



UNION UNIVERSITY

VOCATIO CENTER *for*
LIFE CALLING *and* CAREER

Graduate School Application Process

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The Graduate School Process: Getting Started

TWO QUESTIONS TO ASSIST IN THINKING ABOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL

Why do you want to attend graduate school?

Seriously consider your desires for and thoughts about graduate school as a viable option. As Peterson's article "The Graduate School Decision: Basic Considerations" states, "Your decision to attend should be made with a goal in mind – entering a certain profession or enhancing your career, for example."¹

Most importantly, though, you need to grapple with the key life question: "What is my life calling?" Your one calling in life is to repent and believe in Christ and then to grow in sanctification in Christ. Everything in life is supposed to be submitted to that calling and purpose, including your educational and professional goals.

You must prayerfully consider, then, if God is leading you to pursue graduate studies in the midst of your other responsibilities. If you selfishly pursue it while neglecting other responsibilities, it may lead to unintended consequences later on in life.

What is this degree going to do for you personally, professionally, academically, and spiritually?

This question goes hand-in-hand with the above question. Arming yourself with the knowledge of what a graduate degree will do for you will give you substantive reasons to fall back on as you weigh through the graduate school process over the next year or two.

Also, being aware of your giftedness and how God has specifically made you will further reinforce why graduate school is an option for you. In Ephesians 4:1, the apostle Paul states, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." Paul is specifically speaking of our calling of salvation, but a part of worthily walking in that calling is surrendering our educational pursuits to Christ so that we may grow in our gifts and strengths to serve him and His Kingdom.

Christ also reminds us in Matthew 25:14-30 via the parable of the talents how He entrusts His servants with specific gifts and responsibilities, and He commands us to use these gifts in service to His Kingdom and furthering His Gospel. As you consider graduate school, pray over whether this is a "talent" Jesus has entrusted to you in order that you would use it to be a wiser, more virtuous and industrious person in His Kingdom. If this is a part of your calling, do not be like the man who buried his talent in the ground out of fear and neglect and so squander what Christ has laid before you.

¹ "The Graduate School Decision: Basic Considerations." <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/graduate-school-basic-considerations.aspx>. Accessed 3/27/2011

The Graduate School Process: Getting Started

You will find below the primary reasons why you should pursue graduate studies.² Let these serve as guideposts for you to reflect on why you want to attend, what you want to achieve by obtaining a graduate degree, and most importantly, what opportunities God may be opening before you to empower you to serve Him more faithfully.

TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL

1. You discern God opening opportunities to pursue your life calling via graduate studies.
2. You desire to increase your storehouse of knowledge and abilities to more faithfully serve and lead in your career field.
3. You increase your ability to earn a good living while serving others.
4. You widen your career opportunities.
5. You supplement the knowledge base of your education and/or your field of study.
6. You gain opportunities to do research, whether on your ideas or on established studies (and get paid for doing the research, too).
7. You open yourself to teaching opportunities because you will become an expert in your field.
8. You gain access to high-quality resources, technologies, and experts in your field of interest.
9. You might be able to have your education partially or fully funded! Some corporations and organizations set aside funds to assist partially or fully to fund eligible employees. Some colleges and universities have graduate assistance positions or tuition discounts for university employees that might waive part or all of your tuition, and might even pay you a stipend for living expenses!
10. You desire to pursue your life calling to serve others (i.e. the greater good).

REASONS TO RECONSIDER GRADUATE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY AFTER UNION GRADUATION

1. You can develop the “professional student” mindset and continue pursuing education because you are afraid of the workplace.
 - **Remember:** Graduate school is meant to prepare you for your life calling and for service in the workplace, not to avoid it.
2. You lack the discipline and ability to set priorities. An inability to prioritize your time and commitments will cause stress and undue strains on family and personal relationships and, ultimately, on your relationship with God.
3. You do not have the financial means at this present time. You might want to consider working for a short period to prepare yourself to fund your education.

² “A Guide for Potential Grad Students: Should You Go To Graduate School?” <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/guide-students-graduate-school.aspx>. Accessed 3/27/2011

Timeline to Apply

Being intentional with your time and starting early is the key to making your application process go smoothly. Below, you will find a suggested timeline to follow to help you navigate yourself through the application process.

SUMMER BEFORE YOUR SENIOR YEAR

- Begin to draft a personal statement of your academic and professional goals.
- Explore graduate programs. Become familiar with faculty who interest you, entrance requirements, and deadlines.
- Contact graduate programs that interest you and request information.
- Review for the GRE or appropriate standardized test (i.e. GMAT, MCAT, LSAT, MAT, PCAT, etc.).
 - Hint: Even if your prospective program does not require the GRE, national fellowships and other funding sources may request GRE scores.

SEPTEMBER

- Set an appointment with a Vocatio Center professional and/or your faculty advisor to review your statement
- Also, share your personal statement with professors you know and who know you well. Ask their advice about which graduate programs you might consider.
- Narrow your graduate program choices.
- Register to take the GRE or other appropriate standardized test.

OCTOBER

- Take the GRE or other appropriate standardized test.
- Revise your personal statement, tailoring it to your chosen graduate programs. Schedule an appointment with the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career for guidance.

NOVEMBER

- Visit the Registrar's office to request your transcript. Request that the Registrar hold your transcript until the Fall semester grades are in. Arrange for your official transcript to be sent to each program to which you apply.
- Finalize your essays and statement of purpose. Do not forget to seek input from your faculty advisor and a Vocatio Center professional.
- Apply for fellowships and other sources of financial aid, as applicable.
- Check and record the due date for each application.

DECEMBER

- Complete the application forms for each program. Scan the form into your computer or use a typewriter for a neat and clean application form. Reread your essays and statement of purpose. Spell check!
- Mail your applications.
- Most schools send a postcard upon receipt of each application. Keep track of these. If you do not receive a postcard or letter, contact the admissions office by email or phone to ensure that your application has been received before the deadline.

Timeline to Apply

FEBRUARY

- Depending on your field, start planning for the admissions interviews. What questions will you ask? Prepare answers to common questions.
- Fill out the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. You will need your tax forms to do this, so file early in February.
- Schedule a mock interview with a Vocatio Center professional to prepare for any required admissions interviews.

MARCH/APRIL

- Visit schools to which you have been accepted.
- Discuss acceptances and rejections with a faculty member or a Vocatio Center professional
- Notify the programs accepting you.
- Notify programs that you are declining.
- Notify faculty and the Vocatio Center of your final decision/placement.

How to Apply

STEPS TO RESEARCHING AND CHOOSING GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Having thought through these questions and reasons to attend (and not attend graduate school), you should now be prepared to begin the graduate school application process with confidence if you have chosen this course. One of the first questions you may be asking is, “When and where should I start?” The answer is, “START EARLY.” Preferably, you need to begin as soon as the possibility of graduate school surfaces. Below, you will find the steps you will need to follow to properly navigate this process so that you may successfully gain a seat in the graduate program of your choosing.

1. **Self-reflect. Know yourself in order to know which program is the right fit for you.**

- What is God calling you to do? How does he want you to serve?
- What are your interests, personality preferences, and strengths?
- What are your weaknesses and shortcomings?
- What are your values and personal convictions? How is God making and sanctifying you to serve and glorify Him?
- What are your goals personally and professionally? Do you have goals?
- What have you accomplished?

2. **Research career options.**

- Talk with a Vocatio Center professional to learn about options and opportunities.
- Talk with professors to learn about options and opportunities.
- Research careers and job descriptions via resources in the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career and the O*NET Online Center.
- Job shadow and informational interview with professionals in your field of interest to get a feel for what it is like to work in that area.
- Visit websites of professional societies and organizations (e.g. American Psychological Association; American Institute for Graphical Arts). These organizations exist to allow professionals to meet, share ideas, and advocate for their field. Often times, these organizations have information about majors, graduate programs and career opportunities that can give valuable insight to your career/graduate school research.
- Intern and work in areas of interest to understand options better.
- Use the *Graduate School Guide* to learn about graduate programs (you can get a free copy from the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career).
 - Go to institutions’ websites and download their academic catalogues. You can also contact schools and request that they send this material to you in the mail. Look through their course offerings and see what you would be taking for degrees from their programs.

3. **Research graduate schools and programs.**

- Compile a list of schools (3-5) offering your field of study.
 - You can gain this information from professors, Vocatio Center staff, administrators, staff members, the *Graduate School Guide*, and from some professional associations.

How to Apply

STEPS TO RESEARCHING AND CHOOSING GRADUATE SCHOOLS, CONT.

3. Research graduate schools and programs, Cont.

- Read professional journals. See who is published and what schools are represented.
- Determine the locales of each school and see if they are within environments and climates where you would like to and be able to study.
- Determine the admission requirements for your programs of interest (e.g. standardized test scores, undergraduate degree grades, field experience, community service, personal statement, etc).
- Determine the time frame for the program of study:
 - Will you be taking day or evening classes?
 - Will you be in the program on a part-time or full-time basis?
 - How long does it take, on average, to complete this program?
- Research the reputation and mission of the school as well as your specific program of interest.
- Find out the required coursework offered and the level of academic rigor involved.
- Once you have narrowed down to a specific program, research the faculty who would be teaching your courses.
 - Research faculties' professional backgrounds, scholarship profiles and interests
- Seek out comments from current students and alumni. This can often be found in promotional material.
- Determine how accessible are the faculty. Is your faculty member of interest actually a research faculty member who does not actually teach most of your coursework? Is s/he available to meet with you to discuss your coursework and/or career?
- Find out if the school has the accreditation(s) necessary for your specific career field.

4. Fill out the applications.

- Specifically follow the directions of the application. Indicate N/A (Not Applicable) for any blank that does not apply to you. ***Never leave items blank.***
- Type answers or write legibly.
- Start applying early – some applications are due in November and December, but most are due in January or February.
- Know that state universities may have a bias towards their own residents when they select their students.
- As you consider an institution, see if the program and university are a best fit for you.
- Once your application has been turned in, contact schools to be sure application has been received.

How to Apply

STEPS TO RESEARCHING AND CHOOSING GRADUATE SCHOOLS, CONT.

4. Fill out the applications, Cont.

- Be as organized as possible to reduce stress on yourself. Organize materials for each program into a file system that works for you. Specifically, keep the following materials/information in order for each respective school:
 - Application
 - GPA Requirements
 - Letters of Recommendation
 - Personal Statement
 - Graduate School Process Checklist (see pages 52-55)
 - Deadlines for each program
 - Stamped and addressed envelopes, if required
 - Leadership Résumé

5. Choose your program of interest.

- Is this the best institution that you can afford?
- Academic Requirements: Do your test scores, GPA, and any other criteria meet an institution's academic requirements and standards?
- What are the program offerings and courses?
- How much does your program of interest cost per semester? Per year? Overall?
- What kind of financial aid package have you been offered?
 - Scholarships, Fellowships, Grants
 - Loans
 - Graduate Assistantships: Teaching, Research, Administrative Roles, Service in Residence Halls
- What is the ratio of students-to-faculty members?
- What are the overall demographics of the student body?
- What are the institution and graduate programs' enrollment and class sizes?
- What is the location of the campus like? Consider the climate, weather patterns, cost of living, and ease of navigation around the city or town where institution is located. Does it fit your comfort level and lifestyle?
- What are the amenities/facilities that the institution offers?
 - How is the quality of the library and its resources?
 - Do you need on-campus housing and is it available? What type of housing is available and in what condition is it?
 - What other facilities are offered by the institution that you feel are necessary (e.g. gyms/workout facilities, cafeteria, etc.)
- Have you made a physical visit to the institution's campus and do you like it?

How to Apply

COST ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Before you start the application process, you need to think about those upfront required costs to apply, the registration fees for taking standardized tests, cost envelopes and postage to be self-addressed (so that professors may mail letters of recommendation without delay), and the cost of résumé paper on which you will print your leadership résumé. See below an application process cost analysis if you were to apply to three graduate programs so that you can save up and budget for this process.

- Average Application Costs – \$50-\$100 per application
 - This is typically the most expensive upfront cost; it must be paid, and typically it is non-refundable if you are not accepted.
 - Total Cost: \$150-\$300
- Postage Costs
 - Application mailing costs – Approximately \$3-\$5 to mail paper applications via snail-mail
 - Self-addressed stamped envelopes for reference letters (three per application) – Approximately \$4-\$7
 - Total Costs: \$7-\$12
- Standardized Testing Costs
 - GRE – \$160
 - GRE allows for four graduate institutions to receive your score for free. The fee for each additional score recipient is \$23.
 - GMAT – \$250
 - GRE allows for five graduate institutions to receive your score for free. The fee for each additional score recipient is \$28.
 - LSAT – \$139
 - MAT – \$75 at Union University (fee varies per testing center)
 - MCAT – \$235
 - PCAT – \$199
 - PCAT allows for three graduate institutions to receive your score for free. The fee for each additional score recipient is \$20.
- Résumé Paper – \$15-\$25 per ream/box of 250 sheets of linen paper
 - ***Hint:*** You can easily save on this cost by purchasing only what you will need from University Services at Union University. 50 sheets are only \$2.50.
 - Total Cost: \$2.50-\$25
- Envelopes – \$10-\$15 per box of 500 envelopes
- Travel Costs for Admissions Interview
 - If driving – \$100-\$200 in fuel costs
 - If flying – Approximately \$600-\$900 depending on location
 - If staying overnight – \$75-\$150 depending on the locations and type of hotel/motel

Total Cost of Application Process for Three Graduate School Programs: approximately \$1000-\$1500

How to Apply

GPA REQUIREMENTS

The GPA (Grade Point Average) is one of the many indicators of how well you perform your job as a graduate student, and many institutions require a certain GPA level for admittance into their programs. For example a 3.0 or 3.3 GPA is typically required for most masters programs, and an even higher score of 3.3 or 3.5 is typically required for doctoral programs.³ It is not a concrete measurement of a student's intellect, however, and so it is not the only means used to weigh academic prowess. Typically, while institutions require these base GPAs, they will use standardized tests to serve as a further indication of an applicant's academic ability.

For this reason, students are required to take the GRE, GMAT, MCAT, LSAT, MAT or PCAT depending on the program in which they wish to enroll. These tests can also be of great help if a student has a lower GPA than other candidates. If you perform well enough, you may still be accepted into your program of interest.

Is your GPA not where you want it to be? Here are some tips to help you out:

- Use the Hundley Center for Academic Enrichment and make use of the tutoring services in those courses that give you trouble. Learning study skills and gaining a comprehension of the subject matter for difficult courses may increase your chances of receiving higher grades and raising your GPA.
- Take high-quality courses. Yes, it is easy to raise your GPA with introductory courses and so-called “easy A’s” but admissions committees see through those tactics. A lower GPA composed of high-quality courses will do more for you than a high GPA composed of “easy” courses.
- Take more courses. Do not take just the minimum number of courses needed to graduate. Instead, take more courses so that you have more opportunities to raise your GPA.
- Take summer courses. Summer classes are intense but they permit you to focus entirely on one or two classes. That means you are more likely to do well.
- Consider delaying graduation. Spend an extra semester or more in school to take courses to raise your GPA.
- After graduation, take a few graduate courses or challenging undergraduate courses to show your aptitude. These courses point to your performance in these classes as an indicator of your capacity for graduate work.

³ “What's the Role of GPA in Graduate School Admissions?” By Tara Kuther, Ph.D.
<http://gradschool.about.com/od/admissionsadvice/a/gpa.htm>

How to Apply

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

As you progress through your graduate school application packet, you will undoubtedly need letters of recommendation. Below you will find tips on how to secure these letters in the following article by Dr. M. Dennis Jackson.

“How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School”

By Dr. M. Dennis Jackson, Professor of English (retired), University of Delaware ⁴

“Applying for graduate school can be tedious and nerve-wracking, and perhaps the worst step is getting good recommendation letters. But the process can be survived, and I can tell you how.

Unfortunately, you cannot write your own recommendation letters . . . but if you get started early during your senior year of college and stay focused and organized, you will find that you can substantially influence what goes into the letters your references write and the ultimate strength of those letters.

During my 40 years as a university professor, I wrote more than 1,000 recommendation letters, so perhaps I can offer some tips to help you get the best recommendation letters possible for graduate school applications.

WHY do you need strong recommendation letters?

At many institutions, recommendation letters – usually three are required – are just as important in graduate school admissions process as your undergraduate GPA and your scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)[, GMAT, etc].

WHEN should you ask for recommendation letters?

You will find that many graduate schools set an application deadline in November or December. These are hectic months for professors. The semester is driving toward an end, the holidays loom ahead and term papers and final exams are streaming in, waiting to be graded . . . So, anticipate these pressures and ask for letters early – in September.

WHO can write the best recommendation letters for you?

You do not necessarily want to seek out your department's most prestigious professors to write your letters. Instead, find those who can comment specifically on who you are as a person and [a] student. Schools will not recognize a professor's name, but they will recognize his or her passion for your future.”

⁴ “How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School”. By Dr. M. Dennis Jackson.
<http://www.gradschools.com/article-detail/getting-recommendations-116>

How to Apply

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

“How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School,” Cont.

HOW should you ask for a recommendation letter?

“E-mail your professors and request a meeting to discuss your grad school plans. Ask in a tactful but direct way, ‘Professor, would you be able to write a strong recommendation letter [on my behalf] when I apply to grad school?’ Try to determine from their response if they will give you lukewarm or enthusiastic support.

WHAT do your letter-writers need from you?

Here [is] where you can seriously influence the contents and effectiveness of the recommendation letters.

So, now what?

Well, now you owe a debt to each person who wrote a letter recommending you. Send each a Thank You note (‘I know how busy you are, and that your time is valuable, so I really appreciate your help . . .’ etc.). This is a thoughtful gesture . . . You may need another such letter or assistance from the same references later. Speaking from 40 years of experience, I can tell you writing recommendation letters never got easier for me. More often than not, I spent two hours marshalling my thoughts and all the details into a persuasive letter. Like most professors, I wanted my students to succeed. Nothing made me happier than to have a student drop by to tell me that he or she got accepted at a good graduate school.

The letters provide the admissions committee with proof of some of the things you will declare on your résumé and in your ‘Statement of Purpose’ essay required by most schools. If you have cultivated relationships with professors at your school, their subjective appraisal of your skills and traits will go a long way toward helping you get admitted to graduate school. [So close the loop and inform your professors when you have been accepted to your program of choice.]

Often selection committees will use the numeric figures (e.g. GPA, GRE) to make initial cuts in the applicant pool, and then, during the most intense phase of the competition (and it is intense), the committee will look to your recommendation letters for convincing endorsements. Most programs also have a form that your references must fill out, answering short questions about your potential for successful grad school coursework, and then the recommenders are asked to rank you in comparison to other students they have taught over the years. Do not worry, this [is not] as bad as it sounds.

Leave the writers at least three weeks to prepare the letters. Two weeks might force the writers to do a shoddy rush job, and four weeks might tempt them to doze off and forget where they put your application forms. Three weeks seems about right.”

How to Apply

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

“How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School,” Cont.

“Just so you know, graduate schools look for:

- Intellectual development through college
- Aptitude for independent thinking and research
- Analytical abilities and writing skills
- Leadership or creative qualities

Your references need to support their comments with anecdotes or specific examples of your performance as an undergraduate. That kind of specificity of detail makes for good, convincing writing. If the professor can offer only generic bromides such as ‘she was a fine student, never missed class and was always punctual and attentive,’ then admissions committee members will recognize that this professor does not know the student very well.

It helps if the professor has taught graduate classes, and can compare your potential to the abilities of his or her own previous grad students. Often the instructor who knows you best is a grad student who has taught you in a course, but you are better off finding veteran professors who have experience writing recommendation letters. If you have completed an internship – especially one related to the graduate field you wish to pursue - then ask for a letter from the person who supervised that internship (an editor, an office manager, a research scientist you assisted, etc.). While not necessary, it would help if that person has a graduate degree and thus understands what grad school requires of students. [Note:] You would be wise to include only one reference who is not a professor.

Give careful thought to the individuals you choose to write your recommendation letters. They could determine your future.

Most professors will not take the responsibility of writing a letter for you if they anticipate giving you a negative appraisal. But do not let a "no" depress you. That person may [have one of many reasons unrelated to you that prevent him from writing an adequate letter]. Do not spend five seconds worrying about this situation. You are better off finding a reference who is sanguine about your future in grad school. Move on to your next choice.

First of all, try to arrange it so that the letters complement rather than merely echo one another. This can be achieved in part through selecting which particular items you give each reference before they begin writing and helps tell more of a complete story about you.”

How to Apply

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

“How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School,” Cont.

“Have one professor write about the quality of your research and term papers, and perhaps have him mention any study abroad experiences; have another address your oral communication skills, leadership abilities, moral character and personality; have a former internship supervisor talk about your work habits, the nature of your internship, your motivation, and what you contributed to the company or organization where you interned. If you worked to help finance your way through college, this last individual could mention that. You might simply make a bulleted list of the specific things [you would] like a particular letter-writer to address, and add a request: ‘If you can, please discuss these topics in your letter.’

Make sure your references fully understand your career goals. Talk to them about this, and give them a copy of your ‘Statement of Purpose,’ where you further elaborate on your professional objectives. Try to ‘aim’ your letter-writers specifically toward the kind of graduate program you are seeking. If you are applying for [graduate] study in biology, for example, you will want one of your writers to lay special emphasis on your experience as a lab researcher. If you are seeking a grad degree in psychology, you might want extra space to be devoted in a letter to describing your interpersonal abilities.

And then provide information and samples of your work that will help your references illustrate what they will be writing about you. You are, in effect, helping to create your own profile, offering a more balanced portrait of who you are.

Trust me, the professors will welcome your help (writing good recommendation letters takes time, and can be a challenge even for skilled writers). The more prepared my students were, when they requested a letter, the easier my task was, and the more effective my letter was.

[Let us] say you want me to write a recommendation for you. Here is a helpful list of things you can prepare for me and your other references:

- A copy of your résumé and perhaps of your transcript (the latter does not have to be official, it can [be an unofficial student copy]).
- A cover sheet highlighting salient details of your academic life - Which of my courses did you take, and when? What grades did you receive in each class? What is your overall GPA? What is your GPA in your major field? Did you take a minor, and if so, how will it enhance your graduate studies? This cover sheet could also contain that list of things you want me to be sure to address, in the letter.
- A term paper or long examination that I have graded (I cannot recall something I wrote on your paper two years ago, so jog my memory), or a story you wrote for the student newspaper, or a report you wrote after a semester's research in a laboratory.”
- [Note: Also include a summary of your undergraduate research study, especially if you will be presenting during the Scholarship Symposium.]

How to Apply

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

“How to Get the Best Recommendation Letters for Grad School,” Cont.

- “A copy of your personal ‘Statement of Purpose’ essay that you will submit with your application. (I may wind up critiquing your essay, and helping you make your statement more compelling. This essay also should help me further understand why you have decided to go to graduate school and in what field [of study].
- A well-organized series of files, one for each graduate school where you will be applying. Each school will ask that I fill out a form, evaluating your potential for success in grad school. Before you give the form to me, fill out the portion that pertains to you (usually at the top of page one). Be certain that you write on the outside of each file which school is involved, where I am to send my letter (cite individual names [and] titles, if you can), and when my deadline is. Professors can be [busy]. Help them - stress the deadline. If I am mailing the letter, give me a stamped, addressed envelope. If you are going to pick up my letter and mail it with your packet, I will seal it and write my name across the seal (grad schools require that). More and more schools are requesting online recommendations. Be sure I know which of your potential schools do that, and give me the proper URL, so I can find your electronic file and post my letter. For each file dedicated to one of the schools where you are applying, make it clear to me how that grad program differs from the others. Computers make it easy for professors to tailor their recommendation letters to fit the specific graduate program the student is pursuing.
- Make certain I have your telephone number and e-mail address, in case I need further information.
- Include a stamped self-addressed postcard bearing this message (‘Please mail this card to me when you receive this letter’) and I will drop that card into the envelope with your letter. That way, you can track the letter, and you need to do that until you know that all your letters have landed in the right hands.

Most recommendation forms will ask you to sign a voluntary waiver that means you are surrendering your right to view the recommendations written on your behalf. Many professors feel uncomfortable writing an open letter, and some even balk at doing so, if you do not waive your rights to view the letters. Some grad school selection committees may weigh lightly any non-restricted letters in your application. So, waive your rights to read the letters. You can generally trust that letters produced by those who have agreed to help you will be positive (and, again, you can help see to that, by giving your references plenty of help once they agree to write a letter).

Because professors tend to be preoccupied with their own academic work, [it is] a good idea for you to remind them, gently, about one week before your application deadline, that you need them to finish your letter. Remind them again, as the deadline closes in. Most professors will respond to that prodding in a friendly fashion. They know their letter is essential, and they once went through the same anxiety-producing process of tracking down letters and preparing portfolios and so on. Be assertive in a friendly way, until you know their letter is in the mail.”

How to Apply

THE PERSONAL STATEMENT: KEY TIPS

As you navigate through the graduate school application process, you will find it necessary to write a personal statement about yourself to share in more detail why you are a good fit for an institution and its graduate program. Here are some tips to assist you in the process of writing your personal statement:

- You should recollect “epiphany moments” that solidify your life calling and communicate them vividly in your writing. Tell your story.
- Essentially, you should be answering the questions: “Tell me about yourself and why you want to attend our graduate program?”
- Be clear about who you are, your strengths, capabilities and accomplishments
- Be concise and avoid being wordy or overstating your point
- Demonstrate your strengths and demonstrate how you have learned from your weaknesses
- Stick to 2 pages (There may be a page limit or word limit set by the program)

Below, you will find another helpful article that explains the process of writing your personal statement as well as some sample personal statements from Union University students with whom the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career has worked. You will also find sample personal statements after this article to give you an idea of how to craft your own statement.

“Write a Graduate School Essay that Will Knock Their Socks Off”

By www.petersons.com⁵

“Your graduate school personal statement may initially get only five minutes of an admissions officer's attention. In those five minutes you have to show that you are a good pick for the school. What will you say? How will you catch and hold the reader's interest? If you know the answer, then you have a good idea of how to prepare a short but effective graduate school essay that will stand as your personal statement to a graduate school admissions committee when you apply to graduate school.”

Your Grad School Essay Is All about You

Schools . . . want to know why you want to study the field you have chosen, and why you want to study it at their school. Storytelling is an effective way to convey your motivation and commitment and the experiences that drive you. A brief anecdote about some event that exposed you to your chosen field can be effective as long as you make it interesting and you do not stray too far. Do not write in clichés, though, by starting off with something like, ‘I knew I wanted to study ____ when’[?]

Every story has a beginning, and yours will obviously need to have an end as well. You want your story to have a point, a reason for being told that relates to why you are applying to a particular school. Develop a nice segue from your story to a description of your goals and what you hope to achieve personally and professionally by pursuing your degree.

⁵ “Write a Graduate School Essay that Will Knock Their Socks Off“. <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/write-graduate-school-essay.aspx>. Accessed on February 18, 2011.

How to Apply

THE PERSONAL STATEMENT: KEY TIPS

Write a Graduate School Essay that Will Knock Their Socks Off, Cont.

“Read your story over and over and make sure it flows smoothly and makes sense. Sometimes it helps to read it aloud so you can ‘hear’ the words and decide if they sound right.

Graduate School Essays Are Also about the School

When reading a personal statement, graduate school admission committees enjoy a [compelling] story that focuses on the applicant. But you want to be a memorable applicant, so your statement also needs to let the school know why you have chosen them. Ideally, you should relate those reasons to the theme of your story, although it might be hard to do so. (And do not do it if it [is not] true!) . . . Avoid discussing any rankings, gushing about how prestigious the school is, or even tossing in generic praise. Admission committees see right through such tactics.

Your graduate school personal statement will be a bit more [impactful], however, if you can make relevant mention of a faculty member or two and some of their work. That shows you have taken some time to research the school a little further than the average applicant. You want to effectively demonstrate that you know the school, that the school is the right place for you, and that you are the right student for the school. . .

A Graduate School Personal Statement Ultimately Focus on the "Personal"

Stick with concrete experiences that demonstrate your leadership capabilities and positive qualities. Details are important and will help your statement to be interesting and successful in its purpose. But, you do not get bogged down in too many details. You do not need to list all of your accomplishments and activities because they are summarized elsewhere on your application. Your grad school essay needs to communicate your motivation and some of your more intrinsic qualities that make you a highly qualified candidate for the school to which you have chosen to apply.

For example, since research will be a mainstay of this next phase of your [collegiate career], you might be able to do this by focusing on a research experience you had. Be specific! If you worked for a year under a professor, you might emphasize one particular project and explore that in depth. It does not need to have been a major life-changing undertaking—any practical experience can be used as long as you demonstrate your enthusiasm and aptitude for the field you have chosen to study.

Graduate School Essays Are Also about Paying Attention!

Of course, you should always read the application instructions carefully. Some graduate school essays ask for statements of purpose describing specific research interests in lieu of, or in addition to, personal statements that emphasize character and qualities. You might write a beautiful graduate school essay, but if you do not meet the expectations of the application, you have not done yourself any favors! Now start writing – and knock their socks off!”

How to Apply

SAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Personal Statement – Jane B. Doe (L33333333)

When my seventh grade teacher appointed me to lead one of the teams for our class debate on comparative religion, she knew she was challenging me. Not only would we be defending Hinduism at our Christian school, a seemingly impossible task, but orally articulating any argument seemed particularly daunting to me. From the time I learned to read, I had been mastering the art of isolating myself with books, not exactly a healthy skill. I certainly was not an outspoken participant in class. In the fourth grade, Mrs. Broshears, my teacher, began to gradually expand my interests by inspiring a love for writing stories instead of just reading them. Mrs. Main, my seventh-grade history and literature teacher, pushed much harder. She encouraged us to reach beyond the scope of traditional schoolwork by assigning group presentations and recruiting students for her speech team. I, on the other hand, felt completely content spending recess reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlett Letter* or obsessing over adjectives in the essays she assigned. Mrs. Main's persistence may have been what saved me though and introduced me to the land of living, breathing people who could only inspire the books I read and the stories I composed.

When she picked me as the leader of her religion debate to take place during our history course and informed me our group would be defending Hinduism, squaring off against Buddhism and Christianity, I knew which side was slated to win. Still, I researched for weeks, crafting the arguments while my teammates rightly reminded me we were fighting a losing battle. I disregarded them as my competitive streak began to emerge. When the day came to debate, my uninterested and probably frightened teammates forfeited their speaking privileges to me. I, too, felt anxiety building in the pit of my stomach, completely horrified until it came time for me to make my defense. After all, I knew precisely what to say. As the debate progressed, it became obvious that all our preparation was beginning to pay off. The team assigned Christianity failed to grasp the significance of reincarnation in the Hindu faith, and we squashed the Buddhists on a technicality. Our classroom dictionary defined religion as worship of a deity. I questioned the group's right to even participate in the debate on the grounds that Buddhism is more of a philosophy reinforced by meditation and tradition than a religion. To everyone's shock, Mrs. Main chose Hinduism as the clear winner. To my surprise, my preoccupation with books and writing had by no means robbed me of the ability to express myself verbally. The experience taught me the value of well-prepared research and confident communication. After all, the debate was by no means designed to convert middle school students to Eastern religions. We all knew Mrs. Main only meant for the exercise to reinforce what we were learning about the development of Eastern cultures while also developing our communication skills.

My time on the debate team in college has largely accomplished the same purpose. I can credit tournaments with broadening my understanding of the topics we receive thirty minutes to research. In the span of a weekend, I might become better informed as to the status of consumer and national debt, up to date on a couple of international issues which I might not have seen on the morning news, and more well rounded in pop culture knowledge after considering such important resolutions as, “Lady Gaga is this generation’s Madonna” and “Brett Favre should quit.” Clearly, this kind of debate focuses less on teaching participants how to merely win topical arguments. Instead, its primary goal is to teach effective persuasion. As I craft my arguments now, I consider how to win the room, not just the argument.

Seven years after that middle school debate, I recognized for the first time the power of persuasion outside of its educational value while clerking at a local law firm. On a muggy day in the middle of June, a trembling eighteen-year-old boy sat behind the defense table watching his attorney, a partner at our firm, convince the jury that accusations of sexual assault by the boy’s ex-girlfriend amounted to nothing more than a lover’s quarrel. A heated cross examination and a cursory explanation of the girl’s text messaging records that had left me cross-eyed for weeks while preparing the exhibit detailing her phone records sealed the verdict. I sat wedged in between the other two interns for the three-hour ordeal, both of them bored to tears while I sat perched on the edge of my seat. While I recognized that all my past debate experience held value, that day I discovered that defending a person rather than just an idea gave debate new meaning. The success of our firm’s attorney affected his client’s livelihood and reputation much more than the attorney’s personal reputation.

There is something extraordinarily significant about representing those who cannot represent themselves, those who trust someone enough to forfeit their right to speak for themselves to someone who can better speak for them. I desire to pursue a legal education that will prepare me well by continuing to develop my written and verbal skills for more than just rhetorical sparring. I know Boston University School of Law would not only provide me with a distinguished education, but the school’s high ranking faculty with extensive experience in public interest law would also thoroughly prepare me to advocate for others. Additionally, high academic standards coupled with a wide array of opportunities for hands-on experience in the greater Boston area easily convinced me to seek admission at Boston University in hopes of attaining the necessary skills and knowledge to defend those incapable of defending themselves.

How to Apply

SAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENTS, CONT.

Personal Statement: Stanford

Growing up exploring the fascinations of my backyard, I was constantly investigating the unknown intricacies of life around me. While following in my father's footsteps as we quietly picked our way through game trails in search of the perfect perch, I began to develop a genuine curiosity for nature and science. However, it was through "Mom Homework", often much more difficult than the assigned homework, that focused my desire to discover the mysteries of nature through math. As I matured, the stars and galaxies of the great space frontier drew my attention and adventuring imagination by their simple beauty and untold secrets. However, it was not until Mrs. Williams' senior AP chemistry class that I recognized chemistry as the ultimate hands-on application of mathematics and the foundation of my scientific passion.

Following my senior year epiphany, choosing chemistry as a major was, as you might expect, a no-brainer. And though I did not know the specific discipline I wanted to pursue, I was confident in my desire to explore research. During my three summer research internships for NASA, the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany, and Caltech, I investigated projects involving precious metal recovery, pancreatic lipase hydrolysis, and microextractor sample injection protocol development. Though no specific summer project fulfilled my ultimate research dreams, I recognized my love for the process of learning and discovering through creative and systematic research. Finally, through the vibrantly beautiful colors and the simple, yet complex, structure-to-function theories explored in my advanced inorganic chemistry elective, I realized the opportunity for a melding of my desire for research and my interest in the simple beauty of theoretical inorganic chemistry. Through my research opportunities and

chemistry education, I have been academically prepared for graduate school; however, my experiences through Union University's Hundley Center for Academic Enrichment, Chi Omega Fraternity, the Student Member chapter of the American Chemical Society, and researching abroad have provided a well-rounded balance of social and intellectual interactions during my college career while also growing my leadership skills in pursuit of my life's calling.

Therefore, through my uniquely balanced perspective, I turn my gaze upon graduate study at Stanford University. Of the myriad engrossing projects pursued by the Chemistry faculty, Dr. Solomon's investigation of oxidase-facilitating Cu^{II} -phenolate through the coupling of "spectroscopic methods and density functional and ligand field theories" and Dr. Fayer's research on water dynamics in salt solutions and reverse micelles through 2D-IR vibrational echo spectroscopy and polarization-selective IR pump-probe experiments excites my interdisciplinary passions for inorganic, theoretical, and analytical chemistry. In addition to unique project engagement, the opportunity to utilize Stanford's extensive analytical resources, especially the NMR, IR, and Mass Spectrometry facilities, further motivates my pursuit of research at Stanford. Stanford's Department of Chemistry provides the perfect combination of inspiring research opportunities and state-of-the-art analytical facilities that will enable me to continue the legacy of excellent, cutting-edge research through my lifetime's investigation of chemistry.

How to Apply

SAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENTS, CONT.

Personal Statement: University of Tennessee Memphis

I, Ema Fellows, am interested in applying to the University of Tennessee at Memphis for three reasons: (1) to achieve my life-long goal of becoming a professional pharmacist, (2) to fulfill my desire to help my community, and (3) to become the best pharmacist that I can be.

First of all, I realize that my desire to be a pharmacist stems back from my early childhood. It was always a dream of my father for one of his three daughters to be a pharmacist. As a young child I “picked” what I wanted to be when I grew up not knowing how my father’s dream would ultimately become my own. From childhood, until today, my desire to be a pharmacist has remained with me.

Secondly, although my life-long dream to become a professional pharmacist is important, this dream is not the defining factor in my choice to become a pharmacist; rather, it is my love for helping my community coupled with my love for the sciences and my hands-on experience in a pharmacy environment. Being very community service oriented, I enjoy working with and serving people in many different aspects. Working in a pharmacy has given me the fulfillment of serving people that has far exceeded my expectations. Having the opportunity to help people when they are sick, counseling patients about their medications, or even just giving them one-on-one personal attention gives me a sense of servanthood that I strive to accomplish within my community. It is because of this attitude that I have toward helping people that has given me the desire to be a pharmacist. Also, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to engage in science classes as well as work in both a hospital and retail setting of pharmacy. Each rewarding opportunity has enabled me to look at this profession from many different perspectives and commit to becoming a part of it.

Finally, the pharmacy professionals that I have met at the Jackson Madison County General Hospital and at the Jackson Kroger Pharmacy have all inspired me not only to become a professional pharmacist, but also to strive for excellence in the profession. Each, as graduates from the UT school of Pharmacy, have encouraged and given me a wonderful view of your school, and this has greatly affected my decision to look at the UT school of Pharmacy as my number one choice. Additionally, being a native to Tennessee and also the daughter of two alumni of the University of Tennessee of Martin, I have always held the UT system in high regards. Knowing that the UT school of Pharmacy is in the top ten of pharmacy schools and that it has a strong academic reputation, I would like for the UT system to help me achieve my professional goal by accepting me into its Pharmacy program. I have always strived to be the best and with this attitude look for the best institution.

How to Apply

SAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENTS, CONT.

Medical School Personal Statement

It was the top of the ninth and as I strode toward the plate, I remembered my dad's calming words to a once fearful child, "Just keep your eye on the ball and make contact." Though I was much older, a senior in high school playing first base for the Lady Red Devils, the words still resonated. With the pitcher working on her perfect game, I was desperate to make the contact of which my dad spoke. Strike one. I just watched as the ball zipped by. I drew back in anticipation as the pitcher released the second throw and with a loud "thwack" the vibrations radiated through me, only stifled by the "pop" and pain in my knee. That day the pitcher walked away with her no hitter and I was carried off the field. Later in the afternoon at a Vanderbilt Sports Medicine Clinic, an orthopedic physician and the clinic's athletic trainers reassured and intrigued me. Although I had dislocated my knee, they were certain I would suffer no permanent damage and, with a little physical therapy, would be able to return to play. One humid summer night, I was introduced to and had an instant attraction for the field of medicine.

So, a few years later, it was not surprising to me that I choose Athletic Training as a major in college. Inspired by sports medicine and the trainers for whom I interned, I reveled in the study of the human body, learning of injury rehabilitation and prevention while combining sports and medicine – two things I love dearly. This experience challenged me to balance the delicate roles of medical personnel, counselor and friend. Each day, I fielded questions on weight training, therapy routines, and listened intently to the woes of life as a student athlete. I, over time, became adept at assessments, interrelating structure and function and outlining plans for rehabilitation and the ultimate goal of return to play. Eagerly I sought knowledge to better understand the injury process but was frustrated by the narrow scope of sports medicine. Although I acquired tremendous amounts of patience often needed to perform hours of physical therapy and learned about the teamwork needed to supply a continuity of care, athletic training could not provide the systemic understanding of the human body I so desperately desired. Subsequently I began to investigate, in an attempt to better understand the disease process, other systems of the body only briefly discussed during my athletic training classes.

My perspective as a patient led me to choose athletic training and be challenged in a medical atmosphere, but as a junior in college, my scope of medicine broadened. My dad, diagnosed with

kidney failure three years before, finally agreed to examine a transplant as a viable option to dialysis. After just three years of dialyzing, he was much weaker and having to spend such extended amounts of time in a dialysis clinic, found his quality of life to be drastically diminished. With my dad's health in jeopardy, I became frustrated by my limited scope of understanding and continued to question my choice of athletic training as a career. Nevertheless, my junior year was very eventful. I donated a kidney to my dad, improving his life and mine. With his strength returned, he was finally able to again enjoy one of life's simple pleasures, golf. Joy from such a simple activity, once stolen by disease was returned and throughout the course of events for me, brought with it a new perspective. As a family member touched by medicine's ability to affect those we love, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and overflowing with opportunity and intrigue. Ergo, I decided to enroll in classes beyond the athletic training curriculum. Even in my youth, I was aware of what undertaking medical school meant, and so I decided to be challenged by other forms of study and patiently determine if one my devotion could be shifted or two if I truly possessed a lasting fire enkindled only by a career in medicine.

As a senior at Union University, I took a business law class and became fascinated with the enigma of law, its enactment and enforcement, so in the interest of enlightenment, I enrolled as a masters student in the Political Science department at The University of Memphis. Taking mainly classes with a foundation in law, I focused my sights internationally and delved into relations with other state actors. Classes were filled with heated discussions and scholarly arguments. Professors challenged us to think and write critically. I traveled and read ferociously, learning about other legal systems and ways of life. I heard passionate speakers convey the issues of remote regions of the world and inspire audiences to rise up and speak out against injustice. Many symposiums and insightful arguments later, a passion persisted I still could no longer ignore. Even as a student in Political Science, I found health care issues most intriguing and chose to focus my research on organizations devoted to improving the health of stricken societies. While I knew law and international relations could affect individuals globally, medicine's personal element was inescapable and undeniably unique. I wanted, – indeed needed,– more human interaction and as a litmus test, I decided to apply to a paramedic program.

“So let me get this straight, you have decided you would rather be in an ambulance than chasing one?” an instructor questioned during my interview for paramedic school. Everyone in the room chuckled and I simply responded, “Yes sir, that is correct.” My transition to emergency medicine was straightforward and seemed natural, as it was always the most enjoyable portion of my education in athletic training. I was enthralled with all I was being taught – to triage, provide patient

care, to counsel and convince, to make instant decisions that could ultimately decide someone's fate, and to continue to be challenged by every patient interaction. One such interaction proved to be the crux of my journey towards medical school. Mr. Jones had called 911 after experiencing increasing chest pain over an hour. Upon my arrival, Mr. Jones was sitting in his recliner, exhibiting a very textbook appearance of a cardiac event. Immediate interventions were initiated and Mr. Jones was shifted onto the stretcher and wheeled to the back of the ambulance. While transporting, the call proceeded routinely until Mr. Jones, while recounting the events of the day, suddenly stopped talking. The cardiac monitor was now showing ventricular fibrillation. The back of an ambulance, now parked in the middle of Main Street, became a defining moment in Mr. Jones's life, and ultimately in mine. After a quick shock, Mr. Jones was once again talking, seemingly where he left off, but as quickly as it receded, the unsustainable rhythm returned and again I administered a defibrillating shock. At that moment, I wanted to know and fully understand everything that was happening inside Mr. Jones. I was overflowing with questions and ravenous for the knowledge to do more and understand the human body beyond the scope of EMS. With intravenous access obtained and medication administered, the remainder of the ride proceeded uneventful, but a path that began in a batter's box came full circle in the middle of Main Street.

I could no longer deny my desire to become a physician ignited into a blazing inferno that pivotal day on Main Street. I would, after many years of self inquiry, confirm that medicine is a fire burning deeply and continuously in me. Throughout my academic career an interest in medicine was never lacking, but now I possess the most critical components to achieving success, preparation and conviction. I ultimately have no regrets for the scenic route leading me here. The path I have chosen makes me a more unique candidate and will in turn, make me a better physician. From each venture, I gained valuable insight and knowledge aiding me in preparation for my career in medicine. Though I donated a kidney in 2000 and my dad's life improved instantly, it was years later after having decided to pursue other interests, I realized the extent medicine had impacted my family. My mother's emotional distress and father's physical deterioration were stifled by a most unique community of professionals, a group I will be proud to become a part of on graduation day. Even now as a paramedic working in an emergency room, I am reaffirmed each day of my desire and conviction to become a physician. Now more than ever, my father's advice rings true. I have got my eye on the ball and will make contact, only now the ball is medicine and my resolve and dedication will lead me to succeed as a first year medical student and beyond.

How to Apply

LEADERSHIP RÉSUMÉ GUIDELINES

FOCUS ON YOUR RÉSUMÉ ABCs AND 123s...

- **A = Accomplishments**—What activities show tangible results?
- **B = Benefits**—How will you satisfy the needs of your potential graduate program?
- **C = Capabilities**—What can you produce or deliver?

- **1** = A 1-page résumé is ideal.
- **2** = A 2-page résumé is necessary when your experience is comprehensive.
- **3** = A 3-point G.P.A. or higher should be listed.

- Your **résumé should differentiate you from the crowd** by selling the benefits you have to offer.

- Your **profile may be stated or bulleted** in your résumé as well as in your cover letter.

- Your résumé should look like a **published document**, on high-quality neutral colored paper.

- Do not include your grade point average unless it is **3.0 or above**. If your GPA in your major is higher, list it.

- Ask a **Vocatio Center professional** to critique your résumé and make the appropriate improvements.

How to Apply

LEADERSHIP RÉSUMÉ CHECKLIST

- Always tailor your résumé to the job you are seeking!
- Never use a template. If you have, select the text. Go the table menu→Convert→Table to text.
- No more than 2 pages.
- Balance pages (1 full or 2 full) and be consistent with formatting throughout.

Name:

- Bold, 24 pt
- No blank white space at top
- Use same font as headings
- At least 8-10 pts larger than headings

Headings:

- 2-4 pts larger than body text (14-16 pt)
- Same font as Name

Body Text:

- Use a font with feet. (Garamond, Palatino, Times New Roman)
- 10-12 point

Objective/Profile:

- Profile: who you are
 - Power adjectives to describe you
- Objective: what you want to do
 - Seeking a....
- Example:
 - “Adaptable and approachable professional who enjoys serving the public. Passionate about the field of Social Work with a desire to effect positive change in the lives of others. A fast learner who listens well and communicates effectively. Seeking a challenging graduate assistantship in a people-focused environment. Patient, respectful, and productive.”

Education:

- Expected graduation date (Month and year)
- List GPA if 3.0 or above
- List major/minor GPA if 3.0 or above

Professional Experience/Employment:

- For dated items, list the most recent first.
Check for consistency in formatting work experience.
 - Possible format: Job title (*italics*), Company name (**bold**), City, State, Dates of Employment
- Do not list partial years of experience. If less than one year, leave off months. List year only.
- Italicize bullet points for job duties (3-5 key duties)
- Include quantitative and qualitative data

Leadership & Community Service

- Does not have to be dated.

Reference Page

- 4-6 references (List 4 for part-time and 6 for full-time positions.)
- Copy header from résumé. Create a heading called “References.” Should match other résumé headings in font and size.
- List name, job title, organization, phone, e-mail for each reference.
- Notify your references and ask permission to use them.
- Include a good selection of faculty members, co-workers, former supervisors, and character references on your list.

JANE B. DOE

1037 S Forest Oak, Henderson, KY 42420 270.860.8055 j.doe@hotmail.com

Profile

Self-motivated leader who is driven to excel. Articulate communicator (verbal and written) with a strong desire to seek justice. Well organized, compassionate, and hard working.

Education

Union University – *B.A., History and English Major* **GPA: 4.0** Jackson, TN
May 2011

- Provost Scholarship and Debate Team Scholarship
- President’s List and Who’s Who Among American College Students
- Member of Alpha Chi, Sigma Tau Delta, and Phi Alpha Theta Honors Societies

Leadership & Community Service

Union University, Jackson, Tennessee

Senior Class President (2010-2011): Drafted and presented 2 resolutions per month for Student Senate, conducted monthly meetings for 15-person class council, organized class events and service projects, facilitated communication between classmates and administration for senior class gift, participated in Room in the Inn program which provides shelter for homeless men during the winter months, and volunteered at Forest Cove Nursing Home

Debate Team Captain (2009-2010): Communicated tournament details and scholarship requirements to team, planned team building events, conducted officer and team meetings, addressed discipline issues when necessary, and volunteered at Denmark Elementary School

Sophomore and Junior Class Secretary (2008-2009): Kept detailed notes at bi-monthly Student Senates, bi-monthly Student Government staff meetings, and weekly class council meetings, aided in event and service project planning, volunteered at Forest Cove Nursing Home and Women’s Care Center, and tutored for the GED at RIFA

Centri-Kid Camps, Georgetown, KY

Bible Study Leader (Summer 2010): Conducted Bible Studies for 20+ children daily, led an afternoon activity twice daily, and managed stage once daily

Travel

Germany (Winter 2010): 10-day exchange trip to Braunschweig, Germany, lived with and built relationships with German college students, learned to navigate public transportation system alone

Brazil (Summer 2009): 10-day mission trip to small village in Northern Brazil, learned necessary Portuguese to admit 60+ patients daily to free medical clinic

Related Work Experience

King, Deep and Branaman, Attorneys at Law, Henderson, KY

Clerk (2009 – 2010)

Allowed to conference privately with collection defendants, researched up to 20 mortgage recertifications daily, copied and filed up to 30 court documents daily, reviewed and summarized depositions, observed and aided a team of 9 attorneys in at least 15 trials in bankruptcy, civil, criminal, domestic violence, and probate courts

Other Work Experience

Ohio Valley Financial Group – Henderson, KY

Administrative Assistant to CEO (Temporary, 2008)

Transcribed dictation, composed up to 15 business letters and memos weekly, aided in previous executive’s probate by scheduling appraisals, sitting in on conference calls, and evaluating property contracts, produced annual Departmental Operating Plans, new succession plan, board meeting presentations, and monthly management reports

1050 Union University Dr. • Box 2061 • Jackson, TN, 38305
(731) 555-5555 • j.spelling2007@yahoo.com

Jack Spelling

Profile

Hard-working, problem-solver with an extensive background in the field of *economics*. *Persuasive* communicator, especially with respect to *writing* coupled with a strong *dedication to excellence* through analysis and a *competitive edge*. *Highly motivated* with a positive moral character.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Economics with a minor in **Mathematics**, May 2011. **GPA: 3.719.**

Professional Experience

Financial Analyst

Financial Risk Management LLC, Tuscaloosa AL, 2010.

Engaged in *data mining*, drafted *executive summaries*, conducted *research* concerning *industry practices/hedging strategies of market comparables*, worked with *Microsoft Excel and Screenflow*. Developed online course training modules.

Revision Assistant

Introduction to Derivatives and Risk Management, 8th Ed., 2009-2010.

Performed chapter, table of contents, glossary, and aesthetic edits. Fleshed out and expanded undeveloped text as needed. Wrote select end of chapter questions and solution sets.

Mathematics/Economics Tutor

The Hundley Center for Academic Resources, 2009-Present.

Tutor *Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Algebra, Fundamental Concepts, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Quantitative Methods, Statistics*. Learned to better assist students in grasping various mathematical and economic concepts. Assisted well over 50 students in improving their academic standing.

Leadership Experience

Editor of the Stall Street Journal, Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), 2009-Present.

Research, write, and edit the Stall Street Journal a publication with an audience of approximately 4,000. *Director* of advertiser relationships, and *manager* of marketing.

Life Group Leader, 2009.

Assisted freshmen students in making a positive transition from high school to college. Available as a volunteer source of information.

Leadership Experience (continued)

Phi Beta Lambda- Active member, 2009-Present. Union University's business fraternity.

Kappa Mu Epsilon- Active member, 2009-Present. Union University's mathematics fraternity.

Honors/Awards

Provost Scholarship - (3/4 Tuition, 2007-Present).

Won via "Scholars of Excellence" competition, Spring 2007.

Golf Scholarship - (1/4 Tuition, 2007-2009).

Active member of the men's golf team; 2008 NAIA Transouth Champions.

President's List: Spring 2009, Fall 2009. GPA of 4.0.

Dean's List: Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Fall 2008. GPA greater than 3.5.

Other Experiences

Lifeguard, Union University Wellness Services, Jackson, TN, 2007-2008. Certification as Lifeguard and in CPR/First Aid.

Camp Counselor, Winshape Camps, Rome, GA, Summer 2009. Mentor for 9-10 year old males. Developed team building and conflict resolution skills.

Volunteer Experience

Regional Inter-Faith Association: (RIFA) 2007 – 2009. Worked to serve and build strong relationships with the homeless of Jackson through serving meals, cleaning facility for residents, and holding meaningful conversations.

Doulos Ministries Mentorship Program: 2010 – Present. Volunteer as a mentor to struggling middle school students who speak English as a second language.

Mission Jackson: Volunteer to spend time building positive relationships with inner-city youth, ages pre-k – high school.

Global Opportunities: (Go) Trip to Braunschweig, Germany, 2010.

Dan Yung

Address: UU 662 * 1050 Union University Drive * Jackson, TN 38305

Cell: (731) 555-5555 * **Email:** d.yung@yahoo.com

Profile & Objective

An adaptive, passionate and personable individual looking to use his education in communication arts to responsibly further the mission and goals of the organization or company he makes the investment to join. Comfortable working within multicultural environments, with fluent language skills in English and Korean. Extensive exposure to diverse cultures. Teachable, loyal and honest.

Education

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts with an Emphasis in Journalism, May 2009

GPA: 3.51

Major GPA: 3.91

Minor: English

UNION UNIVERSITY, Jackson, TN

Professional Work Experience

Financial Representative Intern, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, Spring 2009

Provide financial security for individuals, their businesses and families.

Certification: Licensed by State of Tennessee Department of Commerce in arena of Life, Accident and Health.

School Newspaper Staff, Cardinal & Cream, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2008-Present

News Editor (Fall 2008-Present).

Assistant Arts & Entertainment Editor (Spring 2008).

Residence Advisor, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2007-Present

Promote high living standards of residents, while operating as a liaison between the students and the residence director.

Entrusted with the confidentiality, management and redemptive discipline of residents.

Media Intern, International Mission Board, Central Asia, Summer 2008

A writer, photographer and videographer who worked to put together a media package to mobilize prayer for an area or people group in Central Asia where there is no current Christian witness.

Highlight: Gold in ADDY Awards for Best of Student Division, 2009

Summer Staff Counselor, Pine Cove Christian Youth Camps, Tyler, TX, Summer 2008

Employed as a counselor and ropes course instructor to middle school students for seven weeks. Charged with being creative, flexible, energetic and motivational.

Business Intern, GP&E Co., South Korea, Winter 2006-2007

Worked in the main office building in Taejon, South Korea as a Korean/English translator and business intern. Accompanied sales manager on business trips.

Student Ministry Intern, Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson, TN, 2005-2007

Worked to serve and disciple youth from seventh to twelfth grade with emphasis on middle school. Planned, organized and executed several youth camps, retreats and events.

Leadership Experience/Awards

- **Lambda Chi Alpha**, Men's Fraternity, 2005-Present
- **Preview Day Student Panel**, Student Representative for Residence/Greek-Life, 2006-2009
- **Rising Star**, Spring 2009
- **President's List**, Fall 2008
- **Senior Class Council**, Fall 2008
- **International Freshman Orientation Leader**, Fall 2007

Volunteer Services

- **Team Romany Mission**, Zimnicea, Romania, Summer 2007
- **Upward Soccer Coach**, Jackson, TN, 2005-2007

Ima Law

1050 Union University Dr. Box 430 Jackson, TN 38305
Cell: 314.555.5555 | Email: i.law@gmail.com

Educational Background

*Union University, Jackson, TN * Bachelor of Social Work * GPA 3.67*

Profile

Compassionate, responsible, and motivated individual seeking to assist vulnerable populations. Driven to serve, encourage, and empower clients. Creative, passionate, adaptable individual prepared to work wholeheartedly.

Related Experience

Intern, Exchange Club Carl Perkins Center, Jackson, TN, 2011-Present

Attend staffing meetings, befriend 4 at-risk children, **observe** weekly visitations with a social worker, **assist** 2 various support groups, **maintain** client information, and **develop** documentation.

Student Worker, Wellness Center Union University, Jackson, TN, 2009-Present

Assist and **serve** 30 customers per shift with workout equipment; **answer** questions regarding fitness center; **maintain** cleanliness of facilities.

Camp Recreation Counselor, Centrifuge Camps, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2009 & 2010 (Summer)

Organization of 12 daily recreational activities; **participated** in team building exercises; **supervised** weekly 700 adults and youth; **coordinated** and **planned** Mega Relay for 5000 camp participants; **implemented** emergency action plan development.

ESL Tutor, Pope Elementary School, Jackson, TN, 2007-2009

Worked individually with 6 elementary second language students; **facilitated** individualized lesson planning; **promoted** language development with each child.

Leadership & Community Service

Student Activities Council, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2007-Present

An organization that provides campus-wide events in order to promote unity among students; Student Activities Council serves by: **creating**, **planning**, **coordinating** and **implementing** functions for Union University students; participate in **development** of large events such as: Variety Show where 2,000 individuals are invited to participate/attend; **conduct** 12 campus-wide events per year.

Life Groups, Union University, Jackson, TN, 2009

Initiated and **maintained** relationships with 16 new freshmen; **established** weekly meetings with co-leader; **created** specific activities to assist in student development; **installed** weekly one-on-one discussions with female students; **communicated** regularly with female LIFE Groupers; **generated** a semester long Bible study.

Youth Leader, West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson, TN, 2008-2009

Provided support and **encouragement** for 15 freshman high school girls; attended and **supervised** weekly worship service activities; **facilitated** Bible study; **formulated** and **led** group discussion.

Technological Skills

Windows | Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint | Internet/E-mail

Academic Achievements

- Member of Phi Alpha: National Honor Society for Social Work Students
- Alumni Leadership & Academic Scholarships; Church & Convention Ministry Scholarship

How to Apply

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

If the graduate program to which you are applying is requiring an interview for admission, you will want to successfully market yourself to the interview committee. Below you will find an article on interviewing tips to assist in this process. You may also visit the Vocatio Center for Life Calling and Career to receive additional handouts on commonly asked questions and proper interviewing etiquette to assist you in your interviewing process.

Graduate [School] Admission: Tips for a Great Interview

By www.petersons.com⁶

“Much like the undergraduate application process, there probably will not be any interview requirements for graduate school admission (though interviews are required by most medical schools and some business schools). However, this does not mean you cannot schedule an interview if you really want the opportunity to sell yourself.

If you think an interview will sway the graduate admission team of the school you long to attend, by all means call the school and request one! [There is] a good chance your request will be granted.

Graduate school admissions: Take the professional approach to interviews

Required or not, an interview for graduate school admissions resembles a professional interview for a job. If you know how to [interview effectively], you will be that much more appealing to the graduate admission committee. Make the most of this opportunity and leave a great impression by following some simple advice:

- Prior to interviewing, get to know the professors at the school you are considering. If the school is far away, find out who the [key faculty] are, make some phone calls, and get your name out there.
- Do your homework on the program [for which] you are interviewing so you can respond to and ask questions intelligently.
- Write your personal essay before you have your interview – it will help you respond to issues that may come up.
- Prepare like you would for a job interview and be ready to discuss your professional goals, areas of interest, and motivation for graduate study.
- Be prepared to answer questions in a way that demonstrates how you solve problems and articulate your ideas.
- Keep in mind that interviewers are probably more interested in your character than how much you know.
- Ask questions that matter to you and give the interviewer insight into your personality and priorities. Do not ask questions that can be answered in the school’s literature.
- Be sure you are dressed properly. That means dressing as if you are going to a professional interview. [Business professional attire is required.]
- Present yourself as positively as possible.

⁶ Graduate Admission: Tips for a Great Interview. <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/graduate-admission-tips-interview.aspx>.

How to Apply

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Graduate [School] Admission: Tips for a Great Interview, Cont.

Graduate school admissions: A final word on interviews

“Interviews are generally not part of the graduate school application process, though they are often associated with the graduate school requirements for medical and business schools. Even if an interview is not required, it can be a perfect opportunity to ‘sell’ yourself to the school, and stand out from the pack.

Remember – most of the time, the people interviewing you are more interested in hearing how you think, rather than what you think. Controversial questions or hypothetical questions may be tossed your way. Do not stray too far from what you know and remember what it is they are trying to draw out, and you will do great!”

Standardized Testing Information

Union University's Testing Services offer the MAT and LSAT. The GRE, GMAT, and MCAT are not offered at Union and must be taken at alternative testing sites; those testing sites closest to Union and how to register for these tests are listed. Below, you will find information for each test, an explanation of which academic areas require each standardized test and, for tests offered at Union, pertinent testing information to prepare yourself to take these assessments.

To learn more about testing and Testing Services at Union, contact Mrs. Cindy Shirley, Director for Prior Learning and Testing, by phone at 731-661-5487 or 731-661-5309 or by e-mail at cshirley@uu.edu. Testing Services is located in the Center for Continuing & Professional Studies building located at 1938 Emporium Drive in Jackson.

GRE (GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION)

Educational Testing Service-GRE

PO Box 6000

Princeton, NJ 08541

1-609-771-7670 or 1-866-473-4373

<http://www.ets.org/gre>

Per Peterson's website, the GRE is a: "Standardized entrance exam used by many graduate schools. Your results indicate how likely you are to succeed in graduate-level studies. The GRE exam is generally administered by computer, but you have the option of taking the test on paper if you live in an area where computer administration is unavailable."⁷

Per www.ets.org/gre, the GRE Revised is composed of the following three sections:

- **Verbal Reasoning** — Measures your ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it, analyze relationships among component parts of sentences and recognize relationships among words and concepts.
- **Quantitative Reasoning** — Measures problem-solving ability, focusing on basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis.
- **Analytical Writing** — Measures critical thinking and analytical writing skills, specifically your ability to articulate and support complex ideas clearly and effectively.⁸

Testing Centers/Test Dates for GRE

University of Tennessee at Martin (52.0 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes)

- To learn more about taking the GRE test at UTM, please visit <http://www.utm.edu/departments/success/tests/gre.php>
- Register for the General Revised Test here: http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register

⁷ <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/gre-test-overview.aspx>. Accessed 3/28/11.

⁸ http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about. Accessed 8/25/11.

Standardized Testing Information

GMAT (GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION TEST)

PearsonVUE

Attn: GMAT Program

PO Box 581907, Minneapolis, MN 55458

800-717-GMAT (4628) or 952-681-3680.

Fax: 952-681-3681

www.mba.com

Email: GMATCandidateServicesAmerica@pearson.com

The GMAT is available year-round and on demand, which offers test takers greater flexibility in scheduling. Available time slots change continuously based on capacity and ongoing registration. You will find out which times are available at your chosen test center when you register to take the exam.

Per the official GMAT website:

The GMAT exam measures verbal, mathematical, and analytical writing skills that you have developed in your education and work. It does NOT measure your knowledge of business, your job skills, specific content in your undergraduate or first university course work, your abilities in any other specific subject area, or subjective qualities, such as motivation, creativity, and interpersonal skills.⁹

Testing Centers/Test Dates for GMAT

University of Tennessee at Martin (52.0 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes)

- There are no set dates for the GMAT test at Martin. You must schedule your exam at <http://www.mba.com/the-gmat/schedule-a-gmat-appointment.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.mba.com/the-gmat/answers-to-frequently-asked-questions.aspx#about5>. Accessed 4/25/11.

Standardized Testing Information

LSAT (LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST)

Law School Admission Council
662 Penn Street, Newtown, PA 18940
215-968-1001
www.lsac.org

Per Peterson's website:

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a standardized test required for admission into law schools approved by the American Bar Association. The LSAT test uses three types of questions to measure your skills in critical reading, verbal reasoning, and analytical thinking. The LSAT has four sections that are scored. Each 35-minute section is made up entirely of multiple-choice questions.¹⁰

LSAT Testing Dates at Union University

- Registration for the LSAT exam may be completed online at <http://www.lsac.org/>. To request a paper registration form or register by telephone, contact LSAC directly between the hours of 8:30 AM and 7:00 PM ET at 215-968-1001.
- Testing is offered typically on the first Monday in June and the first Saturday in February, October, and December. To find specific test dates for 2011-2013, visit <http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/test-dates-deadlines.asp> and under "Other Important Resources," locate and download the "Future Test Dates" PDF.

Alternate Testing Centers/Test Dates for LSAT

University of Tennessee at Martin (52.0 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes)

- The student must contact the university directly to schedule a set time to take the test.
- Register for your exam online at <http://www.lsac.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/lSAT-test-structure-content.aspx>. Accessed on 3/30/11.

Standardized Testing Information

MAT (MILLER ANALOGIES TEST)

Pearson

19500 Bulverde Road

San Antonio, TX 78259

Phone: 800.627.7271

E-mail: clinicalcustomersupport@pearson.com

Website: [http://www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-](http://www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-US/Site/Community/PostSecondary/Products/MAT/Subpages/MATHome.htm)

[US/Site/Community/PostSecondary/Products/MAT/Subpages/MATHome.htm](http://www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-US/Site/Community/PostSecondary/Products/MAT/Subpages/MATHome.htm)

Per Pearson's website, the MAT is a:

High-level mental ability test requiring the solution of problems stated as analogies. Performance on the MAT is designed to reflect candidates' analytical thinking, an ability that is critical for success in both graduate school and professional life. Through analogies with content from various academic subjects, MAT scores help graduate schools identify candidates whose knowledge and abilities go beyond mere memorizing and repeating information.¹¹

Many schools accept MAT test scores in lieu of GRE test scores, but you will want to look at the admission requirements of the specific graduate programs in which you are interested to verify MAT scores are accepted.

MAT Testing at Union University

As of March 2010 the MAT exam at Union University is administered as a computerized exam. Scores are calculated immediately upon completion of the exam. Official student score reports will be received, however, via US Mail two to three weeks following the test administration.

The deadline to register to take an MAT exam is midnight prior to the testing date. An MAT exam cannot be registered for on the day of the exam. Registration is limited to 8 examinees per scheduled exam date. Please bring a current photo I.D. with you when arrive to take your exam.

MAT exams are 60-minute timed exams. Please allow at least 2 hours to take an MAT exam. This includes time required for student check-in and actual testing time. MAT exams are administered in the Testing Center, which is located in Room #129 in the Center for Continuing Studies located at 1938 Emporium Drive.

The MAT Exam fee is \$75.00. The testing fee is payable at the time of testing by check made out to Union University or cash (exact change). Or the fee can be paid by credit card at the time of registration.

¹¹ <http://www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-US/Site/Community/PostSecondary/Products/MAT/Subpages/MATHome.htm>, Accessed 3/24/2011

Standardized Testing Information

MAT (MILLER ANALOGIES TEST), CONT.

MAT Testing at Union University, Cont.

To cancel a scheduled MAT exam contact Testing Services at 731-661-5309 or by e-mail at cshirley@uu.edu. There is a 2-day (work day Monday - Friday) minimum requirement to cancel an exam. If the 2 day (work day Monday-Friday) cancellation requirement is not met and the student does not show up to take the exam for which they have registered, the student will be responsible to pay a Test Administration Fee in the amount of \$25.00.

Alternate Testing Centers/Test Dates for MAT

Bethel University (40.5 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 53 minutes)

- Scheduled by appointment only
- Preliminary score available immediately upon completion
- You will be required to present a valid photo ID
- Testing Sites
 - Bethel University Jackson Campus (Computer-based) (1 mile from Union; Driving time: approximately 4 minutes)
 - Phone Number to Make Appointment: 731-352-6363
 - Bethel University McKenzie Campus (Computer-based) (40.5 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 53 minutes)
 - Phone Number to Make Appointment: 731-352-6363
 - Bethel University Memphis Campus (Computer-based) (75.4 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 19 minutes)
 - Phone Number to Make Appointment: 615-329-9391
 - E-mail Contact to Make Appointment: phillipm@bethelu.edu

Freed-Hardeman University (23.9 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 39 minutes)

- The Center for Academic Services administers the MAT by individual appointment.
- Call 731-989-6060 to schedule a test.
- Written and computer-based tests are available. A preliminary score report is available immediately at the conclusion of the computer-based test.
- Written exams are mailed to the company for scoring.
- Official scores are usually returned in two to three weeks.
- One hour is allowed for this test.

Standardized Testing Information

MCAT (MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST)

Association of American Medical Colleges
2450 N. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037
202-828-0690
E-mail: mcataaamc.org,
Website: www.aamc.org/student/mcat

Per Peterson's website:

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) assesses mastery of basic scientific concepts, problem solving, and critical thinking, as well as general writing skills. The skills tested are those identified by medical professionals as essential for success in medical school and as a doctor.

The MCAT test is broken into four sections: Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, and the Writing Sample. The information below will help you determine what to focus your study on when completing MCAT preparation.¹²

Alternate Testing Centers/Test Dates for MCAT

University of Martin (52.0 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes)

- The exam is offered on standardized test dates, which can be found via a PDF, "2011 MCAT Exam Schedule for the United States and Canada," at <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/reserving/>
- Register online at <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/reserving/>

¹² <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/mcat-test-content-scoring.aspx>. Accessed 3/29/11.

Standardized Testing Information

PCAT (PHARMACY COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST)

Pearson

19500 Bulverde Road

San Antonio, TX 78259

Phone: 800.627.7271

E-mail: clinicalcustomersupport@pearson.com

Website: <http://www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-US/site/Community/PostSecondary/Products/pcat/pcathome.htm>

Per Peterson's website:

The PCAT is an exam developed by PsychCorp, a brand of Pearson. The PCAT is a specialized test that helps identify qualified applicants to pharmacy colleges. It measures general academic ability and scientific knowledge necessary for the commencement of pharmaceutical education. The PCAT is constructed specifically for colleges of pharmacy.

The PCAT consists of 240 multiple-choice items and two Writing topics. Candidates are given four hours to complete the test (plus administrative time for instructions and time for a short rest break about halfway through the test).

Alternate Testing Centers/Test Dates for PCAT

Pearson Professional Center (75.3 miles from Union; Driving time: approximately 1 hour and 19 minutes)

Notes on Registration

- Register early, as seating is on a first-come, first-served basis for scheduling at a Pearson VUE Test Center.
- Please note there are two deadlines. Meeting the "Register and Schedule By" deadline means that you will likely receive your preferred testing date, time, and location. The "Late Registration and Schedule By" deadline will result in additional fees and no assurances that you will receive your preferred testing date, time, and location.
- Requests for accommodations may take up to 60 days to process, so we strongly suggest that you register and submit all required documentation before the "Register and Schedule By" deadline prior to your desired testing window (dates within a given testing month). Please note that you cannot schedule your test with a Pearson VUE Test Center until this paperwork is received and approved.
- If you decide not to show up for a PCAT exam that you have registered for and scheduled, you need to cancel your seat at Pearson VUE (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/pcat>) and cancel your registration on the PCAT site (<http://tpc-etesting.com/pcat/>) by the cancellation deadline in order to receive a refund. If you were approved for a special accommodation, you will need to call Pearson VUE Accommodations at 1-800-466-0450 to cancel your seat. Please note that your absence will not be reported to any schools and will not count toward your five attempts.

Standardized Testing Information

PCAT (PHARMACY COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST), CONT.

Alternate Testing Centers/Test Dates for PCAT, Cont.

Notes on Registration

- Know which recipients you want your PCAT scores sent to before registering for the PCAT.
- Choose a testing window that ensures that your transcripts will be received before the pharmacy program's registration deadline.
- If you want to receive your scores at a different address, a change in address can only be made before the late registration deadline for your testing window.
- Please note that you can only register and schedule for one test date per testing window. If you would like to test more than once during the current testing cycle (2011-12), you need to register and schedule for different testing windows.
- Once registration is completed, you will not be able to reschedule to a different testing window.

Financial Aid

You have been accepted! Now you have to determine who, from the different schools you have applied, is offering you the best financial aid package. There are three forms of financial aid typically awarded, and they are 1) Grants/scholarships (do not require repayment), 2) on-campus employment, and 3) loans (require repayment). A large percentage of students have to finance their education with loans.

Below, you will find some helpful articles on these different types of financial aid to assist you in determining how you will fund graduate school. These will also help in determining the best program that you can afford.

Q & A WITH A FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

By Megan O'Leary ¹³

“We spoke with the financial aid offices at Emporia State University and Towson University to give you some inside information on financial aid for graduate students.

Q: ‘Does your institution offer campus scholarships?’

A: ‘There are scholarships for every student, but they are offered by various departments on campus. When searching for institutional scholarships, double check to see if you will be eligible as a graduate student. . .

Finally, be sure to check your institution's financial aid website for more details about new graduate school scholarships and application deadlines.

Q: ‘Can you explain the Maryland Higher Education Commission?’

Because Towson University is located in Maryland, graduate students who are residents of Maryland have an advantage with Maryland's Higher Education Commission. These residential students can be awarded scholarships and graduate school grants based on need and merit and sometimes will have degree or major requirements. These awards are given by the state; it is then the institutions' job to verify that the student meets all of the requirements and post that money to the student's bill. Check with the state where your school is located. There is a good chance that you can receive additional financial aid based on where you live and where you will be attending school.

13 “Q&A with a Financial Aid Office” By Megan O'Leary. www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/towson_university_financial_aid_q_a.html. Accessed March 2, 2011.

Financial Aid

Q & A WITH A FINANCIAL AID OFFICE, CONT.

Q: 'Would you recommend that students defer undergraduate loans during graduate school?'

A: 'Federal Loans are deferred automatically with the Direct Loan Program. Students need to be enrolled in courses to equal at least half-time status. Additionally, students must be taking courses in a degree-granting program at their institution. Check with your institution to make sure that you are fully admitted to a degree-granting program to be eligible for the Direct Loan Program.'

Q: 'Would you recommend graduate students to complete the FASFA form even if they have an assistantship that will pay tuition?'

A: 'It is recommended to still complete the FASFA for books and living expenses. The results of the FAFSA will tell you what the government will provide for you as a student.'

Q: 'Can graduate students apply for the Stafford loan as they may have during their undergraduate work?'

A: 'Direct Stafford Loans come through the results of a FASFA. Students will not have to seek out a loan (for example, through their bank); [it is] federally funded through the school. This simply means that the government will send the school the money to cover the student's bill, and then it will be the graduate student's responsibility to pay it back six months following completion of the degree or if the student stops going to school at least half time.' "

Financil Aid

“GET PAID TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL:

Graduate fellowships and assistantships benefit students financially and academically”

By Jessica Pupillo ¹⁴

“Instead of paying your way through graduate school, there are several ways you can work for free and reduce tuition and living expenses.

Allison Lau will not owe a penny to the University of Oregon when she graduates next year with her doctorate in counseling psychology.

Selected as a graduate teaching fellow, Lau paid her tuition fees by teaching multicultural leadership and life skills classes to undergrads. She also received health insurance benefits and a generous monthly stipend.

Commonly called assistantships, most schools hire graduate students just like Allison to teach classes or assist with faculty research projects. The school pays your graduate school tuition and fees, and some will even pay a monthly stipend and provide health insurance. In addition to providing financial aid for graduate school, assistantships also provide valuable experience.

Allison says her experience as a teaching assistant helped her when applying for internships. ‘My fellowship was integral in my clinical training as a psychologist,’ she says. ‘Since my positions involved teaching, therapy, and outreach to students, I could totally rack up hours for applying to pre-doctoral internship sites, which are partly based on how much experience I have like this.’

Competition for graduate assistantships in your academic department can be stiff, so you will want to start researching opportunities early by checking with your school's financial aid office and your academic department.

Similar to research assistant positions, graduate fellowships also pay at least part of your tuition and often provide a monthly stipend to support your research. Most fellowships require you to fill out a lengthy application and submit a research proposal.

Popular organizations that provide graduate fellowships include the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program and the National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship. However, you can search for additional fellowships that might fund your research and education at Grants Net.”

¹⁴ “Get Paid to Go to Graduate School: Graduate fellowships and assistantships benefit students financially and academically” By Jessica Pupillo. <http://www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/assistantships.html>. Accessed April 19, 2011

Financial Aid

“GOVERNMENT-FUNDED GRADUATE LOANS: *Information on Perkins, Stafford and PLUS Loans for Graduate Students*”

By Jessica Pupillo¹⁵

“With more than \$60 billion earmarked for student loans, the federal government is committed to helping you attend graduate school. Perkins, Stafford, and PLUS loans are all available to graduate students.

Perkins Student Loans

Perkins Loans are offered through the school you attend. These loans are available to both full-time and part-time graduate students and are repaid directly to the school. A Perkins Loan can cover up to \$6,000 a year with an interest rate of 5 percent. Recipients of Perkins Loans are selected based on financial need; if you received a Pell grant as an undergraduate student, you will likely be offered a Perkins Loan.¹⁶

Graduate Stafford Loans

You can qualify for a Stafford Loan for up to \$18,500 a year without demonstrating financial need. If you have financial need, the government will pay the interest on up to \$8,500 of the loan while you are in graduate school, during the six months after you leave school, and if you defer your loan. Interest rates on Stafford Loans are fixed at 6.8 percent.¹⁷

There are two types of Stafford Loans: a direct loan and a Federal Family Education Loan. Direct Stafford Loans are paid by the federal government and repaid directly to the government. If you receive a FFEL Loan, your loan money will come from a private institution, and you will repay your student loan to that same institution. You will, however, have the opportunity to select your lender.

PLUS Student Loans

If you need additional financial aid for graduate school, you may qualify for the new Graduate PLUS Loan. This new federal loan is only available to students who can pass a credit check. Direct PLUS Loans have a locked interest rate of 7.9 percent, and FFEL PLUS Loans have a fixed interest rate of 8.5 percent.¹⁸

To apply for any of these federal loans, you must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. You can now complete the application and manage your student financial aid online. Other education loans are available from private financial institutions; however, they generally have a variable interest rate.”

¹⁵ Government-Funded Graduate Loans Information on Perkins, Stafford and PLUS Loans for Graduate Students By Jessica Pupillo. www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/govt_loans.html. Accessed March 2, 2011.

¹⁶ All interest rates listed are for student loans disbursed beginning July 1, 2006. Interest rates may change for loans disbursed during the 2011-2012 school year.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Financial Aid

“A GUIDE TO STATE-FUNDED MONEY FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL: *Locate financial aid for graduate school offered by your state*”

By Christina Couch¹⁹

“Getting into graduate school is only half the battle. Paying for it is the other. Students looking for money for graduate school should first tap the resources in their own backyard. Because the state and the federal government calculate financial need differently, prospective graduate students may be eligible for financial aid from their individual state even if they do not qualify for a check from [the federal government]. Check out what types of graduate financial aid could be available in your state.

Grants, Scholarships, and Fellowships

No matter what you call it, if you [are awarded] one of these, you will get free money for graduate school. While some states primarily offer need-based financial aid for graduate school, others—including Ohio, Kansas, and Arkansas—offer merit-based financial aid to prospective students with a proven undergraduate record. The budget for state-funded graduate school scholarships varies tremendously from state to state, and many states include restrictions such as specific programs of study, required research or travel, or awards may be reserved for minority students only. Some states such as New York, New Jersey, and Oklahoma also offer memorial scholarships to prospective graduate students directly affected by national tragedies.

Low-Interest Loans

Do your homework and you could wind up with a lower interest rate than you would get if you took out federal loans for graduate students. In an effort to curb local worker shortages, many states offer low or no-interest graduate school loans as well as loan forgiveness programs for students in certain professions, with teaching, nursing, and health care being the most common. In exchange for getting a break on graduate school, students who take advantage of these programs are expected to work a certain number of years within the state upon matriculation.

Military Benefits

In addition to financial aid awards, a few states also offer funding for military personnel as well as spouses and dependents of military personnel. While some states restrict aid only to those who have served or are currently in active duty, others consider reservists eligible as well.

For more information on what types of financial aid for graduate school are offered in your state, contact your local board of higher education.

¹⁹ A Guide to State-Funded Money For Graduate School Locate Financial Aid for Graduate School Offered by Your State. By Christina Couch. www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/grad_school_state_funding.html. Accessed March 2, 2011.

Financial Aid

APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

By Megan O'Leary²⁰

“Deciding to take on the challenge of pursuing a higher degree is a feat in itself, but applying for graduate scholarships can sometimes carry a whole new meaning of pressure. Do not allow this process to deter you from graduate school. The best advice is to begin early; make sure that you have a listing of the schools and each of their requirements together. This will help you through the process of applying for graduate school scholarships.

First, think about the important people who have surrounded you during your undergraduate experience. Feel free to compile a list of faculty members, administrators, and old employers or supervisors who have seen you in action. Remember, these people should know a lot about who you are as a person. They will be writing about how you performed in various situations and even about your professional career goals and how your work is compared to your peers. These people will be the greatest resources you may have for graduate school letters of recommendation. Be sure to give them ample time to write you a letter because they may want to spend a lot of time on it. It is also very helpful to provide your writers with a current résumé. Remember, they may have seen your work in the classroom or on the job, but they may not know all of the co-curricular activities that you participate in.

Determining how to pay for school after you may have already taken out student loans to pay for your undergraduate degree is complicated and may become stressful. But do not allow it; there are many options for graduate students. Often, institutions will send you financial aid information upon acceptance to a program. You can take out graduate student loans for living expenses or for tuition just like you may have during your undergraduate work. However, if you are still concerned with the payment look into graduate fellowships, assistantships and teaching assistant positions. Frequently, if you are hired for any of these positions, the department will finance your education and give you a paycheck. If you are still worried, know that there are many graduate scholarships available depending on the institution.

The best advice for all of these priorities during the scholarship application process is being on time. Make sure that with your listing of all graduate schools that you also know all of the deadlines for applying for scholarships. A good tip is to create your own deadlines about three weeks before the actual deadline. This will help you mail all of the forms on time. After all of this paper work is complete, let the waiting game begin!”

²⁰ Applying for Graduate Scholarships. By Megan O'Leary. www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/scholarship_application_process_ga_positions.html Accessed March 2, 2011.

Financial Aid

TOP THREE SCHOLARSHIP MISTAKES MADE BY GRADUATE STUDENTS — AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

By Michelle Taute²¹

“Everyone wants to land a big scholarship to help them finance their graduate school education, but [there is] an art to the process. Make the most of your search for graduate school scholarships by avoiding these common missteps.

Mistake #1: Not starting soon enough.

At one time or another, everyone procrastinates, but when it comes to scholarships, this tendency can cost you money.

‘I think the biggest mistake is that students wait too long,’ says Mary Watkins, director of recruitment and retention for the graduate school at the University of Cincinnati.

She suggests undergrads start their search for scholarships during their junior year. If you are in the work force, you should plan on beginning the search process 18 months before you want to walk back into the classroom. This approach makes it less likely that you will miss crucial deadlines. Start right now with a listing of scholarships at www.students.gov.

Mistake #2: Avoiding your homework.

There are no short cuts when it comes to finding potential scholarship opportunities for graduate school.

‘You are going to have to go to the Internet and search,’ Watkins says. ‘There's not one definitive source.’

Instead of wishing for a magic bullet, start looking at financial aid opportunities that match your life and interests. Check into scholarships awarded by area of study, where you live, and even the church you attend. Worried about scams? Go to the Federal Trade Commission's Scholarship Scams site for advice.

Mistake #3: Overlooking obvious resources.

As Watkins points out, most graduate schools award financial aid to students in the form of scholarships, fellowships, and teaching or research assistantships.

‘You should be contacting and communicating with your program of interest at different schools,’ Watkins says. ‘Let them know you are interested in all forms of financial aid.’ Many of these awards are made by a selection committee rather than an application process, so you need to be in close touch with a program to get your hat in the ring.

²¹ Top Three Scholarship Mistakes Made by Graduate Students — and How to Avoid Them. By Michelle Taute. www.gradview.com/articles/financialaid/the_top_three_scholarship_mistakes.html. Accessed March 2, 2011.

Graduate School Process Checklist

Organization is key to making sure the graduate school application process goes smoothly. Below, you find a set of checklists you may use to keep track of your work as you apply to each school of interest.

CHECKLIST

Sample Checklist

Here is a sample checklist to give you an idea of how to use this resource.

	Princeton	Stanford	Union
App. Deadline	December 1	March 15	April 1
Date Sent	11.7.2011	12.28.2010	3.1.2011
App. Received	Y	Y	Y
References Received	11/21	4/4	3/29
Interview Date	N	Y	N
Interview Location (Campus/phone)	N/A	1.15.11; phone (they will call!)	N/A
Deposit deadline	May 1	April 15	April 30
Financial Aid Deadline	June 15	June 15	June 30
Visit date	March 27	Need to set	April 2
Contacts	John Templeton (Assistant Dean for Grad. Admissions)	Dr. Steele (graduate); Dr. Kay; G. Atkins (adm)	Christy Wyatt (Coordinator for M.A.E.d.)

Graduate School Process Checklist

CHECKLIST

The same information from the sample above is provided for you below in four tables with enough space for 12 of your top choices. Just fill it out according to the institutions you have chosen to send an application. Remember, this is a guide to keep you on track and reduce stress.

School Name			
Application Deadline			
Date App. Sent			
App. Received			
References Received			
Interview Date			
Interview Location (Campus/phone)			
Deposit deadline			
Financial Aid Deadline			
Campus Visit Date			
Comments			
Contact			

Graduate School Process Checklist

CHECKLIST

School Name			
Application Deadline			
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App. Received			
References Received			
Interview Date			
Interview Location (Campus/phone)			
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Financial Aid Deadline			
Campus Visit Date			
Comments			
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Graduate School Process Checklist

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