Graduate School
Application materials and research

- Start researching programs and schools early, up to a year before application cycles start
- Use the schools’ websites, research boards and gradschools.com to locate programs of interest
- Identify schools and programs where your interests and career goals will align
- Spend time reviewing mission statements and descriptions of the departments you would like to join
- Ask current faculty or industry professionals for advice or suggestions for recommended programs
- Read and review research by faculty in your area of study and faculty bios on the school webpage
- Learn about locations and campus culture
- Review in and out of state admission numbers and competitiveness
- Identify schools that have admissions standards that met your credentials but also apply to competitive programs of interest
- Determine financial aid and scholarship opportunities that will offset costs
- Apply for graduate assistantships or teaching assistantships that will help you build related experience
- Schedule a campus visit and tour departments of interest
- Meet with faculty members or the department head to ask details about the program
- Review required courses and plan of study for the program
- Learn what application materials will be needed
- Identify application deadlines and begin organizing materials early
- Use campus resources including career services to review your personal statement or letter of intent
- Request 3-5 people to serve as references and share guidelines with letter writers
- Prepare for admissions tests and schedule your exam with the testing center
- Use test prep books and classes to increase your test scores
- Practice for admissions interviews and review sample interview questions
- Prioritize your school choices and take time to make decisions about who has the best fit for your career goals

Oklahoma State University
Arts & Science Career Services
Andrea Skimbo, andrea.skimbo@okstate.edu
Chelsey Armstrong, Chelsey.armstrong@okstate.edu
Schedule an appointment at cascareers.okstate.edu
www.hireOSUgrads.com
Finding and Researching Graduate Programs

Research schools and programs by visiting school websites, admission pages and using [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com). Compare similar information in order to decide if you want to attend and/or apply to the program. Fill in the chart to compare four programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Type of Degree</th>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>Location City/State</th>
<th>Size of student body</th>
<th>Previous year’s class profile</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>In state/ out of state</th>
<th>Financial aid</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Faculty Research</th>
<th>TA/RA positions</th>
<th>Number of credits</th>
<th>Student Research options</th>
<th>Thesis requirements</th>
<th>Application Deadlines</th>
<th>Required Test</th>
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Application Materials
Determine what components are required for your application and deadlines by visiting admission sections on the school’s website.

Application
- Typically submitted online
- Some applications allow “Save for later” options so you can complete it in stages
- Call admission offices to ask questions or clarify any details if you are unsure
- Follow directions closely and be aware of deadlines
- Expect variations in application processes and materials that will differ by program

Test scores (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT)
- You must schedule your exams at a test taking facility 2-6 months in advance
- Allow 20-31 days between test dates to retake the exams if needed
- Research school expectations for scores and determine entering class averages
- Prepare for tests months in advance using test prep materials
- Purchase a test prep book or enroll in test prep course to expand test material knowledge
- Take several practice tests

References
- Most programs require 3-5 references, use academic and professional references
- Ask your contacts if they would be willing to be a positive reference for you
- Provide reference 2-3 weeks of notice to complete letters and provide full instructions to letter writers
- Letters are typically submitted online or mailed in sealed envelopes to admissions offices

Transcripts
- Request official transcripts from the registrar’s office

Personal Statement/Letter of Intent
- Identify the character count, word count or length limits
- You may be asked to answer a specific question or address a prompt
- Document may consist of one essay or multiple essays, follow all directions provided by the college or admissions instructions
- Plan ahead, begin preparing information and documents well before deadlines
- Visit career services for help developing and editing the document

Interviews
- Some programs include interviews as part of the selection process
- Review example interview questions and develop response strategies
- Schedule a mock interview and gain interview prep advice from career services
- Purchase a full suit and business professional attire
- Notify instructors if interview dates will conflict with class attendance
Building Content for Your Personal Statement

1. Why do you want to attend this program/college/university?
   - What interests you about this specific program?
   - How do you fit within this educational program?
   - Why did you decide to apply here?
   - What do you know about the faculty, research, facilities, location, etc. that interests you?
   - What do you know about the school’s reputation/awards/rankings?

2. What have you done to prepare for the program? (1-3 paragraphs)
   - Academic preparation
     - What classes or academic projects have you completed that relate to the program?
     - What concepts/lesson/skills have you learned in your classes that apply to this program?
     - How have faculty relationships assisted your knowledge base?
     - What research skills or experience do you have?
     - What honors/awards have you received that note your abilities?
   - Related Experience
     - Describe any of your related experiences
     - Connect your related jobs or internships to skills needed for this program
     - What technical skills have you developed?
     - What job shadowing/observing have you done to help you understand this field
   - Outside classroom experience
     - What skills or talents do you have that would complement this area of study?
     - What clubs or professional organizations helped you build skills?
     - What experience do you have with leadership?
     - How has campus/community involvement been beneficial to your development?
     - How has your volunteer experience helped prepare you?
     - What relationships have you built that connect to this area of study?

3. Career goals
   - What are your short and long term career goals
   - What type of positions would be ideal?
   - What type of work/area of focus most interest you and why?
   - What will success look like for you?
   - How will this program help you meet your professional or career goals?

Editing and developing your document:
- Plan to edit your document at least six times
- Work with career services to edit and polish your document
- Allow mentors and industry professionals review your document
- Use the writing center for proofreading and grammatical checks