APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL
Overview of Topics & Concerns

- **Pre-Application**
  - Understanding graduate education
  - Preparing for the application process
  - Researching graduate programs
  - Factors to consider

- **Application**
  - Components of an application
  - Contacting faculty, students and staff
  - Graduate admissions process
  - Admissions Timeline

- **Post-Application**
  - Funding, housing and special programs
Pre-Application
Understanding Graduate Education

- What is graduate school?
- Why should I go to graduate school?
- How is graduate school different from college?
- How is graduate education structured?
- Should I complete a master’s degree first?
- Should I work first?
- What can I do to prepare for graduate school?
Why Graduate School?

- To move beyond passive acquisition of knowledge
  - You are creating new insights
- A graduate degree demonstrates your ability to identify and solve important problems
  - Pathway to academia – best job in the world
  - Pathway to the knowledge economy
- Money!
Why Graduate School?

Education pays

Unemployment rate in 2009:
- Average, all workers: 7.9%
- High school graduate: 9.7%
- Less than a high school diploma: 14.6%
- Some college, no degree: 8.6%
- Associate degree: 6.8%
- Bachelor's degree: 5.2%
- Master's degree: 3.9%
- Professional degree: 2.3%
- Doctoral degree: 2.5%

Median weekly earnings in 2009:
- Average, all workers: $774
- Less than a high school diploma: $454
- High school graduate: $626
- Some college, no degree: $699
- Associate degree: $761
- Bachelor's degree: $1,025
- Master's degree: $1,257
- Professional degree: $1,529
- Doctoral degree: $1,532


Lifetime earnings with a doctoral degree exceed those of bachelor's degree holders by approximately 50% (US Census Bureau)
What Can I do Now to Prepare for a Graduate Education?

- Clarify your career plans and goals
- Research the requirements of your career
- Research the requirements of your career path
- Maintain a competitive undergraduate GPA
- Participate in undergraduate research programs
- Talk with graduate students in your prospective field of study
- Develop positive relationships with faculty
What Should I Say or Ask When Speaking with Faculty?

- Let faculty know what you are interested in studying.
- Ask faculty if they can recommend any schools or particular programs of study that fit your interests.
- Ask faculty how you can best prepare yourself academically for graduate school.
- Ask faculty what their experience in graduate school was like.
Choosing a Program

- Review the literature from your classes.
  Collect authors of your favorite articles, books, studies and citations and then see where those authors are working
- Visit Graduate Division & academic department websites
- Search for professional academic organizations in your field (MLA, AAAS, APA, ASA, etc.)
- Attend the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education
  https://www.caldiversityforum.org/
- Try a Google search using terms such as “choosing a graduate school”
  http://gradschool.about.com/cs/choosingaprogram/a/choose.htm
  http://www.phds.org
  http://www.gradschools.com
The Right Graduate program

- Fits your interests
  - Has faculty with whom you can see yourself working with
- Offers flexibility
  - Interdisciplinary training is of particular benefit
- Has a record of placing students in your desired career path
- Offers co-curricular training
- Satisfies geographic considerations
Other considerations

- Reputation of department and faculty
- Faculty publishing record
- Social environment
- Demographics
- Focus on graduate vs. undergraduate students
- Infrastructure and resources
  - Amount and character of support offered
- Practical aspects
  - Housing, transportation
  - Location (geography relative to family/significant other, city characteristics, available extracurricular activities)
The Application
What are the Components of the Application?

- Application Form
- Statement of Purpose
- Letters of Recommendation
- Exam Scores (GRE, GRE-Subject, CBEST, etc.)
- Transcripts
- Application Fee (Waiver?)
- (Supplemental Materials--writing sample, lab hours)
What to do next?

• You should apply to 6-10 schools

• Find online application materials and email the department staff with any logistical questions about deadlines, application materials, appropriateness of visiting/contacting faculty, etc.

• Contact faculty (where appropriate) that you are interested in working with
  • Inquire about the compatibility of your interests and the research they are currently conducting
  • Tell them you are interested in applying to their program

• Contact students in the program
  • Have them share their own experiences/satisfaction
How is the Graduate Admissions Application Process Different?

• Decentralized among campuses
  • You apply to each campus separately

• Decentralized among departments
  • Your application must specify an academic department

• Role of the Department vs. Graduate Division
  • Departments make “decisions” and Graduate Divisions handle administrative details and finalize financial packages
## General Admissions Processing Timeline: Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Online application opens at <a href="http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/eapp">www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/eapp</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1-15</td>
<td>Many department deadlines close: each department has its own deadline, ranging from Dec. 1 to May 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Departmental nominations for central fellowships begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>January - February</td>
<td>Admissions notification begins for some departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Admissions processing and notification continues</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Student response &amp; SIR deadline for financial support offers</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Final application deadline for some departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Registrar sends a reminder email to all students who have submitted an SIR confirming 1) Perm No, 2) PIN, 3) online registration instructions: “Welcome New Students” <a href="http://www.registrar.ucsb.edu/welcome/welcome-newdirect.htm">www.registrar.ucsb.edu/welcome/welcome-newdirect.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Graduate Division asks for final admissions decisions and any outstanding SIRs &amp; SLRs</td>
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The GRE

• Uses a computer-based system
• Test is taken on appointment-bases
  • Offered throughout the year- no set date
• Scores:
  Verbal: max 170
  Math: max 170
  Writing: 6 points (on a .5 scale)
• Subject Tests:
  Biochemistry
  Cell and Molecular Biology
  Biology
  Chemistry
  Computer Science
  Literature in English
  Mathematics
  Physics
  Psychology
Other Discipline-Specific Exams

- Law School - LSAT
- Business School - GMAT
- Medical School - MCAT
- Teaching Credential - CBEST
- Teaching Credential - CSET
Tips on Submitting Writing Samples

- Writing samples are often required for admission to PhD programs in the humanities and social sciences. (Students in the sciences may be required to take the GRE subject tests and/or submit lab hours instead.)

- Each of the programs you are applying to will have different requirements regarding the length and subject of your writing sample. Some programs will want long writing samples; others will ask you to send a sample that does not exceed a certain page limit. Some programs will require writing samples that illustrate your ability to do independent research; others are less restrictive about what you can send. Be sure to make careful notes of the writing sample requirements for each of the schools you are applying to.

- Carefully proofread your writing sample for spelling, grammatical, and sentence-level errors.

- After proofreading, ask at least one faculty member to review your writing sample. Be sure you make any changes according to their comments before you submit it.
Post-Application
Not to Forget…

- Extramural funding opportunities
- Housing Application
- Special Programs (AGEP, DIGSSS, etc.)
- Summer Research Programs
Two-year undergraduate research program for juniors who want to pursue a Ph.D.

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