably larger sums of money invested each year in graduate students by American graduate institutions. Nearly every graduate school has aid available for a promising student, including first- year applicants. The amount and form of this aid varies considerably, but a few basic distinctions should be noted:

A **Fellowship** or **Scholarship** is awarded on the basis of academic ability and anticipated contribution to a field. It may range in amount from a few hundred dollars to several thousand. Unless otherwise stipulated, it involves no work or service beyond a full-time schedule of graduate courses. In many cases, the terms Fellowship and Scholarship are used interchangeably, although frequently a Scholarship does not involve a stipend as does a Fellowship and covers only tuition and education-related expenses.

A **Teaching** or **Research Fellowship** combines institutional responsibilities with a part-time study schedule. Fellowships may be supported by the institutions themselves or by various outside agencies. With the notable exceptions of national fellowships, most are controlled through the graduate institutions.

An **Assistantship** is a form of institutional aid designed not only to provide for financial support of graduate students, but to meet institutional needs in teaching and research as well. Duties vary considerably. A graduate student may be asked to undertake dormitory supervision, to read students' papers, to be responsible for recitation sections, to teach formal classes or to undertake advanced research projects. Assistantships are often reserved for more advanced level students, although first- year students may also qualify. If an assistantship is accepted, realize that time for study will be limited and work responsibilities will have to come first in priority. An assistantship can be a most valuable type of professional experience, especially when teaching or significant research is involved. Since this may lengthen a degree program, it may be wiser to consider a loan as a supplementary means of support in order to complete the degree more quickly.

Always check eligibility before applying for awards. Many awards have restrictions regarding field of study, citizenship, future career plans, language proficiency, etc. Also, examine the actual cash value of the stipend to understand what may be received. Some fellowships have a very small face value but carry additional allowances for tuition, fees, travel or dependents. The term of the fellowship should be considered. A one-year nonrenewable fellowship with a high stipend may be less desirable than a three-year award with a somewhat lower annual stipend.

Most granting agencies require applications on forms supplied by them. The letter to the director or secretary of the foundation requesting forms should be as brief as possible. The same rule applies when requesting the application forms for admission, fellowships and/or assistantships directly from the dean of the graduate school. If the entry reads "By letter to the department chairman," a fairly detailed letter is written and supplemented later by additional information when requested. If the entry reads "By nomination of a faculty member," you should not write to the granting agency but should ask your major professor whether he would be willing to recommend you for the award.

Very carefully read the application forms and instruction sheets. Many applications are rejected as being incomplete or filled out incorrectly, or for ambiguous answers to the questions. A scrupulous effort to provide all the information requested in a clear, concise, readable form with attention to all mechanical details (style, format, grammar, spelling, neatness, organization and clean, clear type) establishes a favorable attitude on the part of the selection committee.

Each application for an award must be accompanied by a number of supporting documents. These regularly include a transcript of academic records and two to three letters of recommendation from professors. National award competitions may require four recommendations. Award committees may request a detailed statement of a candidate's plans and aspirations; some a report of results on the Graduate Record Examination or other standard test; and even others photo identification. REMEMBER - an application for a university- sponsored fellowship is not an application for admission to the university itself. Formal admission procedures are necessary. For specific fellowship information see: Marquette University Fellowship and Scholarship Handbook.

Loans, such as the Perkins, Stafford, Supplemental Loan for Students (SLS) and the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), are available in helping finance graduate study. Descriptions and eligibility information is available in the Student Financial Aid Office, 1212 Building, Room 415 and is also listed in the Marquette University Graduate School Bulletin. Most Graduate and professional schools utilize the FAFSA financial aid form and some also require what is known as the Profile Form.

VIII. TRANSCRIPTS

Request transcripts from the Registrar in ample time to meet admissions and fellowship application deadlines. Determine beforehand the total number of copies that will be needed and order them all at one time, if possible. Have transcripts sent directly to the graduate school being applied to. For details and costs, contact the Registrar's Office, Marquette Hall, Room 310.

IX. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of Recommendation are very important. It is strongly advised to approach the following in this recommended order of importance: the professor in the major field who knows the candidate and his or her work best, the highest-ranking person in the major field who knows the candidate personally and then a professor in another field who knows the candidate well.

A few basic rules of "etiquette" should be followed when obtaining letters of recommendation:

- * Prepare several copies of a detailed resume of academic background, including related study, coursework, grades, awards and honors. Also include a statement regarding your interests, plans for further study, and future career goals.

- * Request an appointment with the professors that have been chosen and provide them with a resume to read before the appointment. This will acquaint them with a candidate's academic interests and performance beyond the classroom perspective. This also allows them to be of greater assistance during the appointment and provides them a broader base for a meaningful, supportive letter on the candidate's behalf.

- * Request such letters of recommendation well in advance of deadlines. If the institution provides special recommendation forms, supply whatever information possible before presenting them to the instructors for their comments. Do not inconvenience the faculty by having them request addresses of schools. Let them know how many copies of the recommendation are needed and provide them a stamped envelope addressed to each of the proper institutions or foundations as the instructions indicate.

- * Ask the instructors if their names can be used as a future reference.

- * The Career Services Center provides a credential file service for letters of recommendation and will send them to the graduate schools of choice upon written request. Professors may suggest doing this in lieu of individual letters to each graduate school although, if they can be secured, **personalized letters will have greater impact than the "To Whom It May Concern" generic format. Also, please be aware that many graduate school application packets contain special school letterhead stationery for letters of recommendation to be written upon. Therefore, it may be advantageous for professors to write letters on computer so that they can be printed on the designated paper.** If a student wishes to establish a credential file for the purpose of applying to graduate schools, please call the Career Services Center at 288-3577 for an appointment.

- * It is possible that a few professors may be asked at one time by several students for letters of recommendation. If they should refuse a request, do not become discouraged. There are other professors whose schedules may allow for such correspondence.

X. A PERSONAL ESSAY

This essay is sometimes called an intellectual statement and may be required for graduate school admission. It is a carefully prepared statement which includes the highlights of intellectual and personal development and gives relevance and substance to graduate pursuits. In this statement, describe formulative academic experiences, individual talents and special interests along with future aspirations. This is no easy assignment. This may be the first time that a candidate has been asked to evaluate him or herself in such a manner. It must be prepared with the utmost care and with sufficient time for extensive reflection and revision. It cannot be done very well in the time constraints of the late fall. Plan to prepare a draft during the summer and then put it away. Upon rereading it in the fall, review it critically and revise it. **The Marquette Writing Center can assist students in polishing their essays. Please call or stop in at Monitor Hall, 4th floor, x5542.**

XI. ADMISSION FORMS

Check and double-check the application forms and supporting papers for accuracy. The assembling of complete applications is the candidate's responsibility. Respect application deadlines