

Support Your Application with Experience

Getting Experience from Unpaid Work

- Volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. Take time out of your schedule to get some experience, such as with after-school programs, volunteering at your library, community assistance, etc. Consider finding opportunities through www.volunteermatch.org or www.idealists.org, or through your local community agencies.
- Consider your hobbies or other interest that may have relevancy.

Getting Experience in School (either during or after)

If you are current student:

- Put yourself in situations over a long enough period where a professor or supervisor can appreciate your traits and abilities.
- Summer can be an excellent time to find employment or volunteer opportunities as a professor's or research assistant.
- Undergraduate research experience is *always* relevant (although not required).
- Discuss your experiences with an academic advisor to see what program/degree would be a best fit – see which of your experiences are relevant
- [The Importance of Bringing the Real World into Graduate School](#)
- [Getting Experience is Essential Preparation for Graduate School](#)

If you have been away from school for a while:

- Examine and evaluate your professional and academic experiences.
 - What experiences have you had that fit well into programs you are considering applying to. Do any recent experiences have relevancy?
- Discuss your experiences with program advisors to see what program/degree would be a best fit based on your experiences
- Can you apply your professional experience to the program(s) you are considering?
- Have a Growth Mindset!
 - Believe that you still have the ability to grow and learn
 - Keep yourself motivated
 - What did you learn from past mistakes and experiences?
- Look into your hobbies, or outside interests that may be relevant. Do you do anything on your free time that connects well with the programs you are considering. Whether paid or unpaid, you can add these experiences as part of your application process. If you feel your experiences connect well to the program, showcase them!

Develop a Passion Project

- Are there any hobbies and outside projects that have connection to what field you may be interested in?

- Social media platforms have given ability for others to express themselves, their ideas, and projects – use this to your advantage! Create content that is connected to your interested field of study.

Build Relationships

- Establish relationships with work colleagues, supervisors, managers, etc. Besides providing a strong recommendation letter for graduate school, they may also be able to connect you with new opportunities to learn.
- Join an alumni networking group at your alma mater.
- Consider becoming a member of the professional organization or association for your field of interest. This can help you to not only learn more about the field, but also connect with other professionals. [What is a professional organization?](#)
- Connect with program staff and faculty before you consider applying