



Welcome to the
**2020 Southern California
Forum for Diversity in
Graduate Education**
Virtual Workshop Series

TODAY'S WEBINAR

How to Select, Apply to, and Prepare for Graduate School

Kathy Redd, Moderator

John Herring

Antonio Knox

Dawn Loyola, Ed.D.

Laura McGeehan

Julio Sosa, M.B.A.

Katherine Van Horn, M.A

Mission of Diversity Forum

Originally established in 1991, the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education seeks to increase diversity in higher education by connecting historically underrepresented students from California colleges and universities to resources within a community that values graduate education and promotes access to opportunities in academia.



General Community Zoom Guidelines

- We value your participation in today's session
- **Respect** each other's virtual boundaries
- **Close other programs/browsers/windows** to maximize video streaming and speed



Chat/Q&A Guidelines

- Chat function will not be active during presentations
- Submit your questions in the **Q&A feature**
- Q&A will be **actively moderated**

*Thank You in advance for helping us to create
a safe, friendly environment via Zoom*



How to Choose a Graduate Program

Laura McGeehan



How to Choose a Graduate Program

1. Consider your career goals when deciding on a Master's or PhD

(Thanks to the Princeton Review)



How to Choose a Graduate Program

2. Divide and Conquer



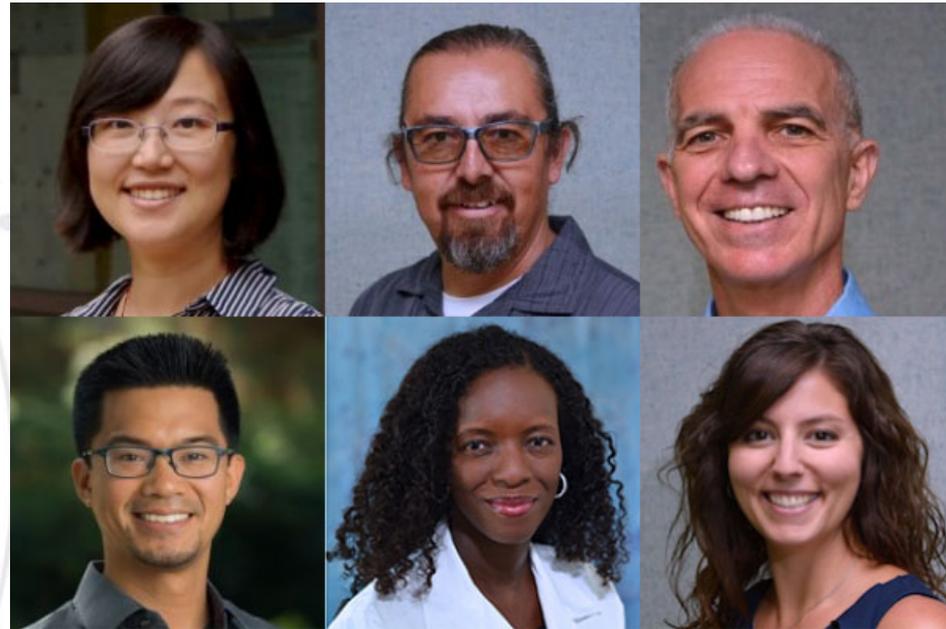
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(Thanks to the Princeton Review)

How to Choose a Graduate Program

3. Network With Faculty

(Thanks to the Princeton Review)



How to Choose a Graduate Program

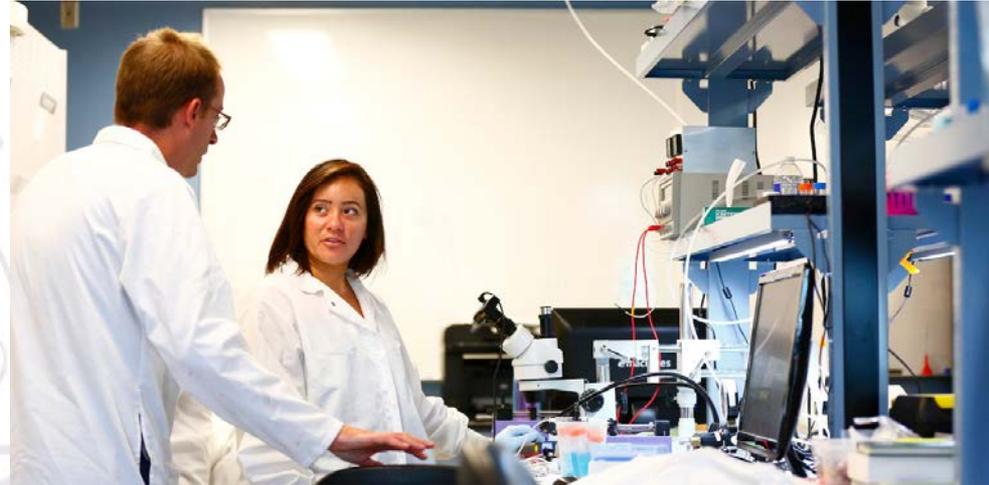
4. Consult Actual Grad Students



(Thanks to the Princeton Review)

How to Choose a Graduate Program

5. Determine the resources and facilities



(Thanks to the Princeton Review)

Addressing Graduate School Finances

Self Assessment and Clarifying Questions for Graduate School's Affordability

Antonio Knox



Financial Readiness

- Beginning the process of looking into financial options that are suitable for you can be daunting.
- Being financially prepared for graduate school is a critical aspect of your readiness to begin.
- The average cost for graduate school can range between \$30,000-\$40,000 per year.
- It's important to understand how your degree will be financed.

Self-Analyzation of Your Finances

The total cost of graduate school does not stop at tuition and fees. Just as the tuition, fees, and cost of living varies for each school, each person's personal life is just as different, and these differences should be considered:

- How much in total out of pocket expenses will I incur?
- Am I currently employed? If so, will I need to quit or reduce my hours?
- What is the total sum of my current bills?
- Will I be commuting or moving on or near campus?
- Does my fellowship cover full tuition and fees?
- Federal loan or private loan?
- What will be my return on investment (ROI)?

Decision Time

Once you have decided to move forward in your pursuit of a graduate degree after considering the cost and affect for you financially personally, now is the time to focus on what questions you should ask the school.

Questions for the School

- Does the school offer any additional fellowships and grants?
- Are there any work study positions available for graduate students? TA opportunities?
- What are all of the conditions of my fellowship?
- What type of private student loans do you offer? Interest rates?



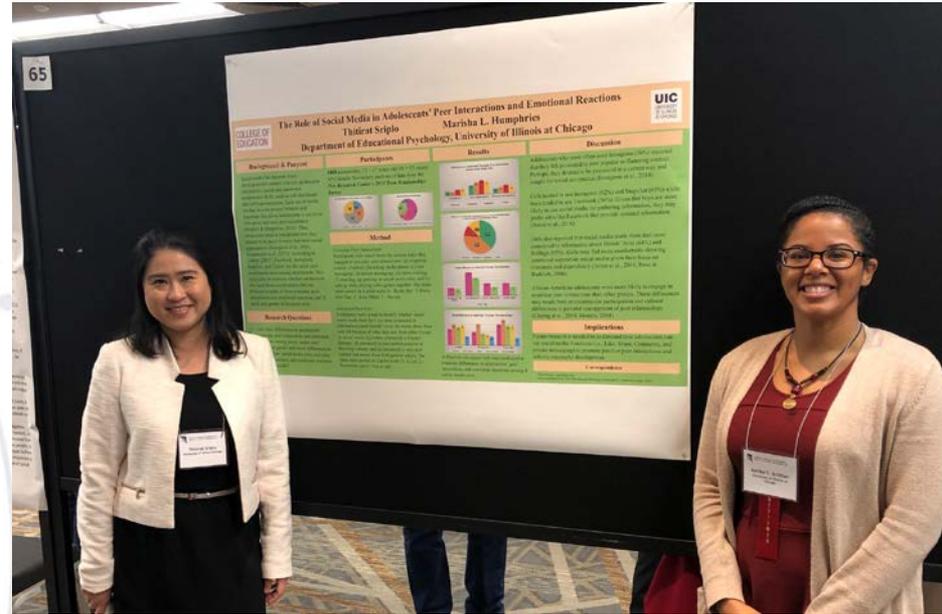
How to Research Potential Major Professors at a Target Institution

Laura McGeehan



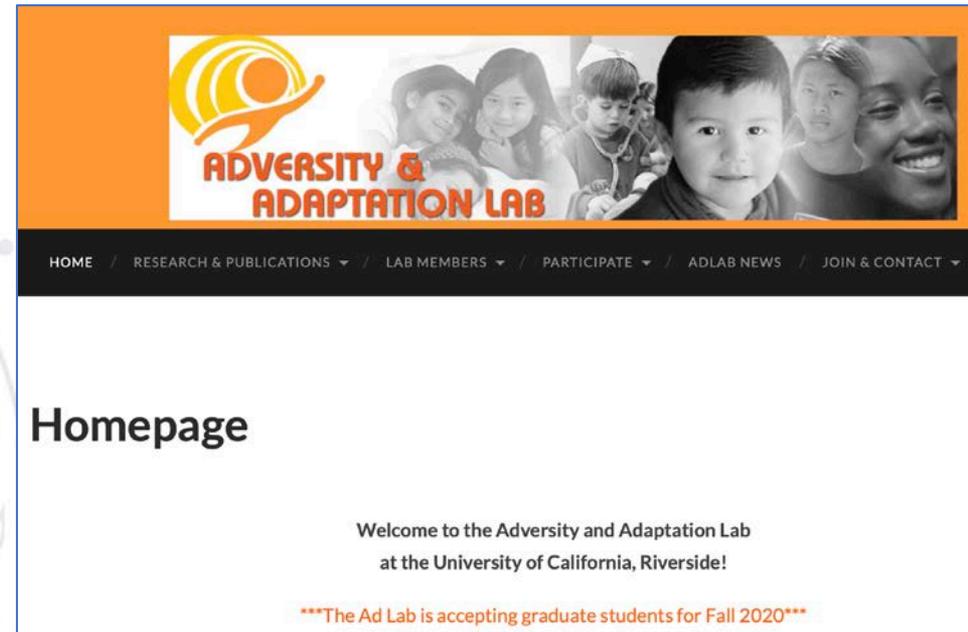
Identify Potential Major Professors

1. Ask your UG faculty advisor or research mentor



Identify Potential Major Professors

2. Check out their web site and papers on Google Scholar



Identify Potential Major Professors

3. Where do their graduates go afterwards, and are they successful?



Identify Potential Major Professors

4. Reach Out:
Don't be afraid
to email
professors
directly



Identify Potential Major Professors

5. Contact current and former graduate students



Parts of a Graduate Student Application

John Herring



Includes

Academic degrees and records	Statement of purpose
Test scores	Personal history statement
English language requirement	Relevant experience
Letters of recommendation	Application fee

Academic Degrees and Records

- Transcripts must have most recent grades or final grades
- All courses above the high school level
- Courses for community college can be included on undergraduate degree IF they have the course and grade listed. Otherwise separate transcripts must be ordered
- Unofficial copies can be used for review purposes but official copies (sealed and unopened) must be sent to the graduate program representative

Test Scores

- Required tests depend on the program and you should check carefully with each school you are applying to: e.g. GRE, TOEFL, CBEST, LSAT, MCAT, etc.
- Plan accordingly when taking any required or suggested testing. It can take five to six weeks for the scores to be reported to the program to which you are applying.
- Each college/university has its own Institution Code; if you have it available, scores can be sent directly to the school.

English Language Requirement

- International students often have to take one of the following tests: TOEFL paper-delivered test, the TOEFL iBT, or the IELTS
- These tests may be waived if the bachelor's or master's degree was awarded from a school which has English as the language of instruction OR if a degree has been completed within the United States

Letters of Recommendation

- Letters of recommendation are typically submitted electronically but check with the requirements of the school you are applying to. Paper letters of recommendation may not be accepted depending on the institution
- There is usually a minimum number of letters of recommendation. Check with the institution to which you are applying

Statements of Purpose

- Most Universities require applicants to write at least one essay as part of the application
- If multiple essays are required, they should not duplicate each other. Personal resumes or curriculum vitae are usually not accepted as a response to either essay

Other Relevant Experience

Some programs may have additional requirements or request materials to assess an applicant's qualifications. Examples include:

- Course Prerequisites
- Writing Samples
- Articles
- Projects
- Curriculum Vitae



Application Fee

- Typically a non-refundable application fee is required; check with the institution to which you are applying
- Fee waivers may be available for qualified domestic students. Please consult with the graduate admissions office of the University you are applying to for more information

Admission Essay Types

A look at the different types of essays and what sets them apart

Katherine Van Horn, M.A.



Personal Statement

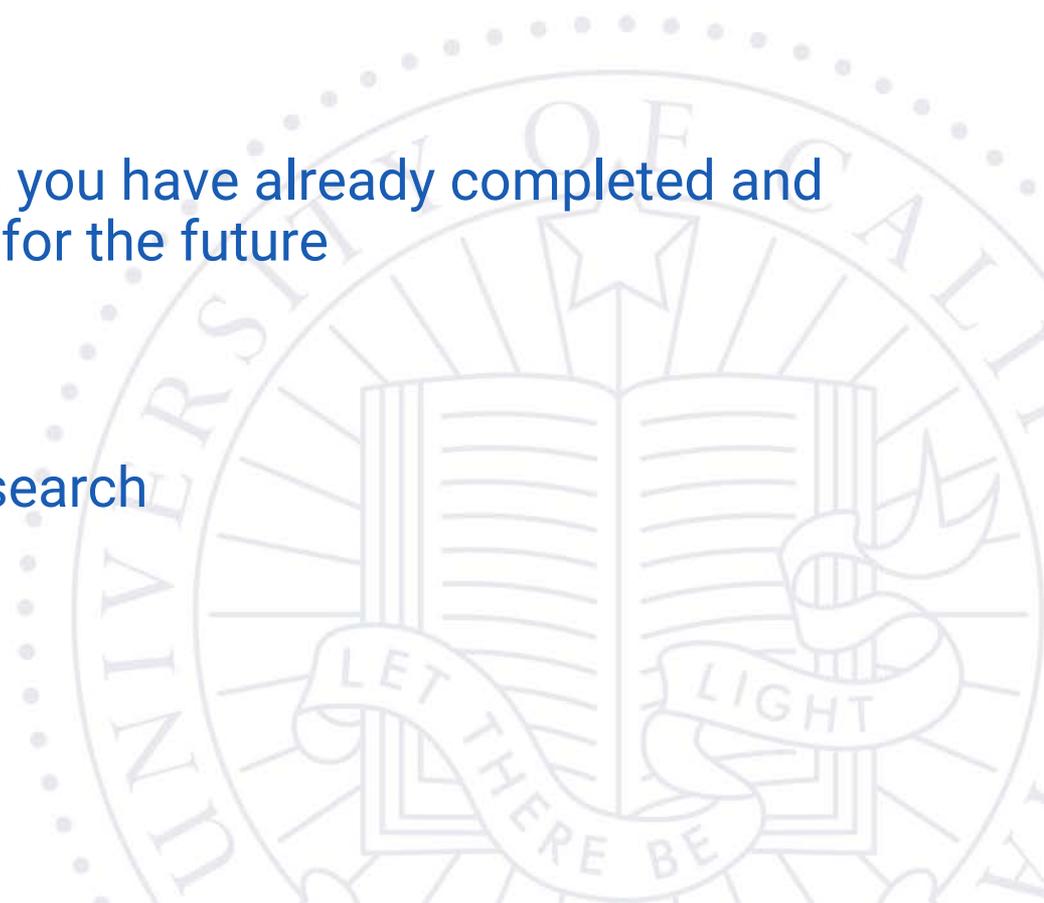
An overview of your qualifications, passions and individual experiences

- * Engaging opening
- * Clear theme
- * Tie it to the program

Research History

An overview of what research you have already completed and what your research goals are for the future

- * Should be forthright
- * Show the connections
- * Connect to Faculty research



Other Essay types

- **Goals and Dreams:** Be creative, but focus on the future. Make sure to include how the program will help you achieve these goals
- **Academic Achievements/Experience:** Be forthright, but show how these shaped who you are and will benefit you in the program
- **Strengths and Weaknesses:** Be upfront and discuss how you compensate for your weaknesses. Do not try to fake a weakness or fall into the trap of the humble brag

A few tips:

- **Read the prompt.** Each essay has a different purpose and should include different information. Don't repeat if you are required to submit several essays.
- **Check the details.** Make sure you are including the right school, program and degree objective in the essay. Observe the word count.
- **Be concise.** Admissions committees read dozens of essays and do not want to wade through unnecessary words or stories.
- **Do the research.** Look at the mission statement of the school and the program. Research faculty you would like to work with and reference their work.

Letters of Recommendation

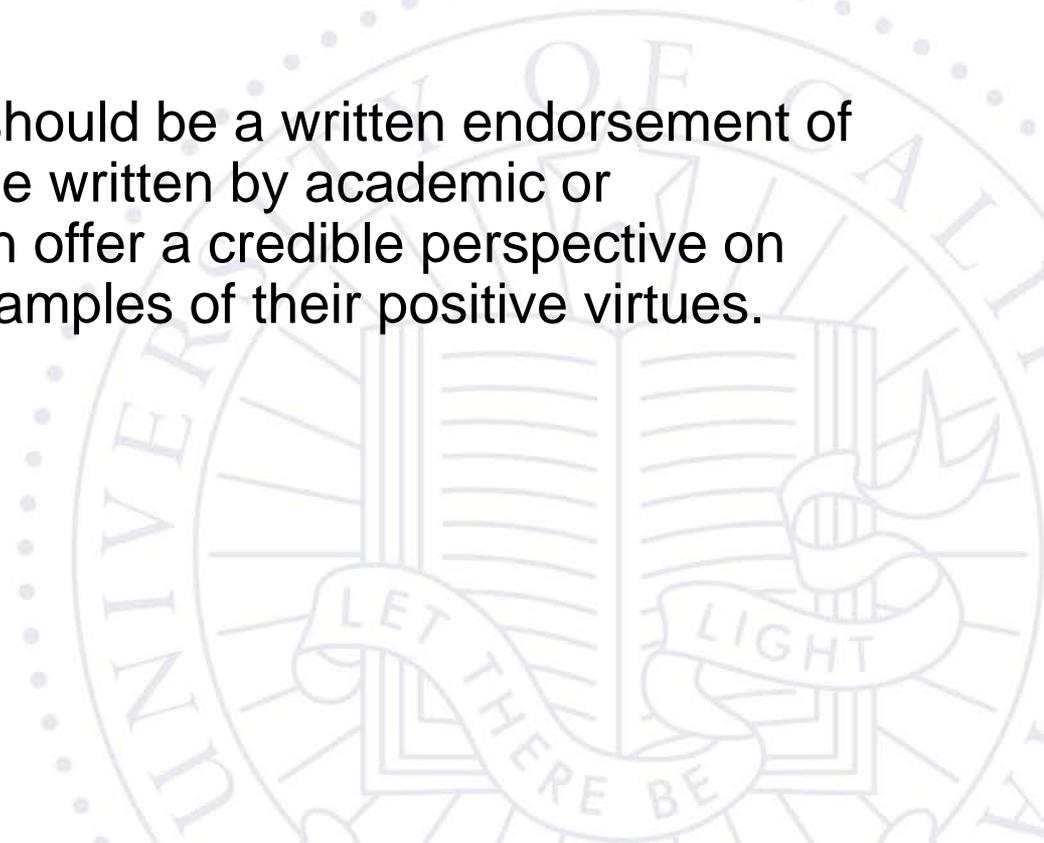
Who to Ask, How to Ask

Katherine Van Horn, M.A



What is a Letter of Recommendation?

A letter of Recommendation should be a written endorsement of the candidate. They should be written by academic or professional contacts who can offer a credible perspective on their abilities and concrete examples of their positive virtues.

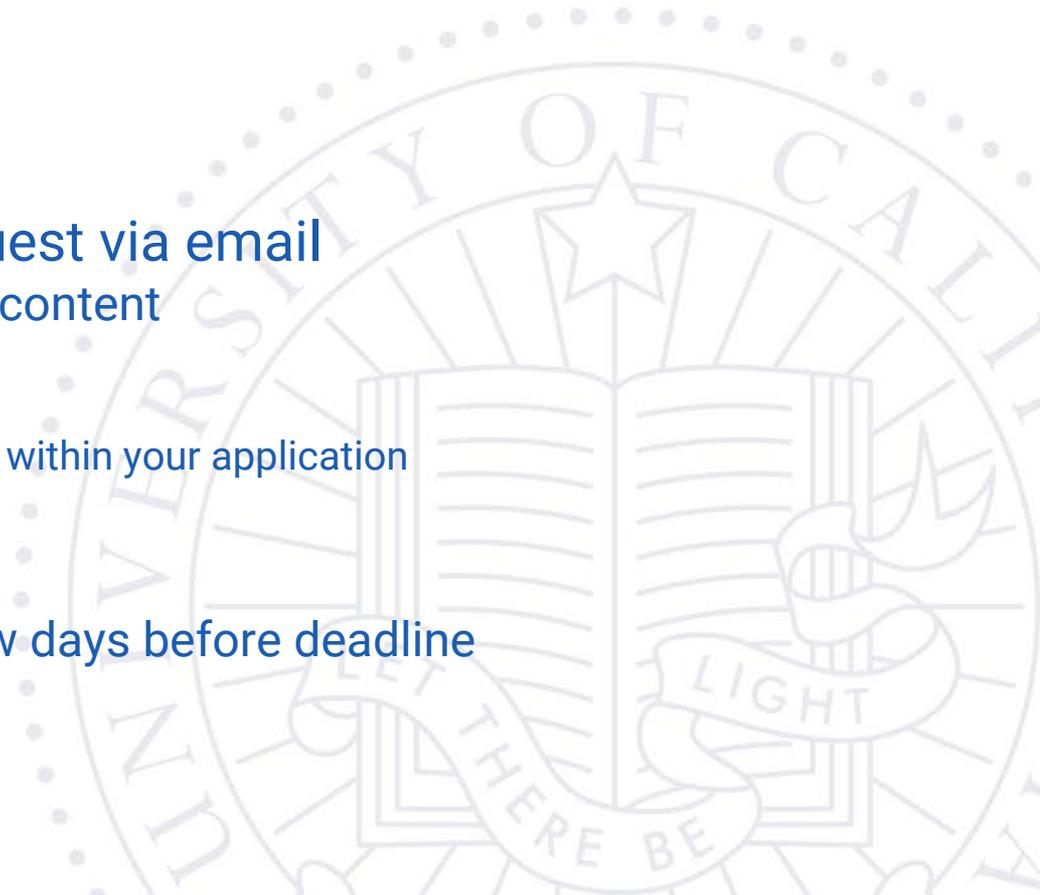


Who to Ask

- Professor's who know your abilities
 - One you've taken multiple classes with
 - One you've visited office hours consistently
 - One you've worked on project with
- People in leadership positions
 - Volunteering
 - Research
 - Employer
- No Familial Relation

How to Ask

- Ask in person
- Follow up with a formal request via email
 - In the email, include possible content
 - Projects you've completed
 - Awards you've received
 - Attributes you are emphasizing within your application
- Set a deadline
 - Give plenty of notice
 - Send a friendly reminder a few days before deadline



Check the details!

Make sure to include:

- the college/university
- the name and type of program
- The preferred addressee of the letter

GRE – Is it Required?

Dawn Loyola, Ed.D.



GRE

GRE – Graduate Record Exam, administered by ETS

- General test
- Subject tests

<https://www.ets.org/gre>

Some institutions are moving away from the test

- Optional at some universities, or specific programs
- Check with the programs you are applying to for their policy

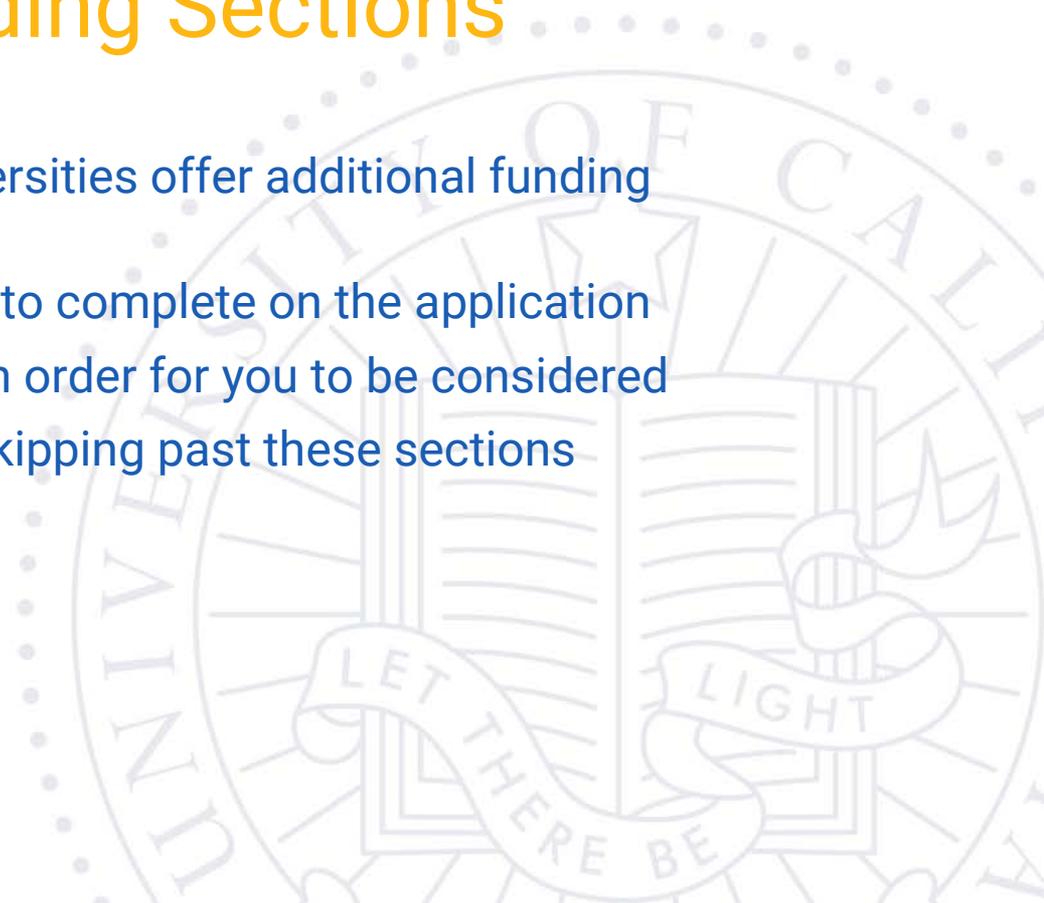
Optional Application Sections

Antonio Knox



Supplemental Funding Sections

- To increase diversity, many universities offer additional funding opportunities
- They are often optional sections to complete on the application
- It could also be boxes to check in order for you to be considered
- Stop and ask questions before skipping past these sections



You may be eligible if you are a...

- First-generation college student
- Member of an ethnic or racial group historically underrepresented in graduate education (Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Native Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino)
- McNair or Mellon Mays Undergraduate Scholar (the Graduate School will verify an applicant's status as a McNair Scholar or Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow while pursuing a baccalaureate degree at a U.S. institution)

Eligibility Continued

Experiences overcoming significant challenges in their path toward graduate school. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Managing a disability
- Being of a gender or orientation identity historically underrepresented in their graduate field of study
- Veteran status
- Single parent
- Holding DACA status



Curriculum Vitae

Dawn Loyola, Ed.D.



Curriculum Vitae

What is the CV?

What is the purpose of submitting a CV?

Resources for writing the CV:

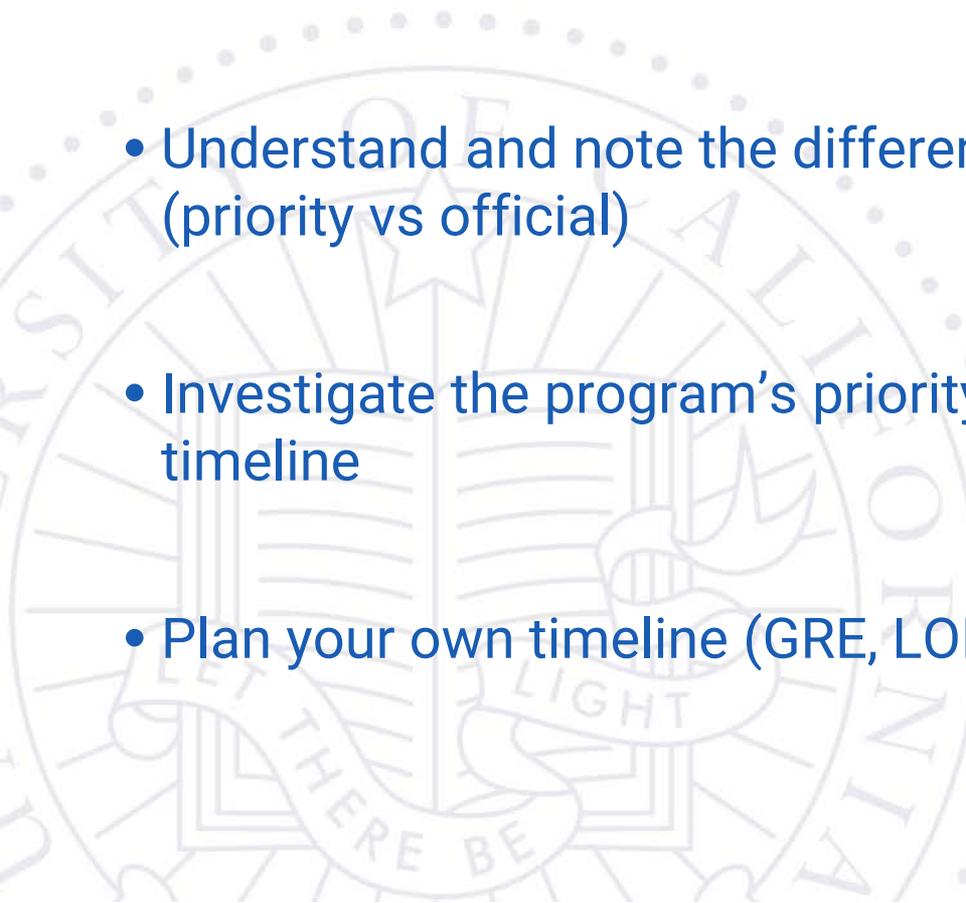
- <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/agep/advcv.pdf>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/academic-curriculum-vitae-example-2060817>

Paying Attention to Deadlines

Julio Sosa, M.B.A.



Time is of the Essence

- 
- A large, faint watermark of the University of California seal is visible in the background. The seal is circular and contains the text "UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA" around the perimeter. In the center, there is a shield with a book and a sunburst, and a banner below it that reads "LET THERE BE LIGHT".
- Understand and note the different application deadlines (priority vs official)
 - Investigate the program's priority deadline and admission timeline
 - Plan your own timeline (GRE, LORs, Personal Statement, etc.)

Grad School Planner

Freshman year

- Dream big and plan how you'll make it happen
- Earn good grades
- Get to know your professors
- Meet with graduate advisers to lay out courses and experiences you'll need
- Apply for summer research programs

Sophomore year

- Apply for undergraduate research projects and/or work with a faculty member on a project. Be persistent!
- Keep up your grades
- Get to know more professors

Summer between sophomore and junior years

- Start searching for potential graduate programs
- Explore fellowships and grants, both extramural and school-specific
- Participate in a summer research internship, if possible

Junior year

- Apply for and participate in a research project
- Start studying for the GRE in the fall (find out if it is required for program you are applying to)
- Map out a plan for applying for extramural fellowships
- Take the GRE in the winter or spring and other necessary standardized tests
- Visit campuses and recruiting events (every fall, organized by career center)

Summer between junior and senior years

- Participate in a summer research program or internship
- Make a list of graduate programs that fit your interests and goals
- Make a plan for applying for admission and university funding, noting deadlines
- Take the GRE (ask each program if it is required)
- Draft your statement of purpose and other application essays
- Start sending out extramural fellowship applications – deadlines are often much earlier than those for admission!

Senior year

- Finish submitting extramural funding applications during fall term
- Request letters of recommendation by early October
- Ask professors for feedback on your statement of purpose
- Submit your admission and funding applications early
- Take the GRE again, if needed. This is your last opportunity if you are applying to graduate school now.
- Stay organized. Stay on schedule. Getting stressed doesn't help!

Where Can I Find Information About Deadlines?

- The program's website
- The School's Graduate Division website
- Contact the admissions advisor or student advisor in the program you wish to apply to

Requesting an Application Fee Waiver

Julio Sosa, M.B.A.



Standard Fee Waiver Eligibility

- You must be a U.S. citizen or current permanent resident
- AB540 students may apply for the fee waiver if they meet the eligibility criteria (contact the Graduate Admissions Office for instructions)
- There are two main ways in which you may qualify for an application fee waiver:
 1. You can demonstrate financial need
 2. You are a current participant in certain programs that qualify for a fee waiver.

Financial Need

Financial need is determined by the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) number listed on your Student Aid Report (SAR), or by the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on your tax return.

To be eligible for the Fee Waiver:

- EFC cannot exceed \$3,093 (Updated each November)
- Annual family income cannot exceed the maximum AGI listed in the Family Income

FAMILY SIZE (including student)	FAMILY INCOME (Maximum AGI on Tax Return)
1	\$23,107
2	\$31,284
3	\$39,461
4	\$47,638
5	\$55,815
For each additional family member	add \$8,177

Program Participation

- Americorps
- California Pre-Doc Program (Sally Casanova Scholars)
- Former Foster Youth
- Hispanic Serving Institutions-Pathways Program (HSI)
- Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC)
- McNair Scholars Program
- Peace Corps
- Undergraduate Minority Biomedical Support (MBRS-IMSD)
- UC-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Initiative (UC-HBCU)
- UC Leads Scholars Program (UC Leads)
- Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT)

(Students must submit verification of program participation for some of the programs listed above)

Other Ways to Obtain a Fee Waiver

- Visiting campus or attending graduate fairs (ABRCMS, SACNAS, etc.)
- Get a fee waiver for applying early (contact program to find out)
- Get a fee waiver for being a child of a veteran or a college employee
- Extenuating circumstance fee waiver (must demonstrate financial need, political or personal hardship, or other circumstances)
- Contact each program you intend to apply to and ask about fee waiver options

Admission Contacts Staff and Faculty

John Herring



Includes

Program Coordinator

Graduate Division Admissions

Program – Admissions Advisor

Program – Major Professor

Program Coordinator

- Usually the first person you will talk to within the department/program
- Will be in contact with this person from the time you submit your application usually until you graduate the program
- Interested faculty within the department will work through program coordinator regarding your application
- Any questions on status of your application will go to program coordinator. Any other questions you have will also go to program coordinator who will either answer or be the central hub to find your answers

Program Admissions Advisor

- Faculty contact that oversees graduate recruitment and admissions for the Program level graduate program
- Works directly with department/program coordinators to ensure applications are complete and accurate before making admissions decisions and sending files forward to the university graduate admissions office
- Admissions decisions at the departmental/program level are made here after consulting with the other faculty in the program that may have interest in the applicant

Program Major Professor

- Faculty that are teaching and/or have labs at the university in a particular program
- Serve as a faculty mentor for graduate students often helping them with their course schedules quarter to quarter
- Serve as committee members for the students as they progress through their written examinations, oral exams, and then final defenses
- A major professor might be assigned at the time of admission for a student or they might be assigned after the student has had an opportunity to rotate through different faculty labs while the student looks for the correct fit. This will vary by the department/program

Q&A

You have

Questions

We have

Answers



Where to find this
presentation and more
information:

<https://cnasgrad.ucr.edu/general-information-applying-graduate-school>

Thank You!

Please send us your feedback
for today's session:

[https://tinyurl.com/
diversity-forum-evaluation](https://tinyurl.com/diversity-forum-evaluation)

