Preparing for Graduate School

Camille G. Mason
Ball State University – Career Services
cgmason@bsu.edu
Is Graduate School for me?
Grad School 101

So Many Options

1. Professional Schools – includes dental, medical, veterinarian, law, paralegal and business schools.

2. Masters Programs – typically 1-2 years full time
   M.A. (Master of Arts) or M.S.(Master of Science)
   M.Ed. (Master of Education)
   M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration)
   M.S.W. (Master of Social Work)
   M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts)
   M.P.H. (Master of Public Health)

3. Doctoral Programs – roughly 5-8 year programs
   Ed.D. (Doctorate of Education)
   Ph.D. (Doctorate of Philosophy)
Search for a Graduate School

Make a list of potential schools and compare:

- Quality of programs
- Research and scholarly opportunities
- Reputation of the school, its programs, and faculty
- Program job placement rates and information
- Financial aid
- Location and cost of living

- Ask experts: faculty and professionals in your field
## Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR YEAR</th>
<th>SENIOR YEAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Start applying to your top 5 programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research Programs &amp; Compare</td>
<td>• Order transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Talk To Faculty &amp; Friends!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Study For Your Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Start saving for your applications/test cost/transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SPRING</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weigh your pros and cons</strong></td>
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<td>• Start taking your exams</td>
<td>• Fill out FAFSA</td>
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<td>• Write your Personal Statement</td>
<td>• Read through your materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask for Letters of Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create your resume</td>
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**TIPS:**
- Visit the campuses that you can afford to tour. This is a GREAT way to get a feel for the atmosphere on campus!
- Send out all materials before the institution’s winter break!! Send all materials that are not electronic in the same envelope!
- Keep records for everything you send. Create a file folder for every institution and keep track of every document in it. Make sure to note date submitted, confirmation received, and follow-ups.
After Graduation: May - August

- Visit campus again!
- Make housing arrangements
- Set up all your utilities
- Arrive early – become familiar with the area – doctors, etc.
- Begin to have all your mail changed to the new address
- Utilize the campus for help! Use all the resources you can!
- Get pumped for a new adventure!
Understand the Admissions Process

- Admissions processes vary by institution
- Admissions committees typically base their decisions on the following factors:
  - Statement of purpose
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Standardized Test Scores (GRE)
  - TOEFL (international students)
  - Grade Point Average (GPA)
  - Transcripts
  - Previous work experience
  - Research experience
  - Curricular activities
  - Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV)
Prepare for Standardized Tests

• Register early
• Practice using a review course or study manual
• Tests include:
  ▫ MCAT: Medical College Admission Test
  ▫ GRE: Graduate Record Examinations
  ▫ LSAT: Law School Admission Test
  ▫ GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test
  ▫ PCAT: Pharmacy College Admission Test
  ▫ DAT: Dental Admission Test
• Schedule the exam 12-18 months before you intend to start graduate school

www.ets.org ~ www.gre.org
Write your **Statement of Purpose**

- **Write a one or two page statement:**
  - What are your specific goals for graduate study?
  - How have you been prepared academically?
  - What experience has helped you prepare?
  - What are your goals beyond graduate study?
  - Answer specific questions required by each school

- **Tips:**
  - Demonstrate your points by providing concrete examples
  - Be positive
  - Have your statement reviewed by faculty
Request Letters of Recommendation

- Make requests courteously
- Request more letters than you need
- Provide faculty with a copy of your statement of purpose and resume/CV
- Allow ample time for them to complete letters
- Let them know when you get accepted!
Order Transcripts & Test Scores

• Order transcripts from your current school early, so that they will be received near the same time as your application
• Check to see if transcripts can be mailed immediately after fall term grades are recorded
• Order test scores to be sent to each school (if you did not do so at the time of the exam)
**Complete and Submit Applications**

- Complete a draft of each application first
- Type all paper applications
- You may be required to include a resume/CV
- Proofread, proofread, proofread!
- Mail all materials well in advance of deadlines
- Make copies of everything and print copies of electronic applications
Arrange Campus Visits

- Make appointments to meet with faculty and/or the admissions office
- Some schools may be able to pay your travel expenses
- Gather information about the community and housing options
Funding for Grad School

• Grants are free money
  ▫ you don't have to work or repay the funds
  ▫ fellowships are the most common type of grant

• Graduate assistantships are the most common funding
  ▫ you receive a stipend and your tuition is waived
  ▫ assistantships include research, teaching, or administrative/professional positions

• Loans are also available
  ▫ federal government and other financial institutions
  ▫ complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
Funding for Grad School Cont’d

- Funding is offered by graduate programs and the Graduate School/Office of Graduate Studies
- Eligibility requirements and application processes vary
- The majority of funding is available in the fall semester
- Visit your graduate program of interest’s admissions or application Web site to determine application deadlines, requirements, and processes
- Identify faculty members with common interests that may have assistantships available
Funding Tips

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Come Visit The Career Center!!

Camille G. Mason  
765-285-1522  
cgmason@bsu.edu

For Assistance:  
• Career Lab in LU 235  
• 8am – 5pm Monday - Friday  
• Drop-in Career Advising  
• MTW – 1-3pm and Thu/Fri – 10am to Noon;  
• Individual career advising by appointment:  
Call 285-1522