

- [12 Step University Selection Process– Part 1 and 2](#)
- [University and Department Rankings](#)
- [How to search for Graduate Schools](#) (different approach)

Apply to Universities – Right way

Selecting Universities is major task, but to get admission, there are so many things that the student can do, so that the application stands out from rest of the students. It's a major misconception about GRE Scores related to admission. Almost every student I talk thinks, having Low GRE score will lower the chance of getting admission.

Graduate Schools Admission documents – Checklist

- 1) GRE Scores
- 2) TOEFL Scores
- 3) Academic Transcripts
- 4) Recommendation Letter
- 5) Statement of Purpose
- 6) Resume
- 7) Paper Presentation Abstract
- 8) Project Descriptions
- 9) Copies of certificates
 - Sports
 - Leadership Skills
 - Tem Work
 - Debates
 - Volunteer Activities
 - Community Services

Graduate School Admission Decision – Major Factors

Each and every credential plays a major role in getting admission. If students have low GRE score, then strong [recommendation letter](#) and higher academic credentials will make up for it. So, does the statement of purpose.

You could have completed a project, which a specific professor might be working on. So, low GPA and GRE score will be compensated because of one's specific project work or paper presentations.

So, a student have to make sure all the documents sent has right amount of information that will make the job easier for the admission committee.

In order to give a different perspective, I put together an article which contains answers from different department admission requirements, on [how GRE Scores are used for admission](#) and how much importance Graduate School Admission committee gives to GRE Scores.

Statement of Purpose (College Essay)

Students can express their personality through statement of purpose. With 2 pages, all the creativity, accomplishments, research potential can be expressed. Don't try to copy the statement of purpose. It's very easy to identify if the statement of purpose was prepared by student or copied from someone's content.

Express Personality

If your score is verbal is 300 and TOFEL is less than 70 and submitting a well crafted statement of purpose, definitely raises a question. Also, writing score in GRE Analytical section will show the writing skills.

Here are some articles that explain how to draft and craft a statement of purpose, including tips from graduate school professor.

- [Statement of Purpose](#) with lots of Samples and tips from professor
- [12 Tips to write high impact SOP](#)
- [Questions about drafting College Essay](#)
- [How to be Original – Draft your own Statement of Purpose](#)

Resume

Resume explains student's academic achievements and skill sets. Good resume should have following characteristics

- Easy to read
- Visually appealing
- Contact information clearly presented at top
- Skills consistent with objective described using keywords
- Education listed in reverse chronological order
- Job Experience lists
- Extra Curricular Activities

[Resume writing tips](#) and [28 questions about resume](#) will give a good idea on how to prepare a resume that will create good impression about you.

Guide to write email to professor to secure admission

Not all professors respond to emails they receive from students about admission. Remember, they are busy people, who will not have time to read boring and lengthy emails. They will receive 100's of emails from students. So, if you were to highlight your case, then you will have to follow the email writing guidelines listed by a professor.

In the following article professor has some harsh words to student who send email asking for some form of aid or admission to graduate school. I strongly suggest every student to read the article – [Writing Email to Professor – Think Again.](#)

Scholarship

Financial Aid is available in 3 forms

- Scholarship
- Teaching Assistant Ship
- Research Assistantship

Usually if academic profile of the student is very impressive, universities will give admission with Scholarship. With scholarship, student will get In State Tuition fees ([difference between In state and Out of State tuition fees](#))

Majority of the students don't get admission with scholarship. Students have to spend at least 1 semester to get some form of funding. In mean time they can work up to 20 hours on campus jobs to pay for living expenses.

Student Visa Preparation

After getting I-20 from Universities, it's time to prepare for student visa interview and stamping. When attending student visa interview, you got to have all the [original documents](#) and know what to expect during the interview.

During the visa interview process, Visa officer in American Consulate look for 3 important things

- Does the student have an academic capability to complete the studies in U.S.?
- Does the student have enough financial resources to afford the cost of education in U.S.?
- Does the student have interest to study in U.S. or got admission for the sake of entering U.S.?

Student Visa Interview

Visa officers are trained personnel's who can find lots of information about you in less than few minutes time. If student has some form of scholarship, then it makes the job much easier. Because, U.S.

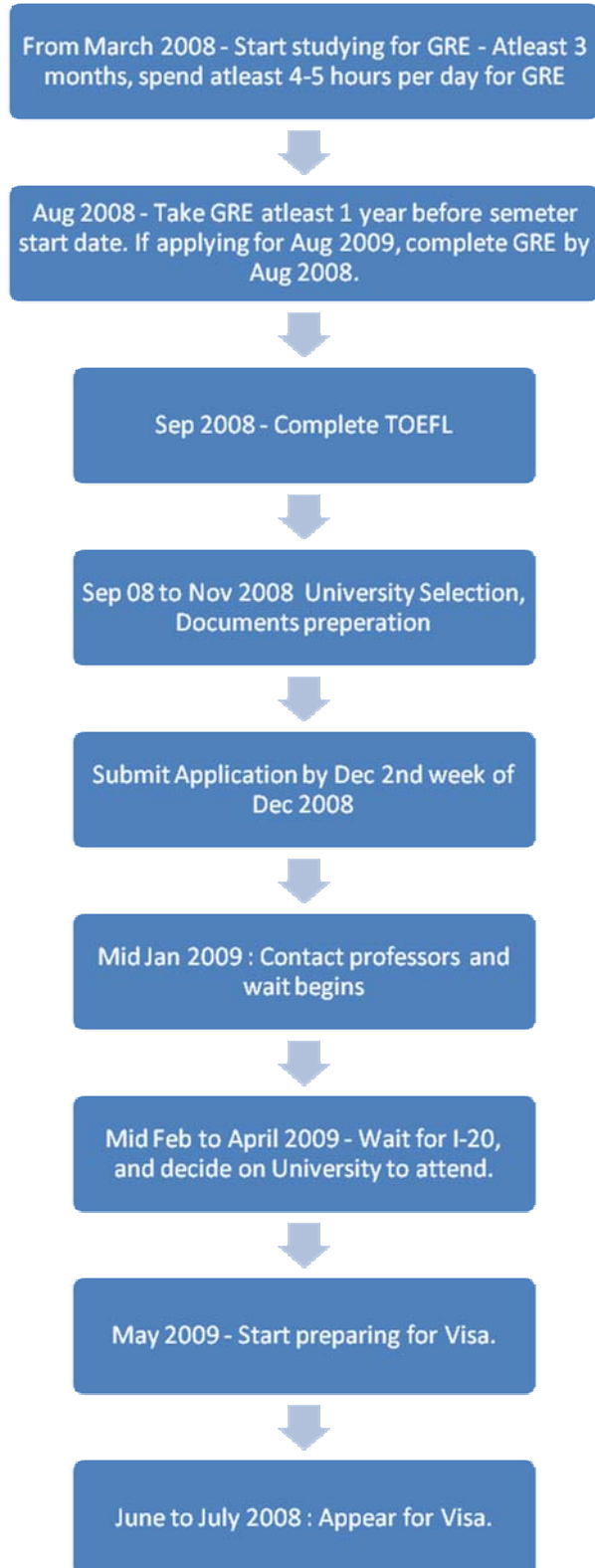
University have recognized the academic achievement and have given scholarship and also that reduces the amount of money student has to show as proof for bank balance.

Here are some of the articles that will explain in detail about bank balance requirements, how to face the interview, sample bank documents and what happens when students submit fake bank documents.

- [Tips to get F-1 Visa, but no tricks](#)
- [Bank Statement for Student Visa](#)
- [How much bank balance is required for student visa](#)
- [F1 Visa Cancelled due to Fake Bank documents](#)
- [Bank Balance for student with scholarship](#)
- [Original Documents used for Student Visa Interview](#)
- [Bank Statement is required for 3 years?](#)

Timeline - GRE Preparation to Student Visa

I have been thinking of creating a timeline that will include when to start preparing for GRE, GRE Test date, Application process, admission decision and student visa.



Following flow cart will explain the timeline to apply to graduate school and it's the best case scenario. It's always better to apply as early as possible.

Universities have separate deadlines for considering the application for Scholarship and regular application deadline. Usually, International students have early deadline when compared to students who are already in U.S. and Domestic students.

In the above case, I said about applying for schools by Dec end. If you plan to apply for high profile schools, they will have deadline in Nov 2008 or so for Fall 2009 semester. So, it's important to be aware of deadlines.

There are many students who plan to take by Dec 2008. Thos students can apply till Feb 2009, but choice of universities will be limited. But, students can still apply.

Other Topics of Interest

This e-book gave an introduction to U.S. Universities admission process and what to expect. I plan to write couple of more e-books that will be related to life of students in U.S. and how to adapt to U.S. culture which would include what student will go through from the day they enter into U.S. till they find a job.

In other e-book, I will give introduction to job search techniques that worked for me, how to negotiate salary, benefits and immigration issues relayed H1B visa and OPT.

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If you have any questions or comments, please free to send me an email. I look forward to hear from you.

Links to other interesting articles

- [Students Spending Habits](#)
- [36 Questions – Right After landing in U.S. airport](#)
- [My first week in U.S. – Pleasant one indeed](#)
- [Students Laptop Buying Guide](#)
- [5 Common questions about Universities – by students](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

1) I have taken GRE twice; will both scores get reported to Universities, if so which score will Universities consider for admission?

It doesn't matter how many times you take GRE, all the scores will be reported to the school and it will appear in the GRE Score Sheet. Universities might take the best scores for each section from different test scores or sometimes they might take average of all the scores reported.

2) How many times can I take GRE?

I have seen students take GRE for 2 to 3 times, but taking GRE twice in 2 months time is not going to improve your score by much. Remember, GRE is computer adaptive and questions have been tested over years before it appears in the actual test.

Research by ETS has shown, GRE scores doesn't change much by appearing for GRE twice in 2 months. Spend at least 3 months time between exams. It might improve your GRE score.

3) Can a student complete M.S. without getting any form of financial aid?

Yes, that's possible too, but it's unlikely. Students will usually find some form of income. It could be from part-time job at least.

4) How much will part time job pay?

Student can work only on-campus for only 20 hours per week. On campus jobs pay \$7 to \$10 per hour, which will pay for monthly living expenses.

5) Do you know anyone who came back to native country, since no job was available after M.S.?

I haven't seen anyone who went back to India or to their native country after graduating. It's easy to find job here, but you got to put in efforts. Searching for job, it is a full time job.

6) How much can someone who just graduated from schools earn?

This is the most common question every student asks before applying to U.S. To get an idea on how much Software Engineers make refer to [Average Salary for Masters Degree](#)

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