



## Preparing for Graduate/Professional School

### Making Your Decision

Ask yourself the following questions when searching for graduate schools or professional programs:

- How far away from family and friends do I want to be?
- How big of a school do I want to attend? What about class sizes?
- Small town or big city? What kind of housing is available and what's the cost of living?
- What kind of social, cultural and career opportunities are available in the area?

Consider visiting the campuses and meeting with faculty and current students, if possible. Looking into faculty research and areas of specialization will give you a better idea of the scope of the program. Similar programs at other schools could vary in focus. Don't forget to look into admissions standards and school accreditation.

### Researching Schools and Programs

There are many helpful sites on the Internet that can get you started on finding the right graduate program for you.

- GradSchools.com provides information on graduate programs in the US and abroad.
- Petersons.com has further information about an array of grad school topics.
- PrincetonReview.com provides comprehensive information on specific programs, school rankings, test prep and more.
- U.S. News & World Report ranks graduate and professional schools.

### Admissions Tests

Many graduate and professional programs require applicants to take an admissions test. Research the requirements for the university/programs you are interested in to determine what type of testing is required. Below are the most commonly required admissions tests.

- Dental Admissions Test (DAT)
- Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT)
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
- Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)
- Optometry Admissions Test (OAT)
- Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT)

### Application Materials

#### Academic Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A typical resume should not exceed one page in length, however, an academic resume or curriculum vitae (CV) is used to highlight your academic achievement and any other relevant experience. A CV is generally more detailed than a resume and therefore longer, but should still be clear, concise and neatly formatted for ease of reading. The Academic & Career Development Center can help you tailor your resume or CV to your intended program of study.

#### Personal Statements and Essays

Many programs require a personal statement or essay from applicants. Your writing skills and commitment to the area of study will be evaluated based on your essay or statement. Be sure to follow all guidelines given by the institution to which you are applying, adhering to length and content instructions. Don't try to write just one essay if you are applying to multiple schools or programs. Tailor each one for its intended purpose.

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### Application Materials

#### Letters of Recommendation

Most graduate schools require at least two letters of recommendation as a part of the application process. When deciding whom to ask for recommendation, choose professors or past employers that know you well and can attest to your achievements and aptitude for success in graduate-level study. It is a good idea to provide your letter writers current copies of your resume so that they can familiarize themselves with all of your relevant experience. Be sure to give your letter writers an ample amount of time to meet deadlines.

#### Admissions Interviews

Some graduate programs will require applicants to attend an admissions interview. This may be one-on-one, a panel interview (one interviewee, multiple interviewers) or a group interview (multiple interviewees, one or more interviewers). Ask what format to expect when you receive notice that you have been selected for an interview. Scheduling a mock interview with ACDC can help you further prepare for this process. You can also talk to current or former students of the program you are applying to about what to expect during the interview. As with all interviews, be sure to dress business professional.