

Preparing for Graduate School

SOAR - Humanistic Social Sciences

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Welcome!



About Me

- Michaela (she/her)
- B.S. in Public Health from UAB in 2022
- PhD in Economics from Emory in 2027 (hopefully)
- (pained) devotee of ATL sports

To Grad School or Not to Grad School?

Where do I even start?

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4. What types of jobs am I interested in?
5. Do I like school?

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Questions to ask:

1. What topics/fields make me excited?
2. What do I want my career to look like?
3. What do I want my day-to-day to look like?
4. What types of jobs am I interested in?
5. Do I like school?

Paths are Endless!

There is (almost) always more than one path to a destination - make the decisions that align best with your goals, and know that you can always adjust.

Why Grad School?

I am interested in
a career in research

My dream career requires it

I want to increase my earning/
promotion potential

My family expects it of me

School is less scary
than the workforce

All my friends are doing it

Practice verbalizing your goals and interests - this is a lifelong skill!

Which Grad School?

Narrowing the Field

Knowing what you want from your grad school experience will help you know what kind of program to look for.

Things to consider:

1. Location (domestic vs. international)
2. Full-time vs. part-time
3. Cost
4. School outcomes
5. Extracurricular opportunities (internships, research, field training)

Stay Organized!

Information you need for each school:

- application deadlines
- unique materials required
- non-unique materials required
- number of recommendations

Application Materials

My Best Tips:

- take as many practice tests as possible
- what's good for your body is good for your brain
- keep an eye out for exam waivers and free resources
- these scores do not define you!

#1 Tip

If standardized test scores aren't required and your score isn't phenomenal, don't report it!

Sections

1. Contact
2. Education
3. Experience
4. Honors/Memberships/Awards
5. References

Resources

Run your CV by your Career Center, friends, or a professor to get feedback.

Letters of Recommendation

The best recommendation letter comes from someone who knows you well!

1. Reach out to ask for a recommendation ASAP
2. Give them a list of each deadline and upload procedure
3. Ask what materials they need from you
4. Send (kind) reminders as necessary 2 weeks and 2 days before the deadline

Personal Statement

Purpose

Give application reviewers a sense of your personality, motivations, interests, and character - anything not communicated through CVs and exam scores!

- What interests you about your chosen field?
- Are there any experiences that led you to where you are now?
- What is your motivation to pursue graduate school?

DO NOT let AI write your personal statement.

The sooner you can turn your interview into a conversation, the more comfortable both you and your interviewer will be.

Questions to be prepared for:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What draws you specifically to this program?
3. What is a challenge you faced recently and how did you overcome it?
4. How do you handle pressure and stress?
5. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

Making the Decision

- Campus visits
- Talk to current and past students
- Talk to faculty
- Department output

Red and Green Flags

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Collaborative environment and friendly students

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Faculty are well-reputed in the field