

Graduate School

Application materials and research

- Start researching programs and schools early, up to a year before application cycles start
- Use the schools' websites, research boards and gradschools.com to locate programs of interest
- Identify schools and programs where your interests and career goals will align
- Spend time reviewing mission statements and descriptions of the departments you would like to join
- Ask current faculty or industry professionals for advice or suggestions for recommended programs
- Read and review research by faculty in your area of study and faculty bios on the school webpage
- Learn about locations and campus culture
- Review in and out of state admission numbers and competitiveness
- Identify schools that have admissions standards that met your credentials but also apply to competitive programs of interest
- Determine financial aid and scholarship opportunities that will offset costs
- Apply for graduate assistantships or teaching assistantships that will help you build related experience
- Schedule a campus visit and tour departments of interest
- Meet with faculty members or the department head to ask details about the program
- Review required courses and plan of study for the program
- Learn what application materials will be needed
- Identify application deadlines and begin organizing materials early
- Use campus resources including career services to review your personal statement or letter of intent
- Request 3-5 people to serve as references and share guidelines with letter writers
- Prepare for admissions tests and schedule your exam with the testing center
- Use test prep books and classes to increase your test scores
- Practice for admissions interviews and review sample interview questions
- Prioritize your school choices and take time to make decisions about who has the best fit for your career goals

Oklahoma State University

Arts & Science Career Services

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Schedule an appointment at cascareers.okstate.edu

www.hireOSUgrads.com

Finding and Researching Graduate Programs

Research schools and programs by visiting school websites, admission pages and using www.gradschools.com. Compare similar information in order to decide if you want to attend and/or apply to the program. Fill in the chart to compare four program.

School Name				
Type of Degree				
Name of program				
Location City/State				
Size of student body				
Previous year's class profile				
Cost				
In state/ out of state				
Financial aid				
Scholarships				
Faculty Research				
TA/RA positions				
Number of credits				
Student Research options				
Thesis requirements				
Application Deadlines				
Required Test				

Application Materials

Determine what components are required for your application and deadlines by visiting admission sections on the school's website.

Application

- Typically submitted online
- Some applications allow "Save for later" options so you can complete it in stages
- Call admission offices to ask questions or clarify any details if you are unsure
- Follow directions closely and be aware of deadlines
- Expect variations in application processes and materials that will differ by program

Test scores (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT)

- You must schedule your exams at a test taking facility 2-6 months in advance
- Allow 20-31 days between test dates to retake the exams if needed
- Research school expectations for scores and determine entering class averages
- Prepare for tests months in advance using test prep materials
- Purchase a test prep book or enroll in test prep course to expand test material knowledge
- Take several practice tests

References

- Most programs require 3-5 references, use academic and professional references
- Ask your contacts if they would be willing to be a positive reference for you
- Provide reference 2-3 weeks of notice to complete letters and provide full instructions to letter writers
- Letters are typically submitted online or mailed in sealed envelopes to admissions offices

Transcripts

- Request official transcripts from the registrar's office

Personal Statement/Letter of Intent

- Identify the character count, word count or length limits
- You may be asked to answer a specific question or address a prompt
- Document may consist of one essay or multiple essays, follow all directions provided by the college or admissions instructions
- Plan ahead, begin preparing information and documents well before deadlines
- Visit career services for help developing and editing the document

Interviews

- Some programs include interviews as part of the selection process
- Review example interview questions and develop response strategies
- Schedule a mock interview and gain interview prep advice from career services
- Purchase a full suit and business professional attire
- Notify instructors if interview dates will conflict with class attendance

Building Content for Your Personal Statement

1. Why do you want to attend this program/college/university?

- What interests you about this specific program?
- How do you fit within this educational program?
- Why did you decide to apply here?
- What do you know about the faculty, research, facilities, location, etc. that interests you?
- What do you know about the schools reputation/awards/rankings?

2. What have you done to prepare for the program? (1-3 paragraphs)

Academic preparation

- What classes or academic projects have you completed that relate to the program?
- What concepts/lesson/skills have you learned in your classes that apply to this program?
- How have faculty relationships assisted your knowledge base?
- What research skills or experience do you have?
- What honors/awards have you received that note your abilities?

Related Experience

- Describe any of your related experiences
- Connect your related jobs or internships to skills needed for this program
- What technical skills have you developed?
- What job shadowing/observing have you done to help you understand this field

Outside classroom experience

- What skills or talents do you have that would complement this area of study?
- What clubs or professional organizations helped you build skills?
- What experience do you have with leadership?
- How has campus/community involvement been beneficial to your development?
- How has your volunteer experience helped prepare you?
- What relationships have you built that connect to this area of study?

3. Career goals

- What are your short and long term career goals
- What type of positions would be ideal?
- What type of work/area of focus most interest you and why?
- What will success look like for you?
- How will this program help you meet your professional or career goals?

Editing and developing your document:

- Plan to edit your document at least six times
- Work with career services to edit and polish your document
- Allow mentors and industry professionals review your document
- Use the writing center for proof reading and grammatical checks