Applying to Graduate School

Trends
A survey conducted by the MIT’s Global Education and Career Development of the Class of 2012 found that 39% of graduating seniors intended to pursue an advanced degree directly after graduation. According to the Council of Graduate Schools, graduate school enrollment is on the rise, and this trend is likely to continue.

Top Graduate School Destinations for MIT Students
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Harvard University
- Stanford University
- University of California-Berkeley
- Boston University
- Cornell University
- University of Pennsylvania
- Johns Hopkins University
- Princeton University
- University of Texas Austin

Common Graduate Degrees
- Master of Science (M.S. or S.M.)
- Master of Arts (M.A.)
- Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Science (Sc.D.)
- Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)
- Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.)
- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.)
- Doctor of the Science of Law (J.S.D.)
- Juris Doctor (J.D.)

Key Skills for Graduate Students
1. Critical Thinking
2. Analytical Abilities
3. Research Abilities
4. Strong Written Communication
5. Strong Verbal Communication
6. Time Management
7. Self-motivation
8. Self-discipline

Top Criteria to Consider when Selecting a Graduate Program
1. Alignment with career interests/goals
2. Quality of the program
3. Strength and reputation of department and faculty
4. Faculty to student ratio
5. Program cost and geographic location
6. Internship or fieldwork opportunities
7. Quality of research facilities, laboratories, libraries
8. Financial aid resources
9. Alumni success and reputation in the field
10. Availability of alumni as a student resource

Exploration Process
Given your criteria, realistically assess what degree and program best suits your needs. Begin researching potential programs, faculty, and facilities in-depth. Explore web sites, professional and scholarly publications, and consult your academic and career advisors. Request information from the schools of your choice early. Keep in mind application deadlines (often Dec. – Jan.) and the time frame for required tests (LSAT, GRE, etc.) Look into financial options and research deadlines for applying for financial aid and scholarships.

Preparation and Application Process Resources
- ODGE resources for MIT undergraduates applying to graduate school: http://odge.mit.edu/undergraduate/resources
- GECĐ resources for applying to graduate school: http://gecd.mit.edu/grad_school
- GECĐ workshop, Applying to Graduate School: http://gecd.mit.edu/resources/workshops
- Information regarding Premed and other health professions: http://gecd.mit.edu/grad_school/health

Additional Websites
http://www.princetonreview.com
http://www.petersons.com
http://www.gradschools.com
http://www.studentaid.ed.gov
http://www.finaid.org
Applying to Graduate School (continued)

Testing Requirements
Depending on your chosen course of study, one of the following tests may be required to demonstrate ability or skills:

- Graduate Record Examination (GRE): [http://www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org), General test and Subject specific including: Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology
- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT): [http://www.mba.com/mba](http://www.mba.com/mba)
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT): [http://www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT): [http://www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)
- Miller Analogies Test (for some Law and Graduate schools): [http://milleranalogies.com](http://milleranalogies.com)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): [http://www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl)

Transcripts
Transcripts must be sent directly to a graduate school from the Registrar’s Office.

Letters of Recommendation
Letters of recommendation are an extremely important part of the process. You should request letters of recommendation well in advance of the deadline for applications. Ask professors or employers in your field who know you well and have a high regard for your work. Information on letters of recommendation can be found at:

- [http://gradschool.about.com/cs/askingforletters/a/recletter.htm](http://gradschool.about.com/cs/askingforletters/a/recletter.htm)
- [http://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradLetter.stm](http://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradLetter.stm)

Essays
A Statement of Purpose is often required and this essay usually describes your research and/or professional interests as they relate to the graduate program. Your essay is an opportunity to emphasize your unique qualities, your motivation, enthusiasm, and maturity, as well as the quality of your writing. For information on writing your graduate school essay:

- [http://gecd.mit.edu/sites/default/files/gradschoolessay_0.pdf](http://gecd.mit.edu/sites/default/files/gradschoolessay_0.pdf)

Financial Aid
*Grants and Assistantships* - Graduate students fund their education in a variety of ways. Grants and assistantships are financial awards that may come in the form of stipends, salary or tuition remission. Find out more information by researching availability of grants, assistantships, and resident assistantships at the institutions where you are applying.

*Scholarships and Fellowships* - Scholarships and fellowships are financial awards based on a variety of criteria. Research and apply for relevant scholarships and fellowships at:

- [http://scholarships.fatomei.com](http://scholarships.fatomei.com)
- [http://gecd.mit.edu/fellowships](http://gecd.mit.edu/fellowships)
- [http://www.researchprofessional.com](http://www.researchprofessional.com)
- [http://odge.mit.edu/finances/fellowships](http://odge.mit.edu/finances/fellowships)
- [http://www.nafadvisors.org/scholarships.htm](http://www.nafadvisors.org/scholarships.htm)

Loans
If you choose to use a federal or private loan to help finance your education, they must be paid back once you graduate. Remember to keep in mind living expenses as well as tuition costs. Investigate both federal and private loans and review payment terms (interest rate, length of loan payments, etc.)

- [http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml)
- [http://www.gradloans.com](http://www.gradloans.com)