

## **Getting into Graduate School PART 2**

Some schools still require the GRE, but not all do. It is important to compile a list of schools you are interested in and make note if you need to take this exam.

### **GRE scores**

- It is recommended to take the GRE at LEAST 2-3 months before the application deadline. Most college students suggest that the best time to take the GRE if the schools you are applying to require it is between the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. It is important to leave enough time to take it again and enough time to make sure your scores get sent to the schools you are applying to. If you have questions about studying for the GRE, go back to Getting into Graduate School, Part 1 and read the section on GRE's.
- If you have taken the GRE's and are happy with your scores, then you can go to the list of programs that you are interested in and go to the ED FIND website OR the website for the program and see if they provide information about what range of GRE scores they want. Keep in mind schools will usually provide you with a range, no one will tell you exactly what score you need to get into their program because few schools use JUST these scores to pick their class. I would encourage you to apply to a school that you really want, even if you are a little outside of their rankings - especially if you have a good GPA.

### **Grade Point Averages - GPA's**

- Most schools will have you calculate your own GPA to put into an application. Your overall GPA is on your unofficial transcript, however some schools ask specifically for your Major GPA. You have to calculate your Major GPA on your own. You calculate it with only HESP courses. You can calculate with the [GPA Calculator on Testudo](#).
- Some students are tempted to submit their GPA differently than what it actually is- NEVER do this and remember that your grades and GPA are checked with your transcript.

### **Transcripts:**

- If the application deadline is before the end of the fall semester, you will need to have your transcript sent without your fall grades. As soon as your grades are posted for the fall, send a NEW transcript.
- You will also need to have your complete undergraduate transcript(s) sent AFTER graduation. Most schools that offer admission, will make it contingent upon you completing your degree AND your spring semester grades.
- You must have each college or university that you have EVER attended submit an official transcript. So if you took even just one class at a community college, even if it is included on your UMD transcript, you still need to have that college submit a separate transcript.

- Unless you plan to use a high school AP credit for your biology or physics requirement, you do NOT need to request your AP scores to be sent.
- You can request your transcripts to be sent from UMD by going to Testudo and clicking on [Transcript Ordering](#) - then you can click on “order official transcript” and it will redirect you to the website called “National Student ClearingHouse” where you will follow the directions given to order your transcript.
- If you have to request transcripts from other colleges you have attended, go to their website and follow their procedure. Not every college uses the same online platform for ordering transcripts, so make sure you check.
- Most colleges require payment for each transcript they send so be prepared! You will get an email when your transcript is sent.
- Most colleges will not request a paper copy of your transcript, so it will be sent digitally, but it still takes time for this transcript to be processed. Make sure you order your transcript at least 3 weeks in advance because during peak application deadlines, it can take longer to process your transcript requests.
- I recommend that you request a transcript prior to fall grades being posted and upload it to your application on CSDCAS. Once fall grades are posted you can request a new transcript, this way there is no hold on your application while you are waiting for your fall grades. CSDCAS cannot mark your application as complete unless a transcript is posted on that application, some schools will not even look at your application if your transcript has not been processed so this ensures that that will not happen.

### **Letters of Recommendation:**

#### **General Information:**

- Your letters should typically come from ACADEMIC sources, particularly from the Hearing and Speech Faculty. If you have relevant work or clinical experience you can submit an extra letter.
- Start with the faculty who know you the best. Try to be mindful about who you will ask- for example, you enjoyed your HESP120 class your freshman year and did well in the class, but have not interacted with that professor since Freshman year. It will be difficult for that professor to write a strong recommendation letter for you about your academic potential based on a 100 level class you took 3 years ago. BUT, if you had that professor for HESP120, was a TA for them, worked on a research project with them, then they would be able to write you a strong letter.
- If you need contact information of a faculty member who is no longer at the school, see the academic advisor for email addresses for faculty off campus.
- It does not matter if you are going into speech language pathology and the faculty member who you want to write for you is in audiology or vice versa.
- If you have a great relationship with a faculty member in another department you certainly can ask them for a letter of recommendation. Keep in mind that many faculty in other departments may not be as familiar with the process, so make sure you give them plenty of time to complete their letters.

### How do I ask for a letter of recommendation?

- The question you should pose to a faculty member is not, “Can you write me a letter of recommendation?”, but rather, “Do you feel as though you could write me a positive letter of recommendation for graduate school”.
- This should be done in person if at all possible. Only a last resort should be email.
- Keep in mind that there are many students applying and few faculty members. Some faculty members may decide that they are only going to write for a specific number of students, or only for students that they have had interactions with outside of class, etc. Don't take this personally! For many of the faculty, this is an enormous task that occurs during a very busy time and we want to be able to write you a thoughtful and complete letter. It's not a bad idea to have a backup person in mind as well.
- Below I have listed what most faculty will want to have in order to write a letter of recommendation. Be sure and ask each member of the faculty if there is anything else they would like to see (GRE scores?, ).

### Documents needed to write a letter of recommendation:

- Be as organized as possible to make things easier for your letter writers. Most letter writers would like the following:
  - **Unofficial Transcript**
  - **Resume**
  - **Personal Statement (If it is not done, a draft is okay)**
  - **List of schools you are applying to with information about how to submit the letter of rec and the due date. (Example Below, easiest to make on Excel)**
- All of this can be sent over email, or you can make a packet. Make sure to check with what your recommender prefers.

Name of School	How to Submit	Due Date
University of North Carolina	Online through CSDCAS	December 8th
Purdue University	Online through CSDCAS	January 1st
University of Maryland	On UMD Website, will send a request through the UMD graduate portal.	January 15th

- If you have a letter that is due before the end of finals - **HIGHLIGHT IT!**
- Give the faculty member all of these materials for all of the schools at one time- try not to add any schools later!
- **GIVE FACULTY AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE!** Ask your recommenders when they would like to have your information.

- Some faculty members wait until right before the deadline to write your letters, do NOT bother your recommender about completing your letter, I would only send a maximum of one follow up email, perhaps when you have submitted your application. It is good to be on top of this, but do not continuously ask your recommender when they will get to your letter, they are most likely writing a lot of letters for a lot of students!
- **Thank the faculty member! Write a thank you note expressing your appreciation for their time. You also should let them know where you end up choosing to go!**

### **Paper Recommendations:**

- Most formats now are online/digital, so this section may not be needed, but just in case, here is how to go about hard copy letters of recommendations!
- If there is no form, just enclose an addressed and stamped envelope with any directions from the program. If there is a form, fill out all the information on the top about yourself and recommender. There is usually a place where you have to sign if you wish to waive your right to see the recommendation letter. Some faculty won't write a letter unless you waive your right to see it and some don't care. If you think about it, that's really fine, because you should never ask someone to write a letter for you unless you know it will be positive.
- For each form that needs to be sent you need to attach a stamped and addressed envelope (No, the University doesn't pay for us to mail your letters )
- If the Program wants you to send everything together in one envelope, address the stamped envelope to the address you will be at during January. Don't assume that you can make arrangements to pick up any letters-unless the recommender agrees to do it that way. Much of this will take place over Winter Break or January and many of the faculty are not around to drop letters off. Faculty will sign and date across the envelope flap and then you can put it in the big envelope to send to the graduate program. DO NOT OPEN THE LETTERS!!

### **CSDCAS (pronounced SIDCAS) Applications:**

- Most of the programs you will apply to use CSDCAS (Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service), but not all of them do. CSDCAS is very similar to the Common Application you may have used to apply to college. The schools that use CSDCAS will tell you that in their application information.
- Information about CSDCAS: <https://www.csdcas.org/>
- List of schools on CSDCAS: <https://members.csdcas.org/program-directory/Search/slp-programs-126204>