

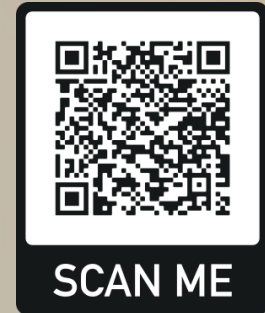


Applying to Graduate School 101

HOUSEKEEPING

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Applying to Graduate School 101

Graduate Studies Resource Center (GSRC)

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Fall 2020

Should I apply to graduate school?...

Factors to Consider

- Your career goals: short-term and long-term
- Time: Master's programs (1-3 yrs); PhD (5-6 yrs); Law (3 yrs)
- Cost / Funding: scholarships, fellowships, grants, loans
- Convenience: location, travel
- Life / Family / Other intangibles

Graduate Studies at CSULB

- Approximately 5,000 students
- Over 100 graduate program options across 65 fields
- 4 doctoral programs
- Standard graduate tuition ~\$8,300 per year for full-time students
- Need-based financial aid available for most graduate programs!

Common Program Options

- Master's degree
- Ph.D. with master's built in (master's degree typically obtained during year 1 & 2 of doctorate upon completion of qualifying exam/comprehensive exam).
- Ph.D. degree

Types of Graduate Programs

Master's degrees

Offered in many fields of study, and vary in coursework and career trajectory

- Two general types of Master's degrees
 - Non-terminal master's degrees: designed to lead to a doctoral degree (e.g., sociology, psychology, biology, English)
 - Terminal master's degree is the highest degree in the field, and does not typically lead to a doctoral degree (e.g., Master of Library Science; Master of Business Administration, Master of Social Work)
- For full-time students, completing a master's degree usually takes 2 years

Types of Graduate Programs

Specialist degrees

- Prepare students for professional certificates, credential or licensing requirements (e.g., credential for becoming a K-12 teacher, counselor, or principal).
- Often earned in addition to a master's degree and will require additional coursework, training, or internship experience.

Types of Graduate Programs

Doctorate degrees – Ph.D.

- Focus on the creation of new knowledge via independent **research**
- Ph.D. recipients typically pursue faculty positions at 4-year universities and/or work in research
- Ph.D. generally takes 5-6 years to complete

I'm graduating soon, when can I apply?

- Get an early start – recommended students begin preparing to applying more than one year before you begin program.
- Application deadlines at many colleges are often 9-10 months before program begins.
 - *Example:* CSULB M.S. Industrial/Organizational Psychology program begins **August 2021** for fall. The application deadline for the program is **December 1st, 2020**

Do I need work experience to apply?

- Many master's, doctoral, and credential programs do ***not require*** full-time work experience, but work experience can help – especially if it is relevant to the field you are applying
- Examples of programs that often prefer/require relevant work experience
 - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
 - Master of Public Administration (MPA)
 - Education Doctorate (EdD)
 - Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT)

Materials needed to apply

- Application/Transcripts
- Entrance Exam (e.g., **GRE**, LSAT, GMAT, CSET)
- Statement of Purpose or Personal Statement (2-5 pages)
- Resume/CV
- Letters of Recommendation (3 generally recommended)
- Writing Sample
- Funding (e.g., scholarships, fellowships, grants, loans)

Materials needed to apply

Application

- Most applications are online and cost from \$70 - \$90 (fee waivers are available for some schools)
- CSULB application is composed of two parts: (1) Cal State Apply application and (2) separate application to specific program

Transcripts

- Should be sent to each college you apply
- Send transcripts from each school you attended beyond high school (e.g., community college, CSULB)

Frequently Asked Questions

- ***What is the minimum GPA for graduate school?***
 - CSU system: 2.5 or higher
 - UC system: 3.0 or higher
 - Private schools: Varies

- ***Will I need to interview to get accepted to a program?***
 - Most masters programs do **not** require an interview
 - Examples of fields that may require an interview: counseling, K-12 teaching, business, and occasionally STEM fields

Resources for GRE Prep

- **Paid services**
 - Magoosh – online service (\$79-179)
 - College of Professional & International Education (CPIE) – on campus (\$500)
 - Kaplan, Princeton Review, Manhattan Prep (\$800+)
- **Free test prep material**
 - Long Beach Public Library
 - Crunch Prep (33 free practice tests)
 - GSRC prep workshops

Frequently Asked Question

- *What is an acceptable GRE score for applying to Ph.D. programs?*
 - Math & Verbal: typically **60th percentile** and above
(score varies by test date)
 - Analytical Writing: generally **4.0+** (4.5+ for competitive programs)

Scaled (Raw) Score	Verbal Reasoning Percentile Rank	Quantitative Reasoning Percentile Rank
170	99	97
165	95	89
160	85	76
155	68	59
150	47	39
145	26	20
140	11	8
134	2	1
130	—	—

Analytical Writing	
Score	Percentile Rank
6.0	99
5.5	98
5.0	93
4.5	82
4.0	59
3.5	42
3.0	17
2.5	7
2.0	2
1.5	1
1.0	–
0.5	–

What role does the statement of purpose play in my application?

- GPA and Exam Scores are telling, but limited...
- Indicator of whether you “fit” within a program/field
- Sample of your ability to write
- Serves as a proxy for interview
- Can be the difference in getting accepted
- Opportunity to sell yourself!

Materials needed to apply

Statement of Purpose or Personal Statement (2-5 pages)

- Reviewed by admissions committee (i.e., faculty in your program)
- General areas to cover
 - Personal background (only if it is relevant)
 - Your educational / professional experience (e.g., work experience, research experience)
 - Why you are a good fit for the program
 - What you plan to contribute to your area of study/field
 - Your future professional goals

Materials needed to apply

- Resume/CV (Curriculum Vitae)
 - Focus on academic/scholarly work – research, scholarly presentations (e.g., professional conference), professional affiliations (e.g., AERA, ASHE)
 - Include work/volunteer experience, particularly if relevant
 - Keep formatting simple
 - Have people in your network proofread

Materials needed to apply

- Letters of Recommendation
 - Typically 3 required
 - Who to ask? Faculty, work/volunteer supervisors
 - How to ask? In-person (email, only if in-person is not possible)
 - What to provide recommender? A list with names of programs, deadlines, resume/CV, draft of statement of purpose
 - When to ask? 2 months before you need them

Materials needed to apply

- Funding your graduate studies
 - Scholarships: on-campus and external scholarships
 - Grants (similar to scholarships): CSU students can receive University Grant covers most of tuition (approx. \$7k/year); need-based
 - Fellowships: may cover all tuition/fees and offer stipend; typically involves work as research assistant, intern, or teaching assistant (very common for doctoral studies)
 - Loans: Similar to undergrad loans, repayment begins 6 months after graduation

How do I become a stronger applicant?

- Make your time at CSULB worthwhile...
 - Join clubs/organizations that support students on the path to grad school
 - Building your resume/CV through research experience, internships related to your field
 - Community service/volunteer work in your field
 - Research different graduate programs and offerings
 - Learn about the application process and create timeline →
Get an early start!

How to Contact GSRC

Online Appointments

Monday-Thursday: 10am-6pm

Friday: 9am-5pm

Website

www.csulb.edu/gsrc

Email

gsrc@csulb.edu