Graduate School 101:

Application Process & Special Considerations in Humanities, Social Sciences & Law

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. General & Undocu-related Considerations
2. Deadlines, Letters of Rec., Testing, Fee waivers, Writing Sample
3. Statement of Purpose vs Personal Statement
4. Resources
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, LSAT, 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

You will be admitted to the MCAT exam on testing day only if your identity document meets the necessary requirements. To ensure that it does, please complete the checklist below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification Requirements</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The names on your ID match the first and last names on your MCAT exam registration EXACTLY. (Middle names or initials are not required on the MCAT registration, even if they appear on your ID.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If they don't match exactly, you must update your name through the MCAT Registration System by the BRONZE ZONE deadline associated with your test date.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If your ID has your initials in place of your first and/or last name, you must contact AAMC Services (202-828-0600) for instructions before the SILVER ZONE deadline associated with your test date.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID was issued by a government agency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The ID's expiration date is printed on the ID and is not extended by a sticker or similar mechanism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID will not expire before your exam date.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID is not a temporary ID.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Paper IDs or ID application receipts of any quality are not valid forms of identification.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID contains a photo that can be used to positively identify you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID includes your signature, which you will be asked to duplicate on test day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID is whole with no evidence of tampering (clipped corners, holes, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ID is in English.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you answered “no” to any of the requirements, please obtain an ID that fulfills all the requirements or adjust your registration details.

If you answered “yes” to ALL these requirements, CONGRATULATIONS! You are ready for exam day!

If you have any questions about test day identification requirements, please refer to MCAT Essentials or contact AAMC Services at 202-828-0600 or mcat@aamc.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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Considerations</th>
<th>Reasons to Pursue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What to expect?</td>
<td>Research interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree?</td>
<td>Your proposed career may require it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Become a better candidate in the job market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Different Degrees

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

- Admissions Test (*mostly waived in 2021*)
- Unofficial Transcripts / GPA
- Personal Statement
- Statement of Purpose
- Letters of Recommendation
- CV / Resume
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>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choose major</td>
<td>-Be proactive and engage in major.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Attend scholarly lectures and discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Academic enrichment programs</td>
<td>-Apply to summer research/internship opportunities.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Instructor Assistant (e.g., Psyc 191)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Honors opportunities.</td>
<td>-Attend California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Attend/Revisit California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volunteer or intern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undergraduate Research Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>-Take note of topics you find interesting based on reading from courses.</td>
<td>-Gain research experience (e.g., labs, Pathways to Research Program)</td>
<td>-Summer Research Program or Internship</td>
<td>-Senior thesis, internship, field study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate School</strong></td>
<td>-Explore career interests.</td>
<td>-Build relationships with faculty and graduate mentors for future letters of recommendations.</td>
<td>-GRE prep</td>
<td>-Apply to Grad school OR -Plan for the year or two before Grad School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-MS/MA vs. Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Search for Grad school programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<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. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<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 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>Jan 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
<td>Jan 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Statement / Statement of Purpose

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

- 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

- Graduate Examination Record (GRE)
  - Subject tests?
- LSAT (law)
- GMAT (business)
- 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. **Bring your Passport!**
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 LSAT, 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
  - Art Portfolio
  - Film–link online
  - Essay
- 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 writing 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?
- Sometimes the department flies you out to get a feel of what they offer
- Ask for application fee waivers
Law School Tips

- LSAT—five 35-min test sections (Analytical Reasoning, Logical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, the unscored variable section, Writing Sample)
- Law School Admission Council–FAQ’s: [https://www.lsac.org/lsat/frequently-asked-questions-about-lsat](https://www.lsac.org/lsat/frequently-asked-questions-about-lsat)
- Why do you want to pursue law school?
- What do you want to achieve after? What difference do you want to make?
- Make sure to address all parts of the prompt
- Revise your statements to fit the questions
- Study for the LSAT
  - Free LSAT prep on [Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org)
# LSAT Sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logical Reasoning (&quot;Arguments&quot;)</td>
<td>- 2 sections&lt;br&gt;- 24-26 multiple-choice questions per section&lt;br&gt;- 35 minutes per section&lt;br&gt;- Tests ability to determine main points of arguments, apply logic to abstract concepts, find relevant information within a text, and analyze and evaluate arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Reasoning (&quot;Logic Games&quot;)</td>
<td>- 1 section&lt;br&gt;- 4 logic games with 4-7 multiple-choice questions each&lt;br&gt;- 35 minutes&lt;br&gt;- Tests ability to understand effects of rules on decisions and outcomes, determine relationships between concepts, analyze situations and draw conclusions based on set guidelines, and apply logic to ambiguous or complex situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>- 1 section&lt;br&gt;- ~27 questions multiple-choice questions&lt;br&gt;- 35 minutes&lt;br&gt;- 4 passages: 3 passages with one author and 1 combination of passages from 2 different sources discussing the same topic&lt;br&gt;- Tests ability to draw inferences based on text, determine main ideas of passages, find relevant information within a text, understand a dense, scholarly text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable Section</td>
<td>- 1 unscored experimental section&lt;br&gt;- 35 minutes&lt;br&gt;- Can be Arguments, Games, or Reading Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Sample</td>
<td>- 1 unscored section&lt;br&gt;- 35 minutes&lt;br&gt;- Tests ability to form an argument based on given facts, support an argument, use written English to express an idea&lt;br&gt;- Learn more about how law schools use the LSAT Writing Sample</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Internships & other Programs

- **IHS: Institute for Humane Studies Fee Waiver $300**
  - [https://theihs.org/funding-career-resources/funding-for-graduate-students/](https://theihs.org/funding-career-resources/funding-for-graduate-students/)

- **IRT: Institute for Recruitment of Teachers in Boston**
  - [https://www.andover.edu/about/outreach/irt](https://www.andover.edu/about/outreach/irt)

- **PIKSI: Philosophy inclusive Key Summer Institute**
  - [https://www.piksi.org/programs/boston/](https://www.piksi.org/programs/boston/)

- Flight, Stipend, Room and board, mentoring, application waivers
Navigating Graduate School: Resource Guide for Undocumented Students

- Focus on law, testing requirements, and stat-to-state nuances, amongst other items
Lastly

- No one single route is the only correct one

- Make a name for yourself get the dept. to know you