Tips on Getting Into Grad School... from someone who has already done it!

NCUWiP
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Penn State University
Many Things to Consider when Applying

- Should not pick a graduate program based on rankings alone
- Does the school offer your specific interest?
- Professor whose research sounds interesting?
- Backup interests?
- Location?
- How do they treat their graduate students?

Applying to a bunch of schools can be expensive → try to be selective
Get Organized!

- Every school has different requirements and deadlines

- Examples: Personal Statement, Research Statement, CV, Letters of Recommendation, Test Scores, Transcripts, Application Costs

- Ultimately, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure everything is turned in on time.
Use Your Resources

• You are surrounded by people who have already gotten in to grad school or are currently applying to grad school!

• At least some of these people will be willing to help you

• Don’t be afraid to ask questions if you get confused.
Tips for the Statement of Purpose

• Don’t be cliché, phony, or dishonest

• Tell a story/write an essay that will be REMEMBERED

• Tailor each essay to the specific school
  – Learn about each school
  – Specific research/professors?
  – Why are you good for the school? Why is the school good for you?

• Don’t just say you are ____, SHOW IT. Highlight your good qualities

• Don’t apologize

• Write, rewrite, and rewrite again
Letters of Recommendation

• This is one of the most important pieces of your application!

• Choose your letter writers carefully

• Make it as easy for them as possible to write you a good letter. It can be helpful to your letter writers to have copies of your CV and your Personal Statement.

• Be appreciative afterward!
Other Tips

• GRE scores are NOT the end all/be all. Doesn’t correlate to future success in Ph.D. programs
  • Still prepare for them!
    → “Schaum’s 3000 Solved Problems in Physics”

• If you don’t do well on GRE’s, find another way to boost your application → UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH!

• Use your networking skills! You never know who will get you a job!
Hope this helped!

If you have any additional questions, you can ask them during Q&A or find me at the conference!