



7 Habits of Highly Effective Applicants

1. See the big picture.

View the whole application. Think about the parts and how each part should add to a more complete picture of you. As an example, the faculty who make admissions decisions will see your transcripts, so you don't need to talk about grades, but you can talk about what you learned and how it prepared you to do graduate work. Also, remember that having an incomplete application is never acceptable and wastes the time of those reviewing your application. Follow directions, and get it done!

2. Know your audience.

Before you begin the application process, survey the work of the faculty members in the College of Education. Faculty members from individual programs in the College of Education review applications, so get familiar with the people you are writing to. Knowing who will review your application will help you tailor your application for the appropriate audience. This means that applicants should have a clear idea of what they want to study and why. Highly developed research questions aren't necessary, but take some time to think about what you want to learn.

3. Do your reading.

Survey the articles and books being produced by the faculty of the program you are applying to. You can get a flavor for some of the work you might be asked to participate in. Graduate schools place great trust in the students they select, and being aware of the kind of work that goes on can help you prepare for graduate study in that program. It's appropriate to apply if you don't see your research interest represented—because you can add something to the conversation too—but know what work is already going on. This will give you a sense of how you can contribute, and it will give you a place to make a connection, something to write about in your statement of purpose. Also, when you read works by faculty members, more often than not, you'll be inspired by the amazing work going on!

4. Put your best foot forward.

Show how your experience relates to the program you are applying for. You've made it this far, and odds are that what you've been doing has influenced your decision to apply to graduate school, and the work you've done has prepared you in some way for graduate work. For example, if you are applying for a degree with a practice component, be sure to mention what you learned working in the field in your statement of purpose and on your resume. Your work/life experiences tell a lot about you, and connecting them to work in the College of Education helps your application tell a complete story.

5. Ask questions.

Don't have all the answers. The University of Washington is a research university, and people here contribute by asking questions. Inside the College of Education, pretty much everybody has the goal of making schools the best they can be, but how they go about that varies dramatically. Framing yourself as a learner who can add to the community gets you ready for work in the College.

6. Contribute.

How can you contribute? Show what you bring to the College of Education through a clear, concise statement of purpose and detailed resume. This demonstrates your ability to do graduate work. Talk about the work going on at the College. Connect your interests and the work of the College, and think about where that combination will lead. How can you contribute to the field? How can you take the knowledge you will gain from the College and go out and make the world a little bit better?

7. Use your resources.

Use the resources around you to make sure that your application is free of errors and paints an accurate picture. If you are still in school, use the local writing center for help with your resume and statement of purpose. Also, use the career center at your college or university for application tips. Ask friends and relatives to review your materials. Ask them to challenge what you say, not just give you compliments. Make sure a second set of eyes reviews your application—this is a big deal!

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