

# Applying to Graduate School

## Research schools:

- Use your professors, alumni, and the web as resources for finding graduate programs:
  - Professors – they have been to grad school and are intimately knowledgeable about their career field
  - Alumni – use the Centre network to talk with alumni in your career field of interest and get their advice on the best graduate programs for that field
  - Websites – the Center for Career & Professional Development has an entire section of its web page devoted to graduate and professional school. The overall best website for locating programs is Peterson's: <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx>
- After you have researched potential schools, narrow your list down to 5-7 and gather information on prerequisites, faculty and their research interests, and any available financial aid (including assistantships). If you cannot find this information online, you can call the school.

## Graduate Exams:

- Virtually every graduate program requires an entrance exam. Professional schools each have their own (e.g. LSAT for law school, GMAT for business school, MCAT for med school) and most other graduate programs require the GRE.
- STUDY! The best ways to prepare are to use the free test prep features on the GRE web site (such as PowerPrep) or to buy a test prep book and take the computerized practice tests (Princeton Review and Kaplan are good resources).
- The GRE is offered on a year-round basis so you can take it at the most convenient time for you. While most schools will only “consider” your highest score, all scores (or score withdrawals) are reported. Professional school exams are only offered on certain dates and often (as with the LSAT) they will average your scores. For complete information, go to <http://www.centre.edu/after-centre/graduate-school/graduate-exams-test-prep/>.

## Application Materials:

- Letters of Recommendation
  - Ask professors or other people early and provide them with a copy of your resume.
  - If no specific instructions are given, call the program and ask them what should be included in these letters. Or, have your recommendations address the following about you: personal characteristics, performance, experience, strengths, capabilities, and professional promise.
- Personal Statements
  - You may be asked to answer a specific question or discuss specific topics. If not, then talk about how you decided to pursue this career/career field, what you hope to get out of graduate school, why that specific graduate program, and how you plan to use your graduate education in your professional career.
  - Also, if you have any areas of concern (i.e. lower grades or GRE scores, lack of experience), this can be the appropriate place to address those.
  - Check out the resources in the Center for Career & Professional Development library for guidance on writing personal statement and samples.
  - Have as many people as possible review your personal statement – parents, professors, friends, and your career counselor (just to name a few)!