



# Graduate School Preparation

<h2>Timeline</h2>	<p>Application deadlines vary based on the institution and the program. While most graduate programs do have a deadline, some offer rolling admissions. Generally speaking, you should begin preparing for your graduate school application during the spring/summer prior to your final year of undergrad.</p>
<h2>Entrance Exams</h2>	<p>The type of entrance exam required depends on the intended program, though most graduate programs require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Other types of exams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Graduate Management Aptitude Test (GMAT)</li><li>• Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)</li><li>• Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)</li><li>• Dental Aptitude Test (DAT)</li><li>• Miller Analogies Test (MAT)</li></ul>
<h2>Personal Statement &amp; Essays</h2>	<p>Most graduate program applications require a personal statement and/or responses to specific questions. Both documents usually provide the opportunity for you to share more information about your background, relevant experiences, academic/career goals, and your interest in the program. Personal statements and essays also give the admissions committee a chance to review your writing skills, so proper grammar is a must!</p> <p>If given a specific essay question, the question should be answered fully, barring any extraneous information. Personal statements, however, generally allow for greater freedom. See the reverse side for some self-reflection exercises to get started and additional guidelines and tips.</p>
<h2>Letters of Recommendation</h2>	<p>On average, 3-5 letters of recommendation are needed for graduate school applications. Your recommenders should be people who are able to speak to your academic capabilities, work ethic, interest in and preparedness for the program. Some programs require that at least one or two of your letters be from faculty members. With this in mind, be sure to maintain relationships with your professors, particularly those in your intended field of study. Regardless of who you choose to ask, remember that your recommenders are likely very busy. Letters of recommendation should be requested at least 4-5 weeks before your application deadline. Remember to send a thank you note to each of your recommenders.</p>

For additional information about the graduate school application process, visit the Graduate School page at [www.otterbein.edu/career](http://www.otterbein.edu/career)

# Writing a Personal Statement

## Self-Reflection

1. Why are you interested in the field of study?

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2. What excites you about the program/school?

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3. In what ways do you believe you are prepared for graduate school and to go into the field?

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4. What are your career goals and how do you believe the program will help you accomplish them?

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### Additional Questions to Consider

- Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (for example, economic, familial, or physical) in your life?
- What personal characteristics (integrity, compassion, persistence, etc.) do you possess that make you a good fit for the field?
- Have you had any mentors or supervisors that have influenced you?

### General Guidelines & Tips

- Personal statements are typically 1-2 pages long.
- Tell a story. What is unique or interesting about your life that has influenced your experiences?
- Start brainstorming ideas early!
- Tailor your personal statement based on the questions being asked.
- Seek feedback from friends, family, and faculty. CCPD and Writing Center staff are available to help you too!