The Only Two Reasons to Go to Graduate School (you must have both)

- Career aspirations
- Desire to learn

Grad school is where these two things intersect.

1. How to Apply

Statement of Purpose

☐ 1-3 pages of “Why”
☐ Include: Motivations, Qualifications, Career Goals, Why you are a fit for a certain program
☐ Write at least 5 drafts and then keep editing. This is the most important part of your application process, the ONE time the admissions committee will get to hear from YOU.
☐ Have at least 3 people read and comment on your writing. The best readers are the ones who know you well and have good writing skills.

Letter of Recommendations

☐ Have at least 3–4 recommenders. At least two need to be academic.
☐ A practitioner can also recommend if you are headed to that kind of field.
☐ Identify recommenders EARLY! This is very important.
  o Give lots of advanced notice. Professors will begin to observe you and interact with you differently.
  o Provide your recommenders with your resume, transcript, draft personal statement, graded assignments etc. to jog their memory about your academic work and preparation.
  o Send a handwritten thank you note and keep them posted of the results.

GRE Scores (standardized tests)

☐ Prepare for exam:
  o Give it up to 2-4 months. Treat it like a marathon. Cramming does not help.
  o Take free prep tests from the test maker.
  o Find out how you learn well - in a classroom, with a buddy, at a bookstore, etc.
  o Go to the bookstore. Randomly pick a few test prep books. Take it to the seating area, spend 15 minutes per book and open each book in the middle to get a sense of which one is best for you. Buy that one and stick with it.

Curriculum Vitae / Résumé

☐ Keep your resume updated regularly.
☐ Custom design your resume for the specific program.
☐ Evaluate how academically intensive the program is and determine whether application will also need a CV. Research other scholars’ vitae to identify the best formats.
**Writing Sample** (This will not be required in all programs)
- Take time to recover former samples (papers, articles, etc.) Make a selection of the best and always revise carefully.
- Edit them according to the specifications of your program. Highlight papers/samples that address the focus of the kind of work you will do.

**Transcripts**
- Review/Troubleshoot for errors and retakes. Scrutinize carefully.
- Order via Banweb.
- Order official transcripts from all other schools too.

**Application Fees**
- Be prepared for costs. Fees can range from $30 - $100 per application.
- Consider GRE test fee, fees for prep class and fees for sending scores to multiple institutions.

2. **Action Steps**
- Gather information on at least 10-15 programs/schools that might interest you. Create specific metrics on the strengths, weaknesses and value of each program.
- Create a portfolio of your work. Be sure to include writing samples and evidence of relevant academic projects.
- Talk to individuals who have studied what you want to study and/or earned the degree you are considering. Visit schools if possible, speak with faculty and current graduate students.
- Approach faculty for advice and planning for letters of recommendation.
- Create a workable timeline and progressively complete your goals.
- Research funding available from different sources.

3. **Advice**
- Attend workshops offered by Advising and Career Services. Time and location are on our website.
- Contact professors/alums/mentors/others who can support you across the university.
- Don’t take it personally if you don’t get into the program. There are always options.
- Speak to ACS staff and your faculty mentors to develop other plans.
- Ask for any feedback they can offer to strengthen your application for the following year.

4. **Resources**
- **Learning Express Library** is a free resource for you. Choose **College Center** and create an account to access practice test. [http://www.learningexpresshub.com/learningexpresslibrary](http://www.learningexpresshub.com/learningexpresslibrary)
- **GMAT prep books** at our library. [http://tinyurl.com/p9m3mqv](http://tinyurl.com/p9m3mqv)
- **GRE prep books** at our library. [http://tinyurl.com/q4gpqre](http://tinyurl.com/q4gpqre)
- **Applying to graduate school books** at our library. [http://tinyurl.com/k8qg6eg](http://tinyurl.com/k8qg6eg)
- **Useful Sites**: petersons.com, princetonreview.com, ets.org, cgsnet.org, gradschools.com

Adopted from Dr. Vikas Gumbhir’s Grad School Presentation