



UNIVERSITY APPLICATION ORIENTATION

COHORT 2014

**Applications and Admissions  
to Graduate Programs in U.S. Universities:  
Process and Procedures**

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**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Alternates

# Where are You in the VEF Fellowship Program Process?

Nominees

YOU ARE HERE!

## Process A



## Process B



# Application Action Plan



# YOUR GOAL UNTIL MAR 28, 2014

- To get admission, with financial aid, into top U.S. graduate programs that accept VEF financial terms.
  - Five universities recommended by U.S. professors
  - Other universities of your choice, including safety school(s)-> HOW

# Key to successful graduate school application

Finding the right match/fit in terms of a program and  
an advisor/mentor

- Do thorough initial research
- Select the best graduate program that matches your research interests and career goals
  - Find the right advisor/mentor in your field of study/area of specialization. Align your interests with faculty interests. Review the faculty's research areas (very important);
  - **Look for a program that best matches your preparation and your qualifications**
  - Review the admission criteria carefully – do you have what they are looking for?

Note: Aim high—do not underestimate your competitiveness

# Considerations

- Professors and their research (from their website)
- Your academic interests and how you will contribute to their research
- Accreditation of university and degree program
- Ranking
- Funding
- Opportunities for training and internships
- Student services
- Location

# Application Documents

- **Application form**
- **Statement of purpose (SOP)**
  - Be author of your own, start early, contact SOP reviewer early
- **Letters of recommendation (LOR)**
- **Supporting documents**
  - Educational documents
    - Certified transcripts: translated, Vietnam's grading system ([available from EducationUSA](#))
    - University diplomas
  - Evidence of financial resources (VEF financial support letter)
  - Evidence of English proficiency (TOEFL & GRE) (sent directly by ETS)
  - Awards and merits (certified English translation)
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Explanation of your Vietnamese name (optional)

# Application Form

- IMPORTANT to state that
  - For Nominees: “I am a nominee for a VEF Fellowship and I am seeking supplementary financial support from the school.” (with the VEF financial support letter included in your application)
  - For Alternates: “I am seeking full financial support from the school; however, as an alternate for a Vietnam Education Foundation Fellowship, I may be awarded a fellowship that would require supplementary financial support from the school. I will inform you if my status changes.”
- check (✓) boxes asking if you request financial support from the university.

# What is an outstanding application?

- Good past academic performance
- High test scores
- Statement of purpose (original, unique, and personalized)
- Letters of reference (reasonable, specific, personalized)
- Significant experience (**research**/teaching/work experience)
- Good match between your academic goals and university program, availability of resources, as well as mentors

# What is an outstanding application?

- *VEF financial support letter*
- *Awards and recognition*
- *Motivation*
- *Demonstrated ability to take on challenges*
- *Understanding of what graduate studies would involve (coursework, research, publication, & teaching assistantship)*
- *Well written application ->*

**YOUR EXCELLENT PREPARATION, POTENTIAL,  
AND PROMISE FOR GRADUATE STUDY**

# Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

- Very important; no substitute for great LOR [Confirm your qualifications, Provide additional information about)].
- Should be **reasonable, specific, & personalized**
  - **Reasonable:** recommender **knows you and your work** ;**has qualifications** to evaluate you; title is less important than the depth of what is written
  - **Specific:** provides specific information, examples, contains details of your preparation and promise, demonstrates your breath, and tells little stories about you.
    - Example: What was your rank in class? What is the outcome of a project you have done? How do you relate to others?
  - **Personalized:** gives insight into who you are and believes in your potential
  - **Contents of LOR should match SOP** (work, research, and/or teaching experience)

# Curriculum Vitae

- Spend time writing and rewriting your CV
- Make it short (1-2 pages) and sharp
- Most notable:
  - GPA
  - Class rank
  - Awards/honors
  - Research experience
  - Publications
  - Relevant work experience
  - Special talents/skills

**Key: Your CV should indicate that you are an outstanding student**

# Selecting U.S. Universities

- Be strategic as to where you apply – dream school(s) and a safety school
  - Five recommended U.S. universities
  - Others of your choice:
    - U.S. News Education school ranking:  
<http://www.usnews.com/sections/rankings/index.html>,
- Also consider
  - Schools that have already had successful VEF Fellows and/or Vietnamese students.
  - Schools where well-known professors in your field teach (reference lists)
- Google search: Key words of research interest, fields of study, professor names, schools, etc.

# Application Timelines

- Application season: late September to mid December
  - Different from university to university, from discipline to discipline
  - Weekly reviews of complete applications
- Apply early
- Admission decision: December 15 to early March
- Deadline to inform VEF: March 28, 2014

# Contact Universities & Professors in the U.S.

- Make sure your application is complete.
- Review application status online.
- Contact admissions office
- Send a personalized email to the professor.
  - Craft a good Email subject
  - Do homework, study & think, make it short but sharp.
  - Personalized letter gets more attention.
  - Don't send exactly the same letter to every professor.
  - Might attach your CV with the letter.
- Be persistent and proactive.

# Formula for Success

4 “Ch”s

- Chuẩn bị
- Chăm chỉ
- Chủ động
- Chiến lược

**CHIẾN THẮNG**

# Summary

To enhance your application:

- Cultivate effective LORs
- Start to write a superior SOP **NOW**
- Be strategic in selecting mentors and graduate programs
- Prepare tailored application docs (SOP, LORs, CV, scores, diploma, merits and awards, research, extracurricular activities, leadership)
- Follow up & report admissions to VEF.

**Thank you  
&  
GOOD LUCK!**



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