Apply to Graduate & Professional Schools

A guide to Help Undergraduates Learn about Getting into Grad School

Guide will include information on:

- Identifying programs that match your interest
- The application process
- How to write a personal statement
- How to secure letters of recommendation
- Preparing for admissions tests
- Financing post-baccalaureate studies
- Interviews
- What if you are not accepted?
INTRODUCTION

Is Graduate School the Right Choice for You?
Given the time and financial costs required to complete a graduate degree, you need to give serious consideration as to whether or not this is the right path for you to take after finishing your undergraduate degree. This is a serious investment of your time, money, and life; which you cannot reverse, so do not take this matter lightly.

Think about where your desire to go to graduate school is stemming from. Are you interested in the degree because it will allow you to advance within your chosen field? Or, is your desire based on the following problematic reasons: fear of entering the workforce, pressure from significant others, a preference to stay in the university environment, or a lack of anything better to do?

Attending a graduate school should not be viewed as a plan in and of itself. Rather, it should be regarded as a step to carry you forward with a career objective. Once you have examined why you want to go to graduate school, and feel comfortable with your reasons, then you are ready to move on with the application process.

Some Quick Statistical Facts
- Any given graduate school department (or program) receives approximately 300 to 1,500 applications per year.
- Out of the number of applications received, the department typically accepts anywhere between 3 to 10 doctoral students.
- About 10% of all applications received by a department consist of applicants with 4.0 GPAs.
- The average graduation rate for Ph.D. candidates is 40%.

What this means for you, (the applicant), is that applying and attending graduate school is a highly competitive process. Graduate departments want to make sure that you will be a good investment and that they will receive a ROI (return on their investment). In other words, you need to prove to the department that you are/will be a serious graduate student and that you will be a productive, contributing to society and academia with your work. By admitting you into their program, they are investing their time, money, and reputation in you; and therefore, expect you to produce research, publish papers, and become a reputable scholar that can contribute to the school’s status. There are several things you can do to prove to the department you are applying to that you possess all the desirable qualities of a serious graduate student. These things include doing research as an undergraduate student, having internship experience, participating in community service, and maintaining a competitive GPA. We will further elaborate on these points as you read through this packet.

Deciding Between the Master’s and the Ph.D.

Which degree is right for you?
It depends on your interests, field of study, motivation, and career goals. Read more about your field and consult faculty advisors to learn more about which option will fit your career goals. Consider:
- What types of jobs do master’s and doctoral degree holders have? Do they differ? How?
- How much will each degree cost? How much will you earn after obtaining each degree? Is the outcome worth the cost? (Visit http://online.onetcenter.org/ to explore career options and see job analyses)
- Are you interested enough to pursue many years of schooling?
- Will earning a doctoral degree offer a substantial benefit in your employment and advancement opportunities?

The Master’s Degree
A master’s degree generally takes 2 to 3 years of full-time study to complete. Some programs are academically focused while others prepare students to continue on to doctoral study. This is the difference between terminal and transitional degrees. Terminal degrees are degrees such as the Master’s or the Doctorate in which that is the highest degree you are awarded after completing the program. Transitional degrees are more often awarded in doctoral programs, and they allow you to obtain a Master’s degree as you work towards your doctorate. Typical Master’s graduate programs consists of coursework and exams, and possibly field work, internship, or other applied experience. Also, some programs will require a written thesis and/or a comprehensive exam. However, a new option that several graduate programs are adopting is the “capstone project”, which will supplement the written thesis component of the Master’s degree. In a capstone project, students demonstrate their ability to apply what they learned in a practical setting.
The value of the Master’s degree varies by career field. In some fields, such as business, a Master’s (the M.B.A.), is the norm and necessity for advancement, while others do not require advanced degrees for career advancement. In some cases such as social work, a master’s degree may hold advantages over a doctoral degree. A Master’s degree can be more cost effective over the Ph.D., given the time and funds needed to earn the degree.

And finally, an important aspect which differentiates the Master’s program from the doctoral program is the financial aid awarded to students. Most programs do not offer as much aid to Master’s students as they do to doctoral students, thus students often pay most, if not all of their tuition themselves. However, there are solutions to this issue, which will be explained in the Financial Aid section of this packet.

**The Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.)**

A doctoral degree is the most advanced graduate degree you can obtain. It typically takes 5-12 years to finish, depending on the program, and other variables of your life. The typical Ph.D. program consists of 2-3 years of coursework, satisfactory performance on comprehensive exams (known as “comps”) and the completion of a significant piece of original research (the dissertation). The dissertation is an independent research project designed to uncover new knowledge in your field and must be of publishable quality. It often takes five or more years for a doctoral candidate to complete all of the requirements for their degree. However, some fields like applied psychology, also require an internship of one year or more.

Most people who wish to receive the Ph.D. are interested in doing research and/or becoming a professor at a university. This degree not only represents high academic and professional accreditation, but it also represents acceptance into a community of scholars and researchers. Earning a doctorate will require extreme personal commitment, motivation, and continuous effort. To be successful in a doctoral program demands more than just good grades and high test scores, but a commitment to your field of study, an ability to think broadly and creatively, and competence in establishing and maintaining productive professional relationships. All of this will come into play when you are working on your dissertation.

If you are unsure about whether you want to apply to Master’s or doctoral programs, you should take the time to think more about what you want out of graduate school, and to research different programs that are of interest to you. Your goal should be to select the educational program that you are most comfortable with, and that serves your unique interests, goals, and values.

**IDENTIFYING PROGRAMS THAT MATCH YOUR INTERESTS & VALUES**

There are a variety of ways to identify programs that match your interests and values. A good starting point is to review directories and internet sites like the ones listed below. Then, it is wise to speak with faculty members, professionals in the field you are considering, or a Resource Advisor at the Social Sciences Academic Resource Center (SSARC) and get their opinions on recommended programs. Once you have identified potential institutions, you will want to contact them to obtain catalogues and application materials. Alternatively, you can come into the SSARC and see if we have any program brochures that may be of interest to you. (Please note, we do not have application materials). Keep in mind that the materials provided by graduate schools are published, in part, for “public relations” purposes. You will need to look beyond the glossy photos to evaluate if the program is right for you.

**Websites to Visit:**

**The Peterson’s Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs**

– This lists degree-granting institutions by areas of interest and contains the information needed to request program information and application materials. You can filter out schools by category, specific field, degree, and location.

www.petersons.com

**Gradschools.com**

– This website lists over 36,000 national and international graduate programs by subject area in an easy to use format. It features links to the homepages of universities from across the United States.

www.gradschools.com

**GradView**

– Created by Hobsons, this website has graduate school programs search capabilities as well as financial aid options, test prep information, and career programs.

www.gradview.com

**All Psychology Schools**

– For psychology majors, this website is a comprehensive online directory of psychology schools, degrees, and careers. You can search for schools by location, degree and/or subject area, compare and research schools, request free information from schools, and explore education options and career paths.

www.allpsychologyschools.com
Investigating University Programs

Evaluating Programs

Once you have identified programs that match your interests, your next step is to evaluate the programs and rank them according to how well they meet your needs. Be sure to use the 3:4:3 ratio when you are ranking your schools. Pick 3 schools that are somewhat of a far reach for you, given your GPA and test scores. Pick 4 schools in which you meet the average statistics of the previous accepted students. Pick 3 schools that are your safety schools in which you far exceed the average GPA and test score of the previously accepted students. Also, use the following list of criteria in deciding which programs provide a good match given your career goals and personal needs.

Program Curriculum

- Do the course descriptions sound interesting?
- What specializations are available?
- Does the curriculum directly support your career goals?
- Does the program focus on theory and research, or does it emphasize the application of knowledge and skill?
- If practicums are required, is there a good variety of practicum sites? And how do they help place students in their respective practicums?

Degree Requirements

- What are the requirements to obtain the degree? (i.e. residency, unit requirements, language requirements, candidacy)
- What kind of examinations must you take?
- Is a thesis or dissertation required?

Faculty

- What is the faculty to student ratio?
- Do faculty members hold degrees from leading institutions?
- What type of special recognition have the faculty members earned (e.g. awards, grants, nobel prizes, etc.)?
- What have they published? (Read up on articles and identify which faculty member and research topic is of interest to you. This will be useful in writing your personal statement.)
- Do the top scholars teach, or are they primarily involved in doing research?
- Is there diversity in both cultural backgrounds and research interests?
- What is the student to teacher ratio?

Program Reputations

- Is the program accredited?
- Is the program well established or is it relatively new?
- Is the program nationally ranked in terms of excellence?

To find out about a program’s accreditation status you can simply ask someone affiliated with the program. Accreditation is particularly important in fields that require licensure. For instance, it is easier to get approval to take the licensure exam for psychologists if you have graduated from a fully accredited program.

Program ranking are provided annually in the US News and World Report. Their rankings are based on different criteria and worthy of comparison. The US News and World Report rankings are available through their website (www.usnews.com).

Cost

- What are the tuition and fees?
- What types of financial aids are available?
- What are the requirements and how do they distribute financial aid to graduate students?
- What are the state requirements for becoming a resident (i.e. how soon can you become a resident to reduce your tuition?)
- Do they have a substantial amount of fellowships and grants? Or do they mostly reward assistantships and work study?
- Consider the cost of living in the area. Is it high or low?
Campus Facilities

- What is the quality of the library, recreation center, and other areas designed for studying or student interaction?
- Is there an adequate number of computer labs?
- How comfortable are the classrooms?
- Are there student services available through offices on campus?
- Is there adequate on-campus housing? If not, is there a housing office that can help locate cost-effective housing?

Career Services

- What type of employment assistance is provided by the program or the university as a whole?
- Are these services only available to current students or are alumni eligible as well?
- With which companies or organizations do graduates tend to find employment?
- How reputable are the alumni?
- Does the university provide recruitment events?

Geographic Location

- Taking into account the weather and social/political climate, can you picture yourself living there for a minimum of two years?
- What employment opportunities are available in the area?
- Is there a public transportation system?
- Is the closest city 20 miles from campus? Or is the campus in the heart of a major city?
- Is there a nightlife on or near the campus?
- How far away is the school from your hometown?

The above list is provided to give you a starting point. What other questions do you need to ask to determine how well a program fits your needs? Once your list of questions is developed, you will want to use multiple sources of information as part of your investigation (e.g. published materials, students enrolled in the program, alumni, faculty, your own personal first-hand experience, etc.). Talking with faculty, students, and alumni will help you compare what you think the program will be like, to how it really is. Generally, the more people you speak with, the better. If you have the opportunity, be sure to visit the school and take a tour of the facilities and sit in on some classes.

If You Are Ready To Apply

After you have completed the necessary research and have compiled a list of schools you would like to apply to, you are ready to start the application process. When starting the application process, be sure to think about polishing your APPLE!

Application
- Performance in class
- Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation
- Exams

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

You should begin the application process at least 18 months in advance of when you want to start a graduate program. Keep in mind that most applications are due between December 1st and January 15th. You will be submitting your application the fall/spring prior to attending. Therefore, if you want to begin graduate school in the fall after you graduate, you should start the application process the spring of your junior year and submit it in the fall of your senior year.

The following timetable lists the tasks that are typical for most application processes. Please note that the timetable represents the ideal timing for completing application tasks. It is not meant to discourage those who are unable to follow this outline

Junior Year

In the Spring:
- Conduct preliminary research of programs
- Develop and prioritize a list of programs you wish to apply to
- Collect information about the required admissions test(s)
- Determine if you can prepare for the admission test(s) on your own or if you will need a test preparation course
- Identify and develop a relationship with (if you have not already done so) appropriate faculty at the graduate school you are considering, who share your research interests
- Think about which professors and professionals you would like to ask for a letter of recommendation from
In the Summer:
- Take the necessary admission test(s) if you are ready, otherwise begin the preparation process to do so
- Request your letters of recommendation. Faculty members will have more time during the summer to accommodate you as opposed to during the school year. Make sure to ask them 4-6 weeks prior to the submission deadline.
- Write for program applications or check to see if they are available online
- Begin writing your application essays/personal statement

**Senior Year**

In the Fall and Winter:
- Take admissions test(s)
- Mail in completed applications
- Complete financial aid forms and apply for relevant scholarships. (Note: Financial aid deadlines are usually earlier than regular application deadlines. Generally, if you want to be considered for aid, your entire application package needs to be submitted by the financial aid deadline.)
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation forwarded to the programs.
- Check with the programs at least two weeks prior to deadlines to be sure your application file is complete. This will give you time to rectify any problems.

In the Spring:
- Visit top choices if possible.
- Contact programs who turn down your application to find out how you could increase your chances if you were to apply again.
- Keep track of acceptances, rejections, and wait lists.

**Application Form**

Be sure you are clear on which applications need to be completed. When seeking admissions to some universities, you will need to complete two application forms, one for admittance to the university’s graduate school and one to the specific program in which you are interested. This is also extremely important if you are applying for a joint degree such as a (JD/MPP – Juris Doctor/Master’s in Public Policy). Often times in applying for a joint degree program, the university will require you to submit an application to the two separate graduate departments. In order for you to be accepted to the joint degree program, you must be accepted into both graduate departments.

Also, should you choose to fill out the hard copy version of application forms, it is best to type out your information. A neatly completed, on-time application will not guarantee admission, but an incomplete sloppy or late application will ensure rejection. Applications for many programs are now available online, and can usually be accessed via university homepages. For a compilation of links to homepages of universities from across the United States, go to [http://isl-garnet.uah.edu/Universities/](http://isl-garnet.uah.edu/Universities/).

**Performance in Class**

In order to be eligible to apply to graduate school, you must have completed your bachelor’s degree. Furthermore, it is recommended that you aim to maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. This does not mean that you cannot apply if you have a lower GPA; however, if you want to remain competitive, then you should maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Be sure to visit the school’s website to find out what the minimum GPA requirement is, and what the average GPA is of the previous year’s accepted applicants. Your GPA will also have some weight in deciding how much financial aid you will be rewarded. Thus, the higher the better.

However, your GPA is not the only thing encompassed in your performance in class. To make yourself an even more competitive applicant, you want to be sure to have completed some kind of research during your time as an undergraduate student. This could mean doing an independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member through the program UROP. Or, this could mean assisting a professor or lecturer with their own research. Not only will this make you appear more competitive, it could also be beneficial in getting a letter of recommendation.

A few other areas you can strive to improve on besides your GPA and doing research to make yourself a more serious...
applicant, is to obtain practical experience, participate in community service, and display leadership skills. In obtaining practical experience, you can choose to do an internship or practicum, or perhaps even obtaining a professional part-time job. You can participate in community service by becoming part of an on-campus organization that does philanthropy work, or you can volunteer in programs on or off campus. In displaying leadership, this could mean taking on leadership roles/responsibilities, or becoming a board member of an organization or club. All of these factors will be weighted into your “performance in class” and are just as equally important as maintaining a high GPA.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Most programs require you to write at least one essay as part of the application process, and this usually pertains to expressing why you are seeking acceptance (i.e., statement of purpose). Detailed advice on how to write an effective application essay can be found at www.rpi.edu/dept/llc/writecenter/web/text/apply.html, which is maintained by the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Writing Center. In general, your statement of purpose will need to prove your interest in and dedication to the program’s area of study, and do so in a way that sounds sincere. Admissions committees prefer essays that reflect a familiarity with the faculty’s research interests and how your own interests relates to the work being done by these faculty members. Note: If you find yourself “stretching the truth” in order to convey interest about a field of study, you need to evaluate why you are applying in the first place.

The personal statement/statement of purpose is a huge component of your application. It is a qualitative way to show your eligibility for graduate school, not quantitative like GRE scores, transcripts, and grades. When writing your personal statement, it is best to start as early as possible. This will allow you to have enough time to think about your topic, the organization of your essay, and to make any and all necessary revisions.

Here are some quick guidelines you should consider following when writing your personal statement:

- If no format is specified in the application, use the default setting of 1000 words (2 pages maximum)
- Be concise (in other words try to write your statement in the minimum amount of pages or words)
- Be concrete (use evidence to back up the statements you make about yourself and your endeavors)
- Be coherent (make sure your essay has a logical flow or outline; i.e., it makes sense chronologically)
- Write in an active voice as opposed to a passive voice. Be sure to emphasize everything from a positive perspective.

What you should keep in mind (by Carla Trujillo, Ph.D.):

- What the admissions committee will read between the lines: motivation, competence, potential as a graduate student.
- You do not want to make excuses, but you can talk about the mistakes you have made as a learning experience.
- If there is something important that happened (poverty, illness, excessive work, etc.) which affected your grades go ahead and state it, but write it affirmatively, that is, in a way that shows your perseverance.
- Make sure everything is linked with continuity and focus.

Things you need to include in your personal statement:

- Personal background
- Classes and solidification of passion (cultural, stats, research methods, etc.)
- Research (on and off campus)
- Practical experience (on and off)
- Leadership (university, local, state, national)
- Community Service
- Short and long-term goals
- Why is the school a good match?

Writing Exercise for Statements of Purpose

By James Culhane, UCI

1. Explain in some detail your interest in the major you wish to pursue. What sort of graduate program are you applying to? How will this program of study further your career goals? What are your career goals? Are you interested in researching and teaching? Why? Explain your interest. Does your career have a community or social goal, as well as a personal one? How did you become interested in this field? Was it through your studies at UCI? Did your personal background influence your choice? Your family? Or the community in which you grew up?

2. What are some of the qualities and skills that make you special? Are you conscientious, dedicated, hardworking, concerned for others, curious, independent, cooperative, and/or creative? Identify which of the following skills most apply to you: research and information gathering; communication; leadership; interpersonal (working well with people); creating and developing; organizing and implementing; working with social (or other) issues; teaching and training.
3. Relate a success story from your life and identify the qualities and skills involved in your achievement. The experience does not need to be glamorous or newsworthy. Ordinary projects or accomplishments can be real achievements. Look for an experience that made you feel proud or good about yourself. What is it that you did? What was your role? What kinds of qualities and skills enabled you to accomplish what you did?

IV. “Fit Section” – This is the only section that varies between each schools’ personal statement essay. Discuss why you chose this particular school. Include 1-2 faculty members at the institution which you hope to work with. Make sure that the faculty’s interests align with your own. Have a concluding statement about why this school and/or program is a good fit for you.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The best recommenders are those who are familiar with your capabilities and who have a high opinion of you. Once you decide to go to graduate or professional school, you should begin cultivating working relationships with faculty or other appropriate professionals (e.g. advisors for student organizations, administrators, doctoral level graduate assistants, internship supervisors, etc.). You can do this by volunteering to assist with research or other projects, taking advantage of opportunities to meet with faculty (e.g. office hours, college socials), participating in student organizations or obtaining experience in your field via an internship or volunteer position.

Do not wait until the last minute to ask for letters of recommendation; your request may be one of many, so you want to provide the recommender with ample time. The recommended time to ask a faculty member for a letter of recommendation is 4-6 weeks before the application deadline. Keep in mind that your application is not considered complete until all of your materials, including recommendations, have been received. When asking for a recommendation, start off by asking if the person feels he/she knows you well enough to write a meaningful or strong letter and watch for any reluctance. You do not want to run the risk of getting a vague or unfavorable recommendation! If you are comfortable with his/her reaction, it is advisable to leave copies of your resume, statement of purpose, transcript(s) and copies of any work you did for them. This will provide them with perspective and refresh their memories about you and your abilities. It is also advisable that you include a list of deadlines and addressed envelopes to each university with a postage stamp on it. Lastly, be sure to send a follow-up thank you note, as well as informing them of the outcome (i.e. offers granted and which program you decide to attend).

Letters of Recommendation Binder:

In asking for a letter of recommendation, it is always a good idea to create a binder comprised of all the information your recommender would need. You may stop by the SSARC for hard copy examples. In a 3-ring binder include the following information:
1. A thank you letter to your recommender (Thank you for endorsing my candidacy for …)
2. Matrix of Schools (Create a table listing all the graduate schools you are applying to, the specific program, the deadline of the application, the deadline of when you want to receive the letter of recommendation, and how to submit the letter of recommendation)
3. Resume
4. Bragg sheet (listing all of your awards and accomplishments that are not listed on your resume)
5. Unofficial copy of your transcript
6. Personal Statement
7. Tabs of each graduate program you are applying to (in each tab include a printout of information about the school, the mission statement of the program, application instructions, and any other information you feel would be necessary to know)
8. Include stamped and addressed envelopes for your recommender if a school requires to submit your letters of recommendation by mail

EXAMINATIONS

The majority of programs require you to take a standardized graduate admissions test as part of the application process. The commonly required tests are the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), and the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). Some schools may or may not require you to take a standardized graduate admissions test. However, some schools may require you to take a subject test in addition to the GRE. Be sure to check the testing requirements for each school you are interested in.

Preparing for Admissions Tests

If you have the time, motivation, and self-discipline or generally do well on standardized tests, then a do-it-yourself approach will probably be sufficient preparation. There are a variety of preparation materials available, which you can find at your general book store. Popular titles include those published by Barons, Arco, Kaplan, and Princeton Review. Study software for the GRE, LSAT, MCAT, and GMAT can also be downloaded for a fee at www.test-preps.com. However, if you are looking for free test preparation material, at the SSARC we provide free Princeton Review preparation books for the GRE, LSAT, and GMAT.

Each test vendor provides free handbooks containing sample tests and basic testing strategies to all who register to take admissions test. Free practice tests are also available at their websites or through Princeton Review:

GRE: www.gre.org
LSAT: www.lsat.org
GMAT: www.gmat.org
MCAT: www.aamc.org/stuappls/admiss/mcat
Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com

Another option when preparing for an admission test is to take a commercial test review course if you can afford the fee (usually around $1,000). When considering this alternative, it is a good idea to speak with people who have taken the course you are considering. The largest vendors are KAPLAN (www.kaplan.com) and Princeton Review (www.princetonreview.com), both of whom can provide references for you to contact and evaluate their courses. The following questions are useful when considering each course:

* How much actual classroom time does the course provide?
* Does it include questions from real tests?
* Does it cover tricks and strategies for specific tests as well as content-oriented materials?
* Are scholarships or discounts available?
* Are the courses taught by instructors that have actual relevant test taking experiences?
* How well did the instructors score on the relevant test?

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

International applicants are required to submit TOEFL scores to demonstrate their English proficiency. Information on testing procedures and locations can be found at www.toefl.org.
FINANCING POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Accounting for tuition and living expenses, the cost per year can range from $10,000 for a state resident attending a public university to over $30,000 at some private universities. To add to the financial strain, once you are admitted to a program, you can expect your tuition and living expenses to increase yearly. Fortunately, there are many types of financial assistance available to graduate students.

Fellowship and Grants
- Granted on the basis of academic achievement, do not have to be repaid
- Normally include a stipend for living expenses and tuition
- Generally go to students that departments most want to attract

Assistantships
- These can either be a Teaching Assistantship (TA), a Research Assistantship (RA), or Project Assistantship (PA)
- Usually involve working 10-20 hours per week in a teaching or research capacity in exchange for a monthly salary and/or tuition reduction
- Requests for information on teaching or research assistantships should be made directly to the academic departments of interest to you
- Some institutions have Resident Assistantships that provide a monthly salary and/or room and board in exchange for working in undergraduate resident halls. To inquire about these positions, contact the school’s direct of residence halls.

Educational Loans
- About 75% of all graduate financial aid is in the form of loans.
- In addition to federally sponsored loan programs (e.g. Stafford Student Loans), there are many private lenders to choose from.
- Contact the institution's financial aid office for information about these loan programs.

Upon acceptance into a program, you may be offered a financial aid package, which may consist a combination of forms of assistance as described above. *Note: The deadline to accept a school’s offer of acceptance and the financial aid package is midnight on April 15th. Do not let a school push you to accept or reject their offer earlier than this deadline. You want to be sure to take enough time to weigh your options.

Also, it is highly recommended that you secure funding beyond which the program offers you. For instance, you may be able to reduce loan debts by securing need-based or merit-based scholarships. The following books and internet sites are helpful resources for locating additional sources of financial assistance.

Books About Funding:

Web Resources About Funding:
- www.fastweb.com
- www.Finaid.org
- www.collegescholarships.com

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are typical of the medical school application process, but some business schools and graduate programs also require them. They are rarely used by law school admissions committees. Regardless of the program, interviews are usually reserved for those who have made the first cut and are used to assess interpersonal skills. The key to interviewing effectively is preparation: reading “how-to” materials and role playing with someone whose feedback you value. Much of the advice on employment interviews applies to admissions interviews.
as well. Build your interview skills by reading: *Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed* by Anthony Medley or *Knock 'Em Dead* by Martin Yate. For more information about medical school interviews, visit [www.interviewfeedback.com](http://www.interviewfeedback.com).

The purpose of this website is to demystify the medical school interview process and it includes sample questions and true stories about applicant experiences.

**WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT ACCEPTED?**

Do not be hard on yourself! You need to remember that, on the whole, more people are turned down than accepted to graduate and professional programs. If you are applying to programs which are particularly competitive, you need to prepare for the possibility that you may not be accepted.

It is important to find out why your application was turned down. Ask for specifics. Do you need more work or volunteer experience? Stronger letters of recommendation? A higher GPA? A more focused personal statement? Better admissions test scores? If you use the 3-4-3 ratio mentioned earlier in this packet, it should increase your chances of getting into at least one graduate program. A part of getting accepted is being able to pick and choose the programs you apply to wisely. Make sure to set realistic goals for yourself. Do not feel discouraged if you do not get accepted, remember you can always apply again.