Graduate School 101:

Application Process
& Special Considerations in Science, Tech, Engineering, & Marketing Programs

Undocu - Spartan Student Resources

Juan Ruiz, MA
Who am I? Why am I here?

- Juan Ruiz Cortes, MA (Philosophy, 2018)
- Critical Race & Ethnic Studies, BA
- Founded Nepantla Philosophy, LLC
  - Created a limited liability company with a mission to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education through programming, professional training, and consulting.
- Undocumented non-DACA entrepreneur
Take a deep breath!

1. I will provide you with a lot of information!

2. I welcome interaction and collaboration!
Presentation Content

1. STEM application details
2. General & Undocu-related Considerations
3. Deadlines, Letters of Rec., Testing, Fee waivers, Writing Sample
4. Resources
How to Start Your Thinking About Graduate School

- Research interests
- Specialized Field, like Medical or Law School
- Seek TA position, or something of the sort
- Application process & cost
- Letters of Recommendation
- Graduate tests
- Post Bacc Programs

TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR WRITING STATEMENT

- Ask one of your letter writers if they can review and provide suggestions for strengthening your Statement of Purpose.
- Have someone edit your statement(s) for grammar and spelling errors before submitting your application.
- Include in your statement(s) why you chose to apply for graduate school and why you chose the graduate program for which you are applying.
- Describe not only your successes, but also any barriers that you have had to overcome.
Marketing Programs

CSU Long Beach (Example)

- Masters of Science in Marketing Analytics
- Non-refundable $70 application fee
- Official transcripts
- 2.75 GPA or greater
- Résumé
- GMAT/GRE Test Requirements Waived for Spring and Fall 2022
- Two letters of recommendation
- Video Statement of Purpose
- Personal Statement

UC Berkeley (Example)

- Masters of Business Administration
- Copy of official transcripts
- GMAT or GRE exam required
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for applicants who received undergraduate degrees in non-English speaking countries
- Interview by invitation only
- Two letters of recommendation from former employers
- Two Essays; SOP only for concurrent programs
Info on Berkeley Marketing MBA continued...

- **Essay 1**: What makes you feel alive when you are doing it, and why? (300 words)
  - A successful essay will share a specific and personal experience that helps the reader get to know you better, giving insight into your character, values, or how you would uniquely contribute to the Berkeley-Haas community.

- **Essay 2**: The definition of successful leadership has evolved over the last decade and will continue to change. What do you need to develop to become a successful leader?

- Applying to Scholarships is optional, yet part of the application, and may require other supplemental materials or essays.

<table>
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<th>Round</th>
<th>Submit application by:</th>
<th>Take GMAT/ GRE/English Tests by:</th>
<th>Decisions posted by:</th>
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<td>April 7, 2022</td>
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Medical School application

- Do not have to be STEM Major
  MCD/Biology/Chemistry
- Can be any major (i.e., Sociology, Physics or History etc.)
- Just need to meet minimum requirements
- ~3.5 GPA (3.2-3.8)
- Volunteering, internship, clinical experience
- Research experience preferred
- Letters of recommendation (3-6 at UCI)

*Rigorous application timeline—may discuss further during office hours*

Requirements

- One year of Biology (w/labs)
- One year of Physics (w/labs)
- One year of English
- One year of Math
- Two years of chemistry (w/labs)
- [https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/](https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/)
- Prefered/Recommended:
  - Computer courses, Anatomy, Cell Biology, Immunology, Microbiology, Neuroscience, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish
- Take the MCAT exam
MCAT - Medical College Admission Testing

- Administered by Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- Standardized test with sections on
  - Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
  - Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
  - Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
  - Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills
- In-person test only
- $305 cost

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<tr>
<td><strong>Section</strong></td>
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<td>Total “Seated” Time*</td>
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*Total seated time does not include check-in time on arrival at the test center.
MCAT Prep Resources

- **FREE!** Khan Academy MCAT Course
  - Sample content from all four sections
  - 1,100 videos and 3,000 review questions to help you study
  - [https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat)

- Full-length practice tests
- MCAT quizzes to assess readiness
- MCAT Flashcards App
- [https://www.princetonreview.com/medical/free-mcat-practice-test?gclid=Cj0KCQiAj9iBBhCJARIsAE9qRtBzwTSLDZ3s5Xuuua9HsE8ZuYADQn4pomC9Lo_pgm1QN6MjSV6fNfEaApWuEALw_wcB&ExDT=2#!practice](https://www.princetonreview.com/medical/free-mcat-practice-test?gclid=Cj0KCQiAj9iBBhCJARIsAE9qRtBzwTSLDZ3s5Xuuua9HsE8ZuYADQn4pomC9Lo_pgm1QN6MjSV6fNfEaApWuEALw_wcB&ExDT=2#!practice)
PHD - Pre-Health Dreamers

- Founded in 2012 by three undocumented medical school graduate students
- Offers networking, advocacy, forums, resources, and community-building opportunities
- Graduate/Professional Programs
  - Scholarship list: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/s/d/1q-ka0BAzfenJ92Feikx_AjF3BpqFNN_eFvlymdv2q8/edit#gid=839553668
  - Internship list: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/s/d/1Aqrs_l6Mq_3FHHvXszW11hlahjO4x2h84k1ZGk7Lh-g/edit#gid=0
A Pre-Med Student’s Steps to Medical School

1. College Freshman Year
   - Explore Your Options for Careers in Medicine
   - Visit Aspiring Docs
     - Meet with an advisor
     - Attend pre-health meetings
   - Apply to summer programs
   - Explore financial aid options

2. Summer
   - Get Some Experience
   - Participate in enrichment programs
     - Volunteer or intern in the field

3. College Sophomore Year
   - Stay on Track for Medical School

4. Summer
   - Get More Experience and Look at Resources
   - Review the MCAT registration process

5. College Junior Year
   - Strategize with Your Advisor for a Game Plan
   - Get research or internship experience
   - Look into financial assistance programs

6. Summer
   - Register early for the MCAT Exam
   - Use Medical Schools Admissions Requirements to compare schools

7. College Senior Year
   - Finalize and submit your AMCAS application
   - Continue with volunteer work

8. College Graduation
   - Receive Letters of Acceptance or Rejection

This infographic represents a basic timeline and steps toward medical school. Your advisor and AAMC resources can help guide you on your individual timeline and steps.

aamc.org/students

©2015 Association of American Medical Colleges
Don’t give up!

- Graduate School is expensive, but not impossible to access and succeed.
- For undocumented students without work authorization, it is particularly more expensive.
  - Then, there is the Residency requirement after completing Med-school where employment authorization is required...
- There are Med schools deliberately supporting undocumented folks.
  - Loyola Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago: DACA recipients welcome and receive full tuition support.
  - [https://ssom.luc.edu/daca/](https://ssom.luc.edu/daca/)
New Law Allows Undocumented Immigrants To Practice Health Care

A new California law (SB 1159) allows undocumented immigrants to practice the occupation they have been trained for, including those trained as dentists, doctors and nurses, KPCC's "Multi-American" reports (Huang, "Multi-American," KPCC, 9/29).
Engineering Research Opportunity

- UC Irvine Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)
- Opportunity for research and intensive graduate preparation program
- Facilitate application, admission, and enrollment in graduate school
- Open to all academic fields at UCI
- June 19-August 12, 2022
- **AB-540 Eligible**
- Juniors, seniors or MA students pursuing a Ph.D.
- Application opens Dec. 2021
- Email: diversity@rgs.uci.edu
  - Maria Menendez

- $4,000 stipend included
- Successfully applying to graduate school
- Successfully applying for fellowships
- GRE preparation course (optional)
- Academic writing
- Preparing academic presentations
- Academic career planning
STEM Resumé

- Different than the Humanities/Social Sciences Resumé
- Showcases
  - key words; identifiable by AI (artificial intelligence)
  - Lab work
  - Courses
  - Internship experience
  - Special projects participation
  - Leadership experience
- Not a “cut and paste” template; every field is particularly different
- Sample: Junior Mechanical Engineering Major Seeking Product Design Internship (pdf)
Break. Transition.
Basic Considerations

- Why? What? Where?
- What to expect?
- Degree?
- Benefits
- Costs

Reasons to Pursue

- More knowledge about a subject/major
- Research interests
- Your proposed career may require it
- Become a better candidate in the job market
Different Degrees

- Master’s: MA, MS, MBA, MPA, MSW, MFT, etc.
- Doctorate: Ph.D.
- Professional: JD, MD, DDS, OD
Undocumented-related Considerations

- State laws affect graduate school admission
  - National Immigration Law Center
    - Map: State Laws & Policies on Access to Higher Education for Immigrants
    - Table: Laws & Policies Improving Access to Higher Education for Immigrants
  - uLEAD: University Leaders for Educational Access and Diversity
    - uLEADNet.org
      - Categorized laws of 50 states into Restrictive, Unstipulated, and Inclusive
US Customs & Border Protection (USCBP) checkpoints

- Interior Checkpoints and Higher Ed Institutions along the border
  - USCBP checkpoints range from 25-100 miles from border
  - There are an estimated 180 checkpoints
  - Living in an area that requires you to pass through a checkpoint poses a higher deportation risk

Figure 4: Map of 100 Mile Border Zone, Courtesy of the ACLU (2017)
Testing Requirements: GRE, GMAT, MCAT, etc.

- Government issued identification for registering and taking the test
  - US driver’s license or passport
  - Original document
  - Valid
  - Bear your full name
  - Includes recent photograph
  - Includes your signature

- ETS Office of Testing Integrity (OTI)
  - Accommodation, waiver or workaround if you do not meet identification requirements
  - Email: TSReturns@ets.org
Disclosing Status on a Graduate Application

- No federal law requires proof of citizenship when applying
- Personal decision to disclose status
  - Typically unavoidable in an application
  - Used for Financial Aid and to gauge diversity of the matriculating student population
  - Provide students with resources
- Information safeguarded by FERPA
  - Except for court orders
  - Legitimate educational interests
  - Directory information
Application Components

- Admissions testing
- Unofficial Transcripts / GPA
- Personal Statement
- Statement of Purpose
- Letters of Recommendation
- CV / Resumé
Timeline

- **Summer:**
  - Narrow down research interests
  - Search for programs
  - Prepare for testing
- **Fall:**
  - Work on application
  - Letters of rec.
  - Personal statement / SOP
  - Writing sample
  - Funding application
- **Winter:**
  - Maintain good grades
- **Spring:**
  - Admission response
  - Interview at campuses
# Detailed Timeline

## Example of Grad School Application Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
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<th>Summer</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td></td>
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**Academics**
- Choose major
- Academic enrichment programs
- Honors opportunities.
- Volunteer or intern
- Undergraduate Research Opportunities
- Be proactive and engage in major.
- Apply to summer research/internship opportunities.
- Attend California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education

**Research**
- Take note of topics you find interesting based on reading from courses.
- Gain research experience (e.g., labs, Pathways to Research Program)
- Summer Research Program or Internship
- Senior thesis, internship, field study.

**Graduate School**
- Explore career interests.
- MS/MA vs. Ph.D.
- Build relationships with faculty and graduate mentors for future letters of recommendations.
- GRE prep
- Search for Grad school programs
- Apply to Grad school OR
- Plan for the year or two before Grad School
### Grad School Wishlist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Name</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Faculty Name</th>
<th>Faculty Contact</th>
<th>App. Requirements</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYU</td>
<td>Steinhardt School of Culture, Ed, &amp; Human Dev.</td>
<td>Psych &amp; Social Intervention</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>C. Suarez-Orozco Niobe Way (Psy. Dev)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cso2@nyu.edu">cso2@nyu.edu</a></td>
<td>Fee Waiver</td>
<td>Dec. 15th</td>
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<tr>
<td>UC Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Developmental Psychology</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Margarita Azmitia Catherine Cooper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:azmitia@ucsc.edu">azmitia@ucsc.edu</a></td>
<td>Personal History Statement, GRE: Fee Waiver</td>
<td>Dec. 15th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanford</td>
<td>School of Education</td>
<td>PSE: child &amp; adolescent dev.</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>-Amado Padilla -Teresa LaFromboise</td>
<td><a href="mailto:apadilla@suse.stanford.edu">apadilla@suse.stanford.edu</a></td>
<td>GRE: 4704 Fee Waiver</td>
<td>Dec 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown Uni.</td>
<td>Education Department</td>
<td>Urban Education Policy</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1. Cynthia Garcia 2. Deborah Rivas-Drake 3. Rosa Cho</td>
<td><a href="mailto:1.Cynthia_garcia_coll@brown.edu">1.Cynthia_garcia_coll@brown.edu</a> <a href="mailto:2.Deborah_rivas_drake@brown.edu">2.Deborah_rivas_drake@brown.edu</a> <a href="mailto:3.rosa_minhyo_cho@brown.edu">3.rosa_minhyo_cho@brown.edu</a></td>
<td>GRE: 3090 Fee Waiver</td>
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<td>Harvard</td>
<td>Graduate School of Education</td>
<td>Human Development &amp; Psychology</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Vivian Louie Hiro Yoshikaw</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vivian_louie@gse.harvard.edu">vivian_louie@gse.harvard.edu</a></td>
<td>GRE: 3428</td>
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STEM Personal Statement & Statement of Purpose

- Word limit depending on the program
  - 250-1000 words
- Describe a time when you dealt with someone difficult
- How did you handle the situation?
- What would you do different if you could do it over?

- Video Statement of Purpose
  - Describe your career goals in the next 3-5 years,
  - Your long-term dream job
  - You can use a platform such as YouTube to create the video.
  - Include your link in the application form
**Personal Statement**

- For financial aid and cohort considerations
- Personal trajectory / journey to career path
- Represents your skills and character
- Overcoming adversity and maintaining academic excellence
  - How?

**Statement of Purpose**

- For research interests/cohort considerations
- What do you want to do in grad school?
- How will you apply your skills to achieve goal?
- Highlight aspects of school / department that guide your interest
  - List faculty you wish to work with
Testing & Exams

Some schools waived these test requirements due to COVID-19

- GMAT (business)
  - Marketing Analytics
- MCAT (medical school)
- PCAT (pharmacology)
- OAT (optometry)
- Request fee waivers from Graduate Division, Fin. Aid Office

1. Pick Up a book from the library, peer, online, etc., and read a few pages a day
2. Don’t try to wing-it!
3. Create a study plan
4. Become acquainted with the examination style
5. GMAT now available online
   a. [https://www.mba.com/exams/gmat](https://www.mba.com/exams/gmat)
The little box at the end of the application...

- **Question:** “Is there anything not included in the application that you would like to share with the graduate committee?”

- Make use of this to genuinely describe:
  - Your fear of standardized testing
  - The underlying reason why there is a “W” or failing grade on your transcript
  - A family hardship that affected a gap in your education
  - And how these criteria are not indicative of your ability to engage in research material
Grad Test prep resource!

- Magoosh online prep-course for GMAT, MCAT, GRE
- Some Universities offer this resource **free** to students--look into this as a possibility at your campus!

https://magoosh.com/
Writing Sample

- Depending on your discipline, the sample may be different
  - STEM: Poster abstract; study you conducted in a course; special lab report; essay for a course or publication
- Work on the sample ahead of time
  - Ideally, use a sample from a faculty advisor that is recommending you and has reviewed your work
- Share your sample with different readers
  - Faculty
  - Peer advisor
  - Mentor
- Save each copy separately and then decide what changes to make
CV / Résumé

- Curriculum Vitae
  - Concise summary of educational background and achievements
    - Personal contact information
    - Educational degrees
    - Awards / publications
    - Teaching and research interests and experiences
    - Skills
    - Professional memberships
  - Highlight experiences in relation to SOP
Letters of Recommendation

- Request **strong well-written** letters of rec.
  - Pillar of the application, ask ahead of time
  - Provides information that is not found elsewhere in the application
    - Don’t be repetitive
      - Some aspects have to be mentioned by the recommender
  - Waive the right to read the letter
    - Shows confidence
    - Professors may be more comfortable to recommend you
  - From: Professor’s, Employer, Internship/volunteer supervisor
Letters of Rec

- Advise Professor ahead of time or at the beginning of a course
- Attend office hours and hold conversations related to your research interest
- Never accept a Letter from a Professor who asks you to write it
  - Provide the recommender with:
    - SOP
    - Résumé / CV
    - Writing sample
    - Transcripts
    - *(See sample in materials attached to this prez)*
Faculty advisor

- Professor/Mentor that will revise all material to be submitted
- Meet regularly and have materials ready to be revised
- Meet professor during office hours or request alternative time
- Be responsible for setting expectations and deadlines
Deadlines

- Submit application materials ahead of time
- Letters may be provided by professors after application has closed
  - It is your responsibility to ensure the recommender has provided your letter
  - Email recommender with gratitude
  - Then email as a follow up to ensure letter submission
Finding the right Program

- Look into the Faculty and their Research interests
- 2-3 faculty members you may work with
- Ask if they will be on
  - Sabbatical, retiring, conducting research elsewhere
- Does the Program offer a MA if you don’t finish the PhD?
- Reach-out to other graduate students at the dept. and read their work
Contacting the Department

- Inquire what funding options are available particular to your circumstances
  - TA ships, fellowships, GSR?
    - Will I have a difficult time registering at your school due to my undocumented status?
    - Is there a category I fall under with your registration office?
- Ask for application fee waivers
Financial Aid Options

● MALDEF Graduate Scholarship & Fellowship List

● Internal Fellowship: UCLA AB540 Grad Students

● External Fellowship: Paul D. Soros Fellowship for New Americans
Undocumented Student Resources

- http://mydocumentedlife.org/
- http://www.phdreamers.org/
- dream.csac.ca.gov
- immigrantsrising.org
Navigating Graduate School: Resource Guide for Undocumented Students

Focus on law, testing requirements, and state-to-state nuances, among other items

Lastly

- No one single route is the only correct one
- Make a name for yourself get the Dept. to know you