



UNIVERSITY APPLICATION ORIENTATION

COHORT 2013

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

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Where are You in the VEF Fellowship Program Process?

Alternates

Nominees

YOU ARE HERE!

Process A



Process B



Application Action Plan



YOUR GOAL UNTIL MAR 28, 2013

- To get admission, with financial aid, into top U.S. graduate programs that accept VEF financial terms.
 - 5 universities recommended by U.S. professors
 - Other universities of your choice

Prepare to Apply

- Study the schools
 - Visit schools' Web sites
 - Visit professors' homepages
 - Learn about their current research
- Prepare your applications tailored specifically for them
- Know application timelines -> submit application before the due date



What do the School and Professors Expect from Graduate Students?

During your degree program, beside doing coursework well, you are expected to:

- **Carry out research**

Requires you to be intelligent, creative, motivated, proactive, able to work with others

- **Publish papers**

Requires communication skills, good organization

- **Assist with teaching**

Requires communication skills (esp. spoken English)

- * **HARD WORKING**

After your degree program, you are expected to:

- **Have a successful career (successful alumnus/a)**

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.”
- 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 are requesting financial support* from the university.

Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

- LORs are very important:
 - Confirm your qualifications
 - Provide additional information about you (vs. application, CV, and scores).
 - A good LOR should be **reasonable, specific, & personalized**
 - **Reasonable**: recommender knows you well and has the qualifications to evaluate you.
 - **Specific**: cites examples, provides specific information, and tells little stories about the student.
 - 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 what kind of person you are and believes in your potential.
- ⇒ **Contents of LOR should match SOP** (research experience, work experience)

What Makes an Application Stand out?

High test scores (TOEFL, GRE, GRE Subject test) only get you into the short list

■ To be selected, you have to make your application stand out in addition to the VEF Financial support letter

– **SOP**

– **LORs**

– **CV** (background & research experience, GPA, **awards**, honors, extracurricular activities, leadership, publications, and skills)

-> Schools/professors read these to **get a whole image of you**

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 the U.S. Universities

- Five recommended U.S. universities
- Others of your choice:
 - US 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, 2013

Contact Universities & Professors in the U.S.

- Make sure your application is complete.
- Review status online.
- Contact admissions office by e-mail--the quickest and easiest way to get answers.
- 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.
 - Indicate that you visited professor's homepage and find a good match.
 - 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

Conclusions

To be a successful applicant to highly regarded U.S. graduate schools:

- Prepare well the application docs (SOP, LORs, CV, scores, diploma, merits and awards)- research, extracurricular activities, leadership
- Submit applications early
- Follow up & report admissions to VEF.
 - Work **diligently** and **patiently**.
 - Be confident and motivated.
 - Do homework: study and think! Be specific, Create an image that stands out.
- Be proactive and persistent.

**Thank you
&
GOOD LUCK!**



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