

# TIPS ON CREATING A WINNING APPLICATION

## BEFORE YOU APPLY:

- ❖ **Get organized.** Support yourself in your own efforts to succeed! Take the time to set up a good system (a spreadsheet, calendar, or wall chart) to track deadlines, application requirements, contacts & tasks.
- ❖ **Find programs or funding opportunities that match your interests and goals.** Plan on doing some serious research to find them. **Don't just apply for the money.** Apply because you want the degree or the experience. Show that your professional goals are in line with program guidelines. Pay careful attention to restrictions about who can apply.
- ❖ **When applicable, connect with the faculty member you want to work with.**
- ❖ **Plan ahead.** Research your university's system for requesting transcripts; give the authors of your letters of recommendation enough time; plan on following up before it's too late to make a difference.

## IN YOUR APPLICATION:

- ❖ **Cover the basics.** Fulfill *all* the elements of the application. Meet deadlines with time to spare. Demonstrate that you can follow directions.
- ❖ **Pay attention to details.** Make your application reflect the high level of care and consideration that you've put into preparing it:
  - ✓ Double check for spelling and grammar errors. Get friends, professors & mentors to proof your work. Use your campus career and writing centers!
  - ✓ Be consistent in how you report your name. The name on your SS card, your application, and your application support materials should be identical.
  - ✓ Make sure your email, phone & address will be active when offer letters go out.
  - ✓ Check your email regularly! This is how most programs will follow up.
- ❖ **Use your resume, essays and personal narrative to show who you are.** Show your leadership potential **with** evidence that you have made a difference already (previous or other experiences). Show interest, enthusiasm & motivation. Show relevant background, skills or experience. Deliver a consistent message. GPA & standardized test scores are important, but don't let average or low numbers stand in your way.
- ❖ **Demonstrate strong writing skills and show proficiency in the English language.** Use your campus career and writing centers!
- ❖ **Know how to get strong letters of reference.** Choose references carefully: seek out recommenders who can speak to your skills, ambition and work ethic. Contact references early and provide them with a copy of your resume or CV.

## AND LASTLY:

- ❖ **Keep trying** – if you don't get an award one year, apply again next year!

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*We'd love to hear your thoughts about this information! Please take a few seconds to share your ideas at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Applying\\_CreateAWinningApplication](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Applying_CreateAWinningApplication)*



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