Applying to Graduate or Professional School

To go or not to go?
Overview

- Why go to graduate school?
- What to look for in a graduate program
- Selection factors
- Standardized tests
- Personal statements
- Resources
- Research
Why go to grad school?

• It’s a requirement for your profession—law, medicine, etc.

• Professional advancement/development—MBA, MSW, etc.

• Intellectual curiosity (see next slide!)

• To change your career field
Why **NOT** to go to grad school

Here are some reasons why graduate school may not be a good option for you—at least right now.

• Uncertainty about your career goals or career direction
• Fear that you will not be able to find a job
• Desire to get rich quick
• You are burned out with school and studying
• Other obligations or priorities will keep you from being able to invest the appropriate time and effort

The Office of Career Services 
Riverside Center, Room 116 
www.ut.edu/career
What to look for in a graduate program

- Chance to study with a leading professional in the field
- Cost and residency requirements
- Availability of fellowships and assistantships
- Reputation of school and/or faculty (But don’t get sidetracked by rankings!)
- Environment (including housing options)
- Time line for degree—how long?
- Know exactly what you want to do!
Selection factors

- GPA (major and overall)
- Letters of recommendation
- Relevant experience (work, internships, volunteer experience, coursework, research, etc.)
- Additional requirements—interview, portfolio, audition, etc.
- Test scores
- Statement of purpose (application essay)
Standardized Tests

- GRE  www.ets.org
- GMAT  www.mba.com
  - For information on UT’s GMAT prep course, go to www.ut.edu/gmatprep
- LSAT  www.lsac.org
- MCAT  www.aamc.org
- MAT  www.milleranalogies.com
Personal Statements

• Be concise and specific; show how your background matches the school’s program and philosophy.
• Follow directions!
• Questions vary widely among schools:
  – Some topics are extremely open-ended.
  – Some topics call for you to discuss your past experiences.
  – Some topics inquire about your motives, goals, and ambitions.
  – Some topics require self-assessment or insight into your personality.
  – Some topics invite you to explain blemishes, deficiencies, or gaps in your past.
Resources

- Professors
- Professionals in the field
- Academic Success Center
- Pre-Professional Advising Guide on UT website: [http://www.ut.edu/uploadedFiles/Academics/CNHS/UTampa_Pre-HealthProfessionsAdvisingGuide.pdf](http://www.ut.edu/uploadedFiles/Academics/CNHS/UTampa_Pre-HealthProfessionsAdvisingGuide.pdf)
- Financial Aid Office at the school(s) you plan to attend
Research

- University websites
- Study catalogs
- Talk to current students, alumni and professors
- Professional associations (American Psychological Association, Law School Admissions Council, etc.)
- Visit the campus
Internet Research

- www.petersons.com
- www.gradschools.com
- www.gradschool.about.com
- http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/grad
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.graduateguide.com
What if I don’t get in?

• “Plan B”
  Gain some experience in the targeted field (volunteer, internship, full time)
  • Attending as a “special” student
  • Waiting and reapplying
  • Applying to other programs
Best wishes!