By now you should have taken the GRE’s and come up with a pretty good list of the schools you are interested in.

**GRE scores**

- If you have not taken the GRE’s yet, you need to do it soon. You need to leave enough time to take it again AND enough time for your scores to get to the schools you are applying to. If you have questions about studying for the GRE, go back to Getting into Grad 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 you are interested in and go to the ED FIND website OR the website for the program and see if they give you information about what range of GRE scores they want. Be prepared for some schools to have no information, some will have current info, and some will have the OLD GRE scores (200-800 raw scores). If you go to this website: [http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/concordance_information.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/concordance_information.pdf) you will see concordance tables that you can use to compare your new GRE scores from the old ones. Again, keep in mind that schools will usually provide you with a range-no one will tell you EXACTLY what score you need to get in to 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 good GPA’s.

**Grade Point Averages-GPA’s**

- Most schools will ask you to figure your own GPA to put into an application. Your overall GPA is on your unofficial transcript. If they ask for your major GPA you will need to figure that yourself. You only figure it using the courses that are HESP (if you took LING200 you can add that). You can use the GPA calculator on Testudo, although I think it’s too confusing. Here is another one [http://www.back2college.com/gpa.htm](http://www.back2college.com/gpa.htm).
• Remember, for most of you, you will have some grades on the old +/- system and some on the new system. So on your transcript you may see a B+ that = 3.0 points in some places and a B+ = 3.3 in others. When the UMD submits your transcript to a graduate program, there is an explanation about this, so you do not have to worry about explaining anything. Some schools may also ask you to figure out your last 60 credits. That means exactly that. For most of you that will mean starting somewhere about the 2nd semester of your sophomore year.

***Students are often tempted to “fudge” their GPA’s. Keep in mind that NO program goes by your word alone. They all get checked!!! So DON’T even think about it! It certainly doesn’t help your admission chances if you have “fudged” your GPA.

• If the application deadline is before the end of Fall Semester, you will need to have your transcript sent without your Fall grades. As soon as your grades are posted for the fall, I would send a NEW transcript. Just because a school has a deadline of Dec.15th, doesn’t mean that they will be looking at your application on that date. When they look at yours you would like your most recent transcript to be there. It takes us about 6 weeks to look at all our applications.

• ***Just a note, you will also need to have the University send a transcript AFTER graduation. Most schools that offer you admission, will make it contingent on you completing your degree AND your Spring semester grades.

TRANSCRIPTS:

• You must have each college or university that you have EVER attended submit an official transcript. Even if you just took one class at a Community College and EVEN if it is on your Maryland transcript, you must submit an official transcript from each school.

• 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 be sent.
• You can request your transcripts be sent from UMD by going to “myUMD.edu”- logging in and going to the bottom of the page where it says Transcripts and Verification. Follow the directions given.

• If you have transcripts to request from other colleges, go to their website and see if they can be ordered online. Then follow their procedure.

• Most colleges require payment for each transcript they send-so be prepared! Also most will email you when the transcript is sent.

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:**

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

• Your letters should come from ACADEMIC sources and particularly from Hearing and Speech Faculty. If you have some relevant work or clinical experience, you can submit an extra letter (JUST ONE!! more only annoys the readers). Obviously you should start with the people who know you best; professors you have had for classes (preferably the classes with good grades), or run the lab you have worked in, or that you have TA’d for. Keep in mind that graduate schools ask for letters that can assess your academic potential for success in graduate school. Here’s an example: you really liked your HESP120 professor and you did well in her class, but you haven’t had any other interaction with her since freshman year. It will be difficult (although not impossible) for her to write a strong letter about your academic potential on the basis of you getting an A+ in a 100 level class. BUT, if you had her for HESP120, was a TA for her, worked on a research project with her, then she would probably be willing to write you a letter of recommendation.

• Some of you may want to ask faculty who are no longer here to write you a letter. This is fine, if you know when they are on campus and can be there to ask them in person, that’s better than asking by email, but you won’t always be able to do that with the off campus people. See the academic advisor for email addresses for faculty off campus.

• ALSO: it doesn’t 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.
A note about asking faculty from other academic departments. 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 faculty 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 as a last resort should your request be in email.

- Keep in mind that there are many of you and few of us!!! Some faculty may decide that they are only going to write for a specific number of students, or only for people 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:**

- The more organized you are, the easier it is on your recommenders! Most recommenders would like the following:

1. Unofficial transcript
2. Resume
3. Letter of intent (if it’s not done...or in a draft...that’s ok)
4. List of schools you are applying to with information about the type of recommendation (online or written) and the due date.
• An easy way to do this is to make a packet (in a folder or large envelope and put the list on the front. (see example below)

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR  Susie Q. Gradstudent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Online or Paper</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U of North Carolina</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>December 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>Online (CSDCAS)*</td>
<td>January 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U of Maryland</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>January 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podunk U</td>
<td>Paper (form and addressed stamped envelope enclosed)</td>
<td>February 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wattsa Matta U</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>February 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alaska</td>
<td>No form, just letter on University letterhead</td>
<td>No deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(addressed and stamped envelope enclosed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>Online (CSDCAS)*</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If you have a letter that is due before the end of finals....**HIGHLIGHT IT!

• Give the faculty member ALL of the materials for ALL of the schools at one time in a folder or envelope.
• Try VERY HARD not to add schools later....if you have to, apologize profusely!!

**Paper 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!!

**Online recommendations:**
• Please fill out everything you can on the application about yourself and about the recommender. Make sure you include the correct email address for the faculty member. You can get them on the HESP website or most of the faculty have all of their information on the signature section of their emails. Here is mine as an example:

Kate Skinker, M.A., CCC-SLP
Director of Undergraduate Studies
Dept of Hearing and Speech
0131 Lefrak Hall
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
301 405 4219
ksinker@umd.edu
CSDCAS (pronounced SIDCAS) Applications:

- Some of the programs you are applying to may be members of CSDCAS (Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service). This is like the Common Application you may have used to apply for college. The schools that use CSDCAS will tell you that in their application information.

- Information about CSDCAS can be found at http://www.capcsd.org/csdcas/students.php

- A list of the schools that use CSDCAS can be found at http://www.capcsd.org/csdcas/directory.php

- PLEASE GIVE FACULTY AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE! Ask your recommenders when they would like to have your information.

- Some of us will wait to do them when finals are over, but some would prefer to get them done earlier.

- We all recognize that this is a REALLY big deal to each and every one of you, and although it is the first time you have done this, keep in mind we do this every year. I will warn you that we all have lives outside of the University and obviously this is a VERY BUSY time. Even if you give us the information in October, some faculty may wait until the very last day to send in your letters (I have often done them on New Year’s Day watching parades and football!) Keep in mind that the graduate program that your letters are going to is just like ours, and their faculty is busy writing letters for their students as well. In thirty years of writing letters, I have never heard of someone being denied admission because the faculty letter of recommendation is a day or two late. Programs will realize that this is not under YOUR control.
• I would suggest that if you really want a good letter, DO NOT BUG THE FACULTY MEMBER UNTIL AFTER THE DEADLINE HAS PASSED!!!

THANK THE FACULTY MEMBER! A nice note expressing your appreciation for their time means a lot. Also, when you decide where you are going, let them know. All of the faculty are interested in where our students end up.