

Quick Tip Sheet

Rhode to Grad School

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Is Graduate School Right for Me?

Step 1: Review our Graduate School module on our website: uri.edu/career > modules

Step 2: Determine if your prospective career path will require a graduate degree by reviewing:

- O*NET (www.onetonline.org)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh)

Step 3: Research graduate programs using the following websites:

- www.gradschools.com
- www.petersons.com
- www.princetonreview.com

Pro-Tip: Arrange individual meetings with your URI professors to help you assess program/degree pros and cons (*consider: curriculum, mission, program faculty, funding and practicum opportunities*). **Bonus:** By fostering relationships with faculty in your field, you are laying the groundwork to reach out to these faculty members for letters of recommendation.

Step 4: Investigate admission requirements and deadlines. Note: If the graduate program requires scores from a standardized exam such as: GRE, GMAT, LSAT - take this seriously and give yourself the recommended six months to prepare.

Step 5: Gain experience through internships, extracurricular activities and participate in networking opportunities with professional associations to enrich your resume.

Step 6: Acquire multiple perspectives (professors, professionals, and/or graduate school admission representative) to proofread your application documents (resume/CV, personal statement, etc.) before submission.

Pro-Tip: Need help writing your personal statement? See our worksheet on the back!

Step 7: Choose a graduate program that meets all your needs (*not just your preferred location*).

Pro-Tip: Keep yourself organized as you go through the application process. Create a spreadsheet of important dates and materials required for each program.

Need timeline help? See resources below:

- <http://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school-advice/application-timeline>
- <https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/grad-school-timeline.aspx>

What is a personal statement, and how do I write a great one?

Personal statements (sometimes also referred to as statement of purpose) is similar to writing a cover letter when applying for job roles. **There is no one-size-fits-all-programs personal statement.** Each program you apply for should have a personal statement tailored to the program requirements, and should sell the reader on your abilities and skills.

An effective personal statement should include why you are interested in the program you are applying to, but also how will you contribute to their program? What interests and previous experience make you an ideal candidate?

Usually there are two types of personal statements:

1. *General*: Write a personal statement describing your experiences and goals
2. *Specific*: Tell us about an accomplishment that is important to you

Step 1: Preparation

Before writing your personal statement, identify how you meet the program’s criteria. Based on the program details, what you know from the website or information sessions, what is the program looking for in a candidate?

Program Qualifications <i>(These will vary for each program you apply to):</i>	Personal Accomplishments <i>(Talents, interests, attributes that make you special):</i>	Community Experiences <i>(Clubs/orgs, volunteer, civic engagement):</i>	Academic Accomplishments <i>(Honors, awards, scholarships, achievements):</i>	Professional Experience <i>(Internships, part time work, research):</i>

Step 2: Add in what makes you unique

What are some of the ways that this program matches your personal values? How will you contribute to the program to further its value or achieve its goals? In other words, how can you bring your personal statement from a “me” to a “we” focused document?

Make yourself a desirable candidate by adding in an idea, topic or issue that you are particularly passionate about. This is an effective essay opener, and allows the reader to find out more about you in an alternative way.

Pro-Tip: Look at the faculty that are part of the graduate program. Are they doing research or focusing in an area that you are interested in, or could contribute to in a positive way? This should be included in your personal statement!

Step 3: Ask for feedback

After reviewing your personal statement, make an appointment to have it reviewed for grammar and spelling with the [URI Writing Center](#). Ask multiple people to review it: faculty, supervisors, colleagues, family members.

For more tips and pointers, check out these two websites for resources:

- <https://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school-advice/statement-of-purpose>
- <https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/graduate-personal-statement.aspx>