



SOS Presents:

# How To Get Into Graduate School



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# Agenda

- The Graduate School Experience
- Finding A Graduate School
- The Application Process
- Typical Application Timeline
- Funding Opportunities
- Q & A Panel with Guest Speakers

# The Graduate School Experience

How is graduate school different from undergrad?

- Many more seminar-type courses, especially at the advanced level
- More papers, projects, presentations, but fewer tests
- More researched-oriented
- Increased specialization - narrowing of subject matter studied

# The Graduate School Experience

How is graduate school different from undergrad?

- Much more independent work - self-discipline a necessity
- Less short-term feedback about how you're doing academically
- Increased pressure to maintain high grades - generally B or higher
- Increased competition from talented students



# The Graduate School Experience

Also consider the following options:

- Direct entry Ph.D.
- Thesis-based vs course-based
- Length of program

# Finding A Graduate School

## Internet Searches

- Use a variety of key words
- Careful! Results rely on frequency matches, not program quality

## Advisors, Mentors, Current Graduate Students

- Great resource for graduate program information

## Professional Associations

- Conferences: great for networking, learning about type of research at prospective schools
- Journals: who is doing cutting-edge research?



# Why should you start looking soon?

## To Find Out Important Information:

### Required Classes:

- Some programs require undergraduate courses as prerequisites

### Tests and Cut-off Scores:

- Some programs require a test (e.g. GRE, GMAT)
- Cut-off scores narrow down applicant pool for interviews

# Typical Application Materials

- Application Form
- Letters of Recommendation (usually two)
- Personal Statement
- Transcripts
- Standardized Test Scores (GRE, GMAT)
- Writing and Portfolio Samples





# The Personal Statement

- Be specific in your goals and intentions
- Write a separate letter for each school
  - Schools may have different essay instructions; follow them carefully!
  - Mention specific details of the school's program



# The Personal Statement

## Typical essay requirements:

- **General Essay:** background, future plans, your reasons for choosing that school, et cetera
- **Research Essay:**
  - your specific research interests
  - questions you have thought about
  - why you are interested in these questions
  - what articles you have read to spark your interest



# The Personal Statement

This is your chance to *sell yourself*.

- Take your time. Write it well.
  - Convince the school they want you as a graduate student
  - You may already be ranked before your interview!



# The Personal Statement

This is your chance to *sell yourself*.

- Ask a professor for feedback.
  - They know the process; they've been there!
  - They may sit on admission committees
    - Will know what details to include for success

# Letters of Recommendation

A STRONG letter should:

- Be from a professor who knows you outside of class:
  - Research practicum, honours thesis, faculty club supervisor, et cetera
- Say more than just about your grades:
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Teamwork
  - Your character



# Letters of Recommendation

Provide for each professor:

1. **Envelopes** typed with addresses for each school
2. Each school's **required forms** (fill out all information)
3. **Instructions** from each school (seal and sign, mail or return to student)
4. Specific **information** to include (about you, the applicant)
5. **Deadlines** (for returning to you or mailing—NOT the application deadline!)



# Sending Applications

- Mail applications should arrive **TWO WEEKS** before the deadline
- Write a CV (curriculum vitae) to include all your experience and awards
- Double and triple check your packages to make sure they're complete
- Call and confirm receipt of your application one week before the deadline

# Expenses

Plan ahead and consider the following costs:

- Transcripts
- Test score reports
  - e.g. GRE: free to send to four schools, ~\$13 for each additional
- Application fees
  - Vary by school, often \$25 and up



# Typical Application Timeline

- **August - September**

- Start browsing through programs guides, web sites and university catalogs
- Meet with faculty members you know to discuss personal statement and possible programs
- Start asking for letters of recommendation

- **October**

- Determine which programs to which you'll apply
- Establish your timeline based on deadlines
- Start writing your personal statement

# Typical Application Timeline

- **November**

- Complete application forms and order transcripts
- Provide your recommending professors with letter of recommendation forms and information

- **December - January**

- Mail applications (even if early; better safe than sorry)
- Don't forget to follow up on receipt of your applications!



# Funding Opportunities

Internal: from the graduate school

External:

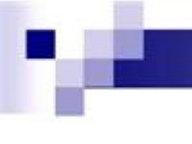
- OGS
- Tri-Council
- Others (HSF Master's, etc.)
- OSAP

# Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program (OGS)

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Academic Year:</b> | 2013-2014                                      |
| <b>Who It's For:</b>  | Graduate students at masters or doctoral level |
| <b>Amount of Aid:</b> | \$5,000 per term up to a maximum of \$15,000   |
| <b>When to apply:</b> | Applications available in October              |

# Tri-Council Awards

- One application per year to one granting agency (NSERC, SSHRC, or CIHR).
- All three offer Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) to top-ranked applicants at each level (master's and doctoral)
- Eligibility:
  - GPA of at least 80% (8.0 or A-) in each of last two years
  - Grades not rounded up



# Heart and Stroke Foundation Master's Studentship Award

- Value: \$36,000
- Deadline: Set by home department
- Eligibility:
  - Canadian citizen or permanent resident
  - Full-time research in cardiovascular or cerebrovascular studies
  - Minimum grade of 80% or A- last two years of studies

# Q & A

**Guest Speaker:**  
Sujanthan Sriskandarajah

- Currently doing PhD in Numerical Approximations in medical imaging.
- Graduated from University of Toronto in Math and Neuroscience and a Masters degree in Pure Math from Western University.





# For More Information:

<https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/PRDR007677.html>

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/>

<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/index-eng.aspx>

[http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/index\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/index_eng.asp)

<http://www.bethune.yorku.ca/sos>