

# The Graduate School Application Process

*Amica Center for Career Education*

**BRYANT UNIVERSITY**

*[www.bryant.edu/career](http://www.bryant.edu/career)*

## WHEN TO START APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

It is smart to start early. One year prior to your start date (or sooner) will ensure that you have enough time to research programs and complete all of the requirements of your applications. Even if a program has a rolling deadline, many graduate schools will accept applicants early and a program may fill to capacity before your application is seen. **Most deadlines for a September start will occur between January and March of the same year. Highly competitive programs may require you to apply a year prior to your start date.**

### Be sure to do some personal assessment:

- Why are you pursuing a graduate degree now?
- Do you have the necessary motivation and resources to complete the degree?
- Is a graduate degree necessary for your career goals at this time?
- Will you be able to manage the course load along with other personal and/or work commitments?

## WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A GRADUATE SCHOOL AND PROGRAM OF STUDY

Below are some of the things people consider when applying to graduate school:

- Size of the school and/or the program they are considering.
- Quality of faculty and what areas of expertise they have or research they have completed.
- Ratio of student to faculty
- Quality of technology/library resources
- Whether a Career Services office exists for graduate students
- Where alumni become employed after completing a graduate degree
- Whether practical experience will be gained as part of the graduate program
- What accreditation the program or institution holds
- Where the school is located
- The cost of the program and how much financial aid is available

## HOW TO FIND PROGRAMS

<b>Graduate Programs:</b> petersons.com gradschools.com	<b>MBA Programs:</b> mba.com	<b>Law Programs:</b> lsac.org
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## HOW TO OBTAIN APPLICATION FORMS?

Most schools have their application forms online at their web site or you can request a packet be sent to you by mail.

### WILL I BE REQUIRED TO TAKE A TEST AS PART OF MY APPLICATION?

Check the admission requirements of programs you are considering to see if a test is required. Be sure to figure in prep time for the test and check the timeline to see how long it will take for your official scores to be available so you can plan your application timeline appropriately. The following are some of the more common graduate level tests that may be required depending on the program you are pursuing:

### **GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test)**

Helps business schools assess the qualifications of applicants for advanced study in business and management. The test yields four scores: Verbal, Quantitative, Total, and Analytical Writing Assessment.

You may take the GMAT exam once every 31 calendar days and no more than five (5) times in a rolling 12-month period. If you score an 800 on the exam, you will be prohibited from testing for five (5) years from your exam date. Score range is 200-800. The retest policy applies even if your score from a test administration within that time period is canceled by you.

See [mba.com](http://mba.com) for details and registration.

### **GRE (Graduate Record Examination)**

The **General Test** measures critical thinking, analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study.

The **Subject Tests** gauge undergraduate achievement in eight specific fields of study including:

Psychology	Literature in English
Computer Science	Mathematics
Biology	Chemistry
Physics	Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology

See [ets.org/gre](http://ets.org/gre) for details and registration for general test or subject test.

### **LSAT (Law School Admission Test )**

A half-day standardized test required for admission to all ABA-approved law schools, most Canadian law schools, and many non-ABA-approved law schools. It provides a standard measure of acquired reading and verbal reasoning skills that law schools can use as one of several factors in assessing applicants. The test is administered four times a year at hundreds of locations around the world.

Many law schools require that the LSAT be taken by December for admission the following fall. However, taking the test earlier—in June or October—is often advised.

See [lsac.org](http://lsac.org) for details and registration including information on the **Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS)**. Registration for this service is required by most law schools.

### **Bryant's Pre-law Advisor is Professor Ron Washburn at extension 20602, Faculty Suite J**

### **MAT: (Miller Analogies Test)**

A high-level, analytic ability test that requires the solution of problems stated as analogies. The MAT consists of 120 partial analogies that are to be completed in 60 minutes. The test is intended to measure your ability to recognize relationships between ideas, your fluency in the English language, and your general knowledge of the humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, and social sciences.

An analogy is a statement that suggests two terms are related to each other in the same way that two other terms are related to each other.

PLANE: AIR as CAR: (*a.* submarine, *b.* fish, *c.* land, *d.* pilot)

The Miller Analogies Test is typically administered at colleges and universities that have elected to be a testing site.

### **MCAT: (Medical College Admission Test)**

A standardized, multiple-choice examination designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, and writing skills in addition to knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine.

Scores are reported in each of the following areas: Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences. Almost all U.S. medical schools require applicants to submit MCAT scores during the application process. Many schools do not accept MCAT scores if taken more than three years ago.

See [aamc.org](http://aamc.org) for details and registration.

### **DAT: (Dental Admission Test)**

Administered on computer on almost any day of the year. The test is designed to measure general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability.

See [ada.org](http://ada.org): for details and registration.

### **DO GRADUATE SCHOOLS NEED MY TRANSCRIPTS?**

Official transcripts will be required from all universities and colleges you attended. You typically must request them in writing and there is a fee. Contact each college or university you have attended for their process.

### **WHO SHOULD I ASK TO PROVIDE A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION?**

You should ask individuals to provide a letter of recommendation for you who can comment on your academic ability and preparedness for graduate level work as well as those who can speak to your motivation, work ethic, character and other personal traits that would make you an appealing candidate for a graduate program. Types of individuals typically asked to be a reference include:

- ◆ Faculty
- ◆ College Administrators
- ◆ Employers
- ◆ Internship Supervisors
- ◆ Coaches
- ◆ Mentors
- ◆ Alumni of the Institution
  
- ◆ Individuals who hold a prominent title and are respected by the admissions committee

### **Waiving Your Right to See Letters of Recommendation**

If you have the opportunity to waive your right to see a letter of recommendation, doing so will add more weight to the letter from the committee's perspective. Be sure to provide each individual with a stamped, addressed envelope to make it convenient for them to mail the form or letter directly to the institution.

### **Confidential Credential Service at Bryant**

If you are thinking about graduate school in the future, and would like to secure confidential letters of recommendation now, you may ask individual recommenders to write you a letter and send it to Bryant's Career Center. We will hold confidential letters for you and mail them to the institutions you apply to in the future, upon your request.

### **WHAT ARE PERSONAL STATEMENTS OR APPLICATION ESSAYS?**

Your Personal Statement (also called Application Essay) is an opportunity for you to show the committee who you are and why you are a right fit for their program. Some institutions provide specific questions they want you to answer, while others are broader in their request for information. Based on what you write, the committee will be evaluating you in a variety of ways including:

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Motivation and commitment to a field of study                                       | Writing ability             |
| Major areas of interest   | Research or work experience |
| Educational background  | Short and long-term goals   |
| Reasons for choosing their program  | Level of maturity           |
| Personal uniqueness and what you would bring to the diversity of the entering class |                             |

Do not use the Personal Statement to explain away negative aspects of your application. Attach an addendum to your application or provide a cover letter if there is not a place on the application for this information. Your Personal Statement should be positive.

The Amica Center for Career Education offers the following resources/services to help with Personal Statements:

### **Critiquing Service:**

You may drop a document off at the Career Center for a critique and get it back the next business day after 3pm.

### **Books available for sign out:**

- Perfect Personal Statements
- Graduate Admissions Essays

## **WILL I BE INTERVIEWED AS PART OF MY APPLICATION?**

Some graduate programs include an interview as part of the application process.

This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your communication skills, maturity and enthusiasm for the program.

Most interviewers will be assessing your thinking skills rather than your grasp of technical knowledge.

Even if an interview is not required, it is always helpful to visit a college or university you are considering to get a sense of your comfort level with the campus environment and the surrounding area. Cost of living is also a consideration, particularly if an institution does not provide on-campus housing for graduate students.

## **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A GRADUATE ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR?**

It is to your advantage to develop a relationship with a graduate admissions counselor at the institution you are pursuing, either by email or phone. This individual can answer many questions regarding your chances of getting into a program and the status of your application as it is coming together. Be sure to use their expertise during your application process.

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT/ESSAY WRITING TIPS**

### **Do:**

- Assess what may set you apart from other applicants
- Grab the reader's attention with an interesting first paragraph
- Make sure your essay/statement actually answers the question asked
- Organize your answer in a thematic and/or chronological order
- Provide specific examples for the points you make
- Tailor your statement /essay to each school
- Use everyday language
- Follow directions regarding word limit
- Project a positive attitude – confident and enthusiastic

### **Don't:**

- Just list activities – this isn't a resume
- Just write what you think the committee wants to hear
- Lecture the reader
- Make excuses for poor grades
- Focus only on childhood experiences
- Use gimmicks
- Use too many "I's"

## ***Good luck in your pursuit of graduate school!***

Whether you decide to pursue a degree immediately following your graduation from Bryant or further along in your future, the Amica Center for Career Education is available to help. Make an appointment at any time to discuss your graduate school plans.

### ***Bryant University. Amica Center for Career Education***

1150 Douglas Pike, Smithfield, RI 02917, [careers@bryant.edu](mailto:careers@bryant.edu)

**Hours:** M-F 8:30am-4:30pm **Evening Hours:** T & W 4:30pm-6:30pm

Information in this handout was adapted from the following sources:

- Peterson's Graduate & Professional Programs, An Overview, 35<sup>th</sup> edition (in our library)
- Perfect Personal Statements by Mark Alan Stewart (in our library)
- [mba.com](http://mba.com), [ets.org](http://ets.org), [lsac.org](http://lsac.org), [aamc.org](http://aamc.org), [ada.org](http://ada.org), [harcourtassessment.com](http://harcourtassessment.com)

## **ONLINE RESOURCES**

- [www.gradschools.com/](http://www.gradschools.com/)
- [www.gradschooltips.com/](http://www.gradschooltips.com/)