

Applying to Grad School

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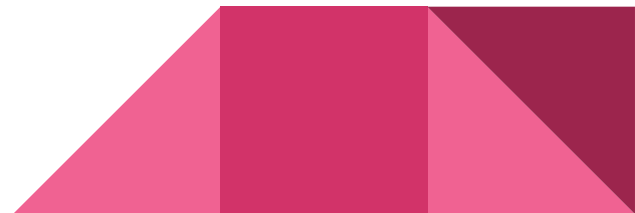
Visit Gracie at: gconte.net



Before You Are Ready to Apply

Undergraduate Research

- A taste of the rigors of grad school
- Research Experience for Undergraduates ([REU](#))
 - 10-12 week summer program funded by NSF
 - Apply to schools
 - Math list is [here](#)
 - Personal Statement
 - Statement of interest
 - References and Transcripts
 - Work with a graduate student
 - Present research to peers and professors
- Research with a professor at your institution



Programs for Undergrads

McNair Scholars

- Summer/semester long program starting sophomore, junior, or senior year
 - Must apply and interview through school
- Federally funded program
- Cohort of ~25 people
 - low income, first-gen and/or URM students (40% of spots reserved for URM)
- Funding for undergrad research
- Programming on applying to grad school
 - Writing cv and statements
 - Providing emotional support
 - Providing funding support for grad apps and GRE prep
 - Application fee waivers
- Student Mentor/mentee program (students are paid to be mentors)
- More info [here](#)

IRT Fellow

- Is a summer and semester grad school preparation program.
 - Must apply the spring semester before grad school applications are due
 - Can apply at anytime even after finishing undergraduate education
- Cohort of ~40 URM applicants from diverse disciplines
- Fellowship provides
 - GRE prep
 - Mentor for writing cv, statements
 - Mentor for choosing schools
 - Funding for grad school apps
 - Graduate school summer fair and workshop
- More info [here](#)

Deciding if Grad School is for You

- The Decision

- Do you love what you do?
- Does your life goal require it?
- Pro: Irreplaceable experience and opportunities
- Con: Emotional exhaustion
- Risk: Burn out
- [A Guide for Potential Grad Students](#)

- Imposter Syndrome

- Thinking everyone else is better
- Attribute success to outside factors
- Worry you won't live up to expectations
- Worry people will find out you're a fake
- You're not alone.
- Learn about its different forms [here](#)
- You are worthy! Tips for moving past it at the bottom of [this page](#)

} Self Doubt





Once You Are Ready to Apply

Application Checklist

- ☐ (All) College Transcripts
- ☐ Letters of Recommendation (2 - 3)
- ☐ GRE Scores
- ☐ Personal Statement
- ☐ Statement of Purpose
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae (CV) / Resume
- ☐ Other: _____

Pro Tip: Make a checklist for each school and keep it up-to-date



Application Checklist

	Dream School	School 1	School 2	School 3	Safety School
Application Deadline					
Application Fee					
College Transcripts					
GRE - General					
GRE - Subject					
Letter of Rec 1					
Letter of Rec 2					
Personal Statement					
Statement of Purpose					
CV / Resume					

Funding Opportunities

Having funding when you apply makes you very desirable


National GEM Consortium

- Multiple opportunities to apply:
 - As a senior in undergrad
 - As a masters student
 - As a Phd student
- Types of Fellows:
 - Full Fellow (Full Funding + Internship)
 - Associate Fellow (Full Funding)
 - University Fellow (University Funding)
- Application:
 - Minimum GPA: 2.8 (masters), 3.0 (PhD)
 - Statement of Purpose
 - Letters of Recommendation (x3)
- More info [here](#)


Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP by the NSF)

- You have two opportunities to apply:
 - Once as an undergraduate student
 - Once as a graduate student
- Apply as an undergraduate!
 - Doesn't impact future applications
 - Gives you material to work from when in grad school if you don't get it
- Application
 - Personal Statement
 - Statement of Purpose
- More info [here](#)

Choosing Schools

- How to find schools:
 - School rankings
 - Schools your favorite professors went to
 - Location
 - Pick which ones to apply to:
 - Find professors that do research that interests you
 - Email graduate students of the advisors you like
 - Types of funding available
 - Other resources that the school provides (ie. mental health resources, strong affinity group communities, values work/life balance)
 - Schools on your list:
 - Dream schools
 - Safety schools
 - Target schools
- 

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

- Study!
 - I like Princeton Review
 - Free online test prep
 - Take the GRE early
 - Leave yourself time to take it again (and again) if you don't like your results
 - General: Occurs often, schedule one to set a deadline for yourself
 - Subject: Occurs 4 times a year. Look up when it happens near you and schedule accordingly
 - You can send 5 scores for free
 - Know which schools you are sending your scores to
 - Pick the same 5 for general and subject
 - Sending a score after test day costs **\$27 *per recipient*** not *per score*
 - Great Score Goals
 - General - Quantitative Reasoning: +90%
 - General - Verbal Reasoning: +60%
 - Subject: +35%
 - Good test scores \neq good grad student (and they know this)
 - Study anyway
- 

Letters of Recommendation and Transcripts

Letters of Recommendation

- Ask well in advance
 - They need time to say yes
 - They need time to write a good one
- The people you ask should have different things to say about you
 - ie: Professor vs. Employer
- This is a favor
 - Be grateful
 - Say thank you
 - You may need to pestor (it's ok)

Transcripts

- Ask well in advance
 - It feels good to check something off the to-do
 - Sometimes there are issues
- Be prepared to send transcripts directly to schools
 - Some schools will not accept transcripts that have passed through your hands



The Writing Process

General advice for your Personal Statement, Statement of Purpose and CV

- **Read the directions** given by each school for each document!
 - There will be lots of overlap
 - You should only need to write one (maybe two) great paper that gets tweaked for each school
- Write a good draft
- Take it to the writing center
- Make revisions
- Revisit the writing center (if revisions were notable)
- Have your advisor and/or a close professor read it



Personal Statement

- Components of a good Personal Statement
 - Catch the reader's attention
 - Loving math since you were 5 does not set you apart in this community (sorry)
 - But it's still a fun fact
 - Should contain different information than on your statement of purpose
 - Be self-reflective about your past experiences and about why you want to pursue a graduate degree
 - Opportunity to let the committee see a glimpse of your personality and provide a broader picture of your application
- Share a copy of your personal statement with those whom you've asked to recommend you
 - They will be especially qualified to help

More information [here](#)



Statement of Purpose

- Your Statement of Purpose should answer these questions:
 - Why do you want to achieve this degree and how will you use it?
 - Why are you interested in this research area?
 - Why are you a good candidate? / Why would your acceptance be beneficial to them?
 - What research experience do you have?
 - What work experience do you have?
 - What teaching experience do you have?
 - Why do you find **this** school desirable?
- Share with an advisor or someone you did research with
 - Talking about math is difficult, they will be helpful

More information [here](#)



Curriculum Vitae Vs. Resume

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Long and detailed

Focuses on academic training and related pursuits to demonstrate potential as a scholar or researcher

For academic positions

Tells the reader what you know

Resume

Short and concise

Summarizes your background and experience to demonstrate your ability to do well in a specific position

For non-academic positions (usually)

Tells the reader what you know how to do



Curriculum Vitae

- What to Include

- Personal information
 - Full Name
 - Email, website
- Educational history
- Research Interests
- Professional experience
- Anything that qualifies you
- Anything that sets you apart

- What not to include

- Too personal information (age, photo, religion, gender, family information)
- Hobbies
- Bad grammar


- Suggested Categories

- Education
- Research Interests
- Work/Academic Experience
- Projects
- Presentations
- Honors and Awards
- Societies
- Publications (this one is impressive)
- Leadership
- Proficiencies
- Community Outreach (relevant volunteer work)

More information [here](#)



Interviewing and Visiting Schools

- Depends on the school:
 - Some schools do interviews during visitation
 - Some schools do phone/skype interviews, and then visitations are just meant to be fun
 - Interviews
 - Make sure you can talk about everything on your CV
 - Review research papers for interesting professors
 - Review statement of purpose
 - **You don't need to have a clear research question, but just be able to talk about your interests!**
 - Visiting Schools
 - Chance to visit the school and surrounding area
 - Talk to professors in person
 - **Talk to current graduate students**
 - **Meet potential cohort**
- 



Now you're in. Congrats!

Now what?

What to Expect

- It will be hard
- You will struggle
- You may think you are not as prepared as your peers
- You may question your decision
- It's normal
- Have a vice
 - Join a book club
 - Run
 - Watch British comedy with friends
 - Wednesday wine night
 - Pet some kittens

