# The Catholic University of America - Adulting

## Professional Development

In this section we will cover some of the more basic, but still hugely important, issues surrounding professionalism in young adults as they begin to establish themselves as members of the adult working class. A lot of people have held jobs as teenagers and throughout college, with varying levels of love for those jobs, and opportunities to advance our professionalism skills. Once in college, many students have internships and start to get their feet wet in the professional arena for the first time. Young adults observe their superiors, survey what their same-aged peers are wearing and how they act, and make incremental adjustments as they understand how to carry themselves at work. Still, some norms and standards of professional practice go unspoken, meaning that many of us are not made aware of such norms until we’ve made a mistake, or “have been called out.” The Counseling Center staff would like to help students avoid some of these hidden pitfalls, and hope that the information below helps you become the well-rounded professional we know all CUA students strive to be!

1. *Professional Salutations*
2. *Building a Resume*
3. *Thinking About Jobs/Internship?*
4. *Thinking About Grad School?*
5. *Graduate School Entry Exams*

### Professional Salutations

“I don’t like talking on the phone. Just text me!” We’re going to go out on a limb here and assume that you’ve said that yourself, or been given that feedback by a friend or family member at some point since you got a cell phone. As a staff we’ve joked about how many of us have transitioned to texting over calling and how that has coincided with the increase in “robocalls” over the past few years (as this section's author was typing they received a call from an 888 number…). We talked about how letting so many calls from unknown numbers go to voicemail has increased the amount that we check our messages. And then we realized, some of us had not updated our voicemail greeting in years, and thought that we likely were not alone. Though the first voicemail greeting you created in high school is probably incredibly fun and clever, that may not be the impression you want employers and other professional contacts to have of you when you don’t answer their call. Check out this short video for suggestions and examples for creating your own professional voicemail greeting!

* Video: [Professional Voicemail, Voicemail Greetings Examples, Professional Voicemail Greeting](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr9emEu7dbs)

Along with recording a more professional voicemail greeting, we also recommend creating a strong signature line for outgoing emails. This is something that many people find relatively easy to do, so we’ve provided a link to an easy-to-digest article addressing creation of an email signature. Enjoy!

* Yesware: [9 Professional Email Signature Examples (& Why They Work)](https://www.yesware.com/blog/email-signature/)

Writing Professional Letters

* Whether you’re writing a cover letter for a new job or application, or conducting ongoing professional correspondence, we advise you to visit the Center for Academic and Career Success’ page: <https://success.catholic.edu/career-support/letters/index.html>

### Building a Resume

Building a resume (or curriculum vitae/CV) is one of the most exciting, and simultaneously anxiety-provoking activities that young adults engage in as they transition into the workforce full-time. For many young adults, this is the first time that they have amassed enough short-term professional experiences to show that they “know stuff” and are “prepared” to take on a new challenge. It is also a time when we all get to sit back and reflect on our academic, professional, and extracurricular accomplishments laid out chronologically. This gives us a unique look into our own developmental milestones, and reminds us of the challenges that we overcame to get where we are now. The other side of this though is that we also have the chance to take stock of areas where we think we are deficient in, leading to worry that these perceived “holes” in our resume will cost us a job. What’s the natural response to feeling inadequate? Trying to plug the holes and/or cover over the gaps. More often than not, when creating a resume, this shows up as adding extraneous details that distract from our best qualities.Well, we’re here to help with all that.

The Center for Career and Academic Success (CACS) has detailed sections to help with CVs and resumes, and also plenty of samples for different professional industries: <https://success.catholic.edu/career-support/resumes/index.html>

Since there are so many resources online, the Counseling Center staff has also collected a few links that will help guide you on your resume building journey. As always, if you want to really dig into this process to improve your skills further, we encourage you to make an appointment with a CACS advisor.

* Indeed: [10 Resume Writing Tips to Help You Land a Job](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips)
* Zety: [45 Best Resume Tips & Tricks: Amazing Writing Advice](https://zety.com/blog/resume-tips)
* Resume Genius: [How to Write a Great Resume | The Complete Guide](https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/how-to-write-a-resume)
* Pongo: [5 Rules for Building a Great Resume](https://www.pongoresume.com/articles/420/5-rules-for-building-a-great-resume.cfm)

### Thinking About Jobs or Internships?

The Center for Academic and Career Success should be your next stop, even if you know how to write a resume. An advisor will be able to walk you through the different options available to you, to maximize the efficiency of your application. They can then help you prepare for the interview itself, or continue networking with alum or trusted employers.

* Locating possible opportunities: <https://success.catholic.edu/career-support/jobs-internships/index.html>
* Preparing for interviews: <https://success.catholic.edu/career-support/interviewing/index.html>
* Networking: <https://success.catholic.edu/career-support/networking/index.html>

### Thinking About Grad School?: Admissions Standards & How to Choose a Program

Having just discussed the process of creating your resume or CV, we now move on to considering what to do if going to graduate school is the path you’re set on following. Though there are numerous options to consider in pursuit of a graduate degree, there are some important things to think about in terms of fit for each individual. Among the more obvious, but not often discussed factors to consider is that of time. Masters programs are almost certainly going to take less time than doctoral programs, so it’s smart to consider how long you can wait to “start your career/life,” if going to graduate school is your choice. No matter what type of program you choose to pursue, the literature, and a lot of anecdotal evidence provided by our staff, indicates the following are general standards to meet for admission into a graduate program: GPA >/= 3.0; Advanced writing skills; Relevant coursework; Relevant work experience; and, Above average entry exam scores (more on that later). In order to assist you in getting a sense of how that translates to the real world, below is an example of minimum eligibility requirements courtesy of the University of Texas at Austin.

* Minimum Admission Requirements, UT - Austin: [Eligibility for Admission Consideration](https://gradschool.utexas.edu/admissions/where-to-begin/eligibility-for-admission-consideration)

Now onto the topic of how to choose a program. First and foremost, once you’ve declared your major, you should start thinking about whether or not that will lead you down a road that leads to graduate school.

If you already know what type of program you want to pursue (e.g., psychology, law, medical school, etc.), the next step in choosing a program is to consider the following:

(1) Are you passionate about the career path you would be pursuing and mission of the program you would be attending?

(2) Does the program explicitly offer training that aligns with your interests? And if not, is it clear that you can create that path for yourself within the program?

(3) Do you have relevant experience that you can apply to the work you’ll do in graduate school?

(4) Does the program have a history of graduates finding financially secure job after graduation?

(5) If the program checks all of my boxes academically and professionally, am I willing and able to move to attend?

Considering these questions is useful in deciding which programs to apply to, and we hope that the following resources will be helpful tools for you moving forward.

* Inside Higher Ed: [On the Art of Selecting a Graduate Program | GradHacker](https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/art-selecting-graduate-program)
* GoGrad: [How to Choose the Right Graduate Program in 2018](https://www.gograd.org/resources/choosing-graduate-program/)
* Community for Accredited Online Schools: [Choosing the Right Grad Program](https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/choosing-the-right-grad-school/)

### Graduate Entry Exams: GRE, LSAT, & MCAT Basics

Applying to graduate school often comes with the assumption that we will also have to take some sort of entry exam. The most commonly discussed entry exams are the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). While many graduate programs have similar general minimum eligibility for admission, not all require the GRE, or any comparable entry exam. Below is a link that describes the different types of programs that likely do not require the GRE, and provides a list of graduate programs that are known to not require the GRE.

* PrepScholar GRE Prep: [Can You Get Into Graduate Schools Without GRE Scores?](https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/no-gre-required-graduate-school/)

Now, if you’re already sure that the career path and graduate program(s) you want to pursue require some sort of entry exam, we’ve got something for you too. Below you will find a brief description of the GRE, LSAT, and MCAT. The review will generally cover what information each exam is testing for, what an “average” score is, and will identify where you can find a list of testing dates and sites. We have also included links to resources that describe each test in far greater depth.

* GRE: The GRE is primarily used by graduate and business schools, in combination with an applicant’s academic record and supporting documents to assess the applicant’s readiness for graduate level studies. IT is composed of three sections: Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing. In a nutshell, the GRE is built to assess: your proficiency analyzing and evaluating written material, your critical thinking skills, and your problem solving skills. Scores range from 130-170. In each section an average score is between 145 and 155.
* The Princeton Review: [About the GRE Test](https://www.princetonreview.com/grad/gre-information)
* Kaplan: [What is GRE? - All About The GRE Test](https://www.kaptest.com/gre/what-is-the-gre)

LSAT: LSAT stands for Law School Admission Test. Similarly to the GRE, the LSAT is built to assess: your proficiency analyzing and evaluating written material, your critical thinking skills, and your problem solving skills. The content of the test differs in that items are constructed to meet the needs of law school admissions officers, thus the wording and test structure is significantly different from the GRE. The LSAT is scored on a scale of 120-180, with an average score of 150, though common wisdom suggests a competitive score is 160 or above.

* GoGrad: [Guide to the LSAT: What to Know About the Law School Exam](https://www.gograd.org/lsat_guidebook/)
* Peterson’s: [An Overview of the LSAT Test Structure and Content](https://www.petersons.com/blog/an-overview-of-the-lsat-test-structure-and-content/)

MCAT: MCAT stands for the Medical College Admission Test. Again, like the GRE and LSAT, the MCAT is built to assess: your proficiency analyzing and evaluating written material, your critical thinking skills, and your problem solving skills. The content of the test differs in that items are constructed to meet the needs of medical school admissions officers, thus the wording and test construction differ from the other two exams. The MCAT is scored on a scale of 472-528, with 500 being an average score. There are four sections to the MCAT, which are scored on a scale of 118-132 with an average score of 125.

* The Princeton Review: [About the MCAT Exam](https://www.princetonreview.com/medical/mcat-information)
* Kaplan: [What is the MCAT - Know All About MCAT Exam](https://www.kaptest.com/mcat/what-is-the-mcat)

If you’re reading this you have reviewed the *Beginner’s Resource Guide to Adulting* in its entirety. Congratulations, and thank you for taking the time to invest in yourself! The Catholic University Counseling Center staff hopes that this information was meaningful and useful to you, and encourages you to share this with your friends and peers if you feel so inclined. Growing up is an amazing life experience and we believe that these resources will assist you at *this* stage of that never-ending process. Happy Adulting!