HOW TO GET INTO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Arnold Apostol & Mandy Ramnaraine
AGENDA

- The Graduate School Experience
- Finding a Graduate School
- Application Process
- Typical Application Timeline
- Funding Opportunities
- Guest speakers
- Q & A
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
UNDERGRAD VS GRAD
More seminar-type courses, especially at the advanced level
More papers, projects, presentations, but fewer tests
More research-oriented
Increased specialization - narrowing of subject matter studied
Much more independent work; self-discipline is a necessity
Less short-term feedback about how you’re doing academically
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER</th>
<th>Direct Entry Ph.D.</th>
<th>Thesis Based vs. Course Based</th>
<th>Length of the Program</th>
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FINDING A GRADUATE SCHOOL

5 Ws + H
## WHERE TO

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- **People**
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  - Current Graduate Students
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- **Professional Associations**
  - Websites
  - Conferences
  - Journals
To Find Out Important Information on:

- **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
THE APPLICATION PROCESS

PREPARATION IS KEY
WHAT YOU NEED TO GET

› Application Form
› Letter of recommendations (2-3)
› Personal Statement
› Transcript
› Standardized Test Scores
› Writing and Portfolio Samples
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
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Typical Essay Requirements
  - General Essay: Background, future plans, why this school etc.

- Research Essay
  - Specific research interest
  - Questions in research field
  - Why these questions?
  - Articles you read that spark interest
This is a chance to sell yourself. Take your time and write it well!
Convince the school that they want you as a graduate student
You may already be ranked before your interview
ASK A PROFESSOR FOR FEEDBACK

THEY HAVE BEEN THERE! THEY MAY EVEN BE ON THE COMMITTEES!
A STRONG letter should come from a Professor OUTSIDE of class

Letters show your:

- Problem-solving skills
- How well you collaborate
- Your character
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Provide 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 YOUR 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 completed
- Call and confirm receipt of your application ONE WEEK before the deadline
EXPENSES

- Transcript
- Test scores
- Application fees
August-September

- Browse programs, do basic research
- Meet with faculty members to discuss possible programs
- Start asking for LOR

October

- Determine which programs you will apply to
- Establish a timeline based on deadlines
- Start working on your personal statement
November
- Determine which programs you will apply to
- Establish a timeline based on deadlines
- Start working on your personal statement

December-January
- Mail Applications (even if early)
- Follow up with the schools on receiving the package
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

MAIN POINT: THERE ARE MANY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE
ONTARIO GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

- For: Graduate Students at Masters or Doctoral level
- Amount: $5,000 per session
- GPA requirement: A- (i.e., 80%) minimum
- When to start applying: October
- Please refer to: [http://cou.on.ca/key-issues/education/graduate-education/ogs/](http://cou.on.ca/key-issues/education/graduate-education/ogs/)

1 applicant may be awarded up to 3 sessions with a total of $15,000
One application per year to one granting agency (NSERC, SSHRC, or CIHR).

- NSERC (Natural Sciences & Engineering) see: http://nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/index_eng.asp. They have awards for undergrad, & post-grad students!

- SSHRC (Social Sc & Humanities) see: http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx

- CIHR Health see: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/193.html

All three offer Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) to *hard-working and informed* applicants at each level (master’s and doctoral)

Eligibility:

- GPA of at least 80% (8.0 or A-) in each of last two years of studies
HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION MASTER’S STUDENTSHIP AWARD

- Value: $ 36,000
- Launch: “late June of each year”
- Eligibility:
  - Canadian Citizen
  - Full Time Research in “heart disease and stroke” across the four health research themes (basic biomedical, clinical, health services/systems, and social, cultural, environmental and population health)
  - Minimum grade of 80% or A- in last 2 years of studies
- For more specific information, refer to: [http://www.hsf.ca/research/en/award-administration](http://www.hsf.ca/research/en/award-administration)

1 “The maximum dollar amount is $100K/year for a maximum duration of three years.” This amt. covers equipments, student stipend, etc. See [http://www.hsf.ca/research/sites/default/files/E-FAQ%202019-2020_FINAL.pdf](http://www.hsf.ca/research/sites/default/files/E-FAQ%202019-2020_FINAL.pdf)
Remember OSAP! (If you don’t know, see http://osap.gov.on.ca)

See: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/193.html for Health-topic-related Research


See: http://nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/index_eng.asp. They have awards for undergrad, & postgrad students
GUEST SPEAKERS

- Professor Stephen Connor (Biology)
- Professor Mark Bayfield (Biology)
- Vrati Mehra (MSc Candidate)