

Graduate School Application Process

Before you start...

- **MS or PhD?**
MS if seeking additional intellectual depth but planning on industrial career, PhD if planning on industrial research or subject expert or academic positions
- **SUGS (Sequential UG Graduate studies)?**
Take masters level courses as an undergraduate, complete masters in two terms instead of three. If you plan on PhD apply directly into a PhD program instead.
- **What area?**
ChE keeps your options open, but courses focus on fundamentals. Could also redefine yourself through a graduate program,, e.g. IOE, Environmental, BME, MSE, chemistry, macromolecular...

Research experience

(if applying for PhD)

- Contact faculty directly
For academic credit, or pay, or as a volunteer
- UROP – UG Research Opportunity Prog.
<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/urop/>
- NSF Research Experiences for UGs
http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp
- Summer Research Opportunity Program
www.cic.net/students/srop/introduction
- SURE – Summer UG Research Experiences
sure.engin.umich.edu/

Summer

Take the GRE (www.ets.org/gre)

Computer based, can take once every 21 days and up to 5 times in a 12 month period. Take the time to study for this...

Verbal reasoning

- “measures your ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it, analyze relationships among component parts of sentences and recognize relationships among words and concepts”

Quantitative reasoning

- “measures problem-solving ability, focusing on basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis”

(A typical mistake is thinking you don't have to review for this one, then doing poorly on it...)

Analytical writing:

- “measures critical thinking and analytical writing skills, specifically your ability to articulate and support complex ideas clearly and effectively”

September

- **List of schools**
 - contact UM faculty in areas of interest
 - www.phds.org/graduate-school/
 - <http://www.che.ufl.edu/cee/>
 - “CEE Grad Guide” App
 - US News and World Report rankings
- **Obtain application materials**
 - Graduate schools
 - Fellowships
 - grad.engin.umich.edu/funding
- **Research areas of interest**
 - Web search, faculty
 - Search NSF, NIH, DOD web page for grants
- **Contact recommenders**
 - Must include faculty currently doing research with
 - Not graduate students
- **Keep info for each school organized**
 - Deadlines, GRE codes, profs to work with....

October

- Grad school applications

Order transcripts www.ro.umich.edu/transcript

Write statement of purpose – next page

Ask faculty for recommendation letters

Don't use UM's reference letter service,

schools will send emails to your referees

Inquire about prospective student visits

- Fellowship applications

NSF

www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp

Hertz

www.hertzfoundation.org/

National Defense Science & Engineering

<http://ndseg.asee.org/>

GEM Minority – Apply for Masters one first

www.gemfellowship.org

National Physical Science Consortium

www.npsc.org

Don't forget grad.engin.umich.edu/funding

Statement of purpose

- Masters or PhD?
- Your long term goal in going to grad school
- No long biographies, save for personal statement
- Enthusiastic, easy to read
- Why specifically you want to go to that school:
Identify interests, faculty you'd like to work with,
show you've researched the school.
- Research experience highlights, be specific
- Internship highlights, be specific
- Show you're well rounded, volunteering, groups, etc.
(work it in, don't dwell on it...)
- Double check that you answered all required questions
- Double check their requirements re. page/word max
- Edit for content, spelling, grammar
- Have someone (advisor, UM Career Center) review it

Personal statement

- Personal story
- Reasons you are interested in pursuing this path, how you learned about it, what steps have you taken so far toward your goals
- How the degree helps you achieve your goals.
- What they need to know to better understand your situation.
- Share your passion for your field.
- Chance to explain reasons for a bad semester
- Don't write something every applicant could write – how are you different from the other applicants?

Recommendations

- At least 2 from faculty
 - GSI could provide quotes for faculty...
- Set up appointment to discuss
- Request confidential letter, has greater believability
- Don't use Career Center letter file, faculty have to enter recs themselves
- Provide recommenders with electronic versions of:

Resume

Unofficial transcript (except advisor)

Statement of purpose

Personal statement

List of schools and deadlines

November/December

- **Finish applications**
 - About 6 schools is typical, more is fine
 - Get organized, takes longer than you think
 - Send in transcripts, GRE scores, others
 - Have someone review your essays
 - Check email, Facebook, LinkedIn, cell phone
 - outgoing messages to ensure they're professional
 - If strongly considering PhD, apply for PhD
 - Confirm everything got there
- **Checklist to compare schools**
 - Key research areas, professors
 - Funding possibilities
 - Size of school, classes
 - Location
 - Teaching opportunities
 - Health insurance
 - Happiness of graduate students

Winter term

- Send updated transcripts
Particularly if improved Fall term
- Visit schools you've been accepted to
See next page
- Final decision date
April 15th
Let definite no's know early
Some schools will have bonuses for early decision.
Don't decide based on bonus, go for the best fit.
- Let recommenders know where you end up...

Campus visit

- Visiting week-ends - schools pay
 - Get ahead with schoolwork...
 - Free up week-ends for your top schools ASAP
- Questions for graduate advisor
 - What percent of students pass qualifying exam?
 - Teaching requirements/opportunities?
 - What's a typical time to graduation?
 - What would you change about the program?
- Questions for faculty
 - What's the structure of your research group?
 - What type of student succeeds in your lab?
 - How often do you meet with your students?
- Questions for students
 - What's the campus / city / department like?
 - How is your research group organized?
 - How often to you meet with your advisor?
 - What do graduate students do for fun?
 - What's your advisor like on a bad day?