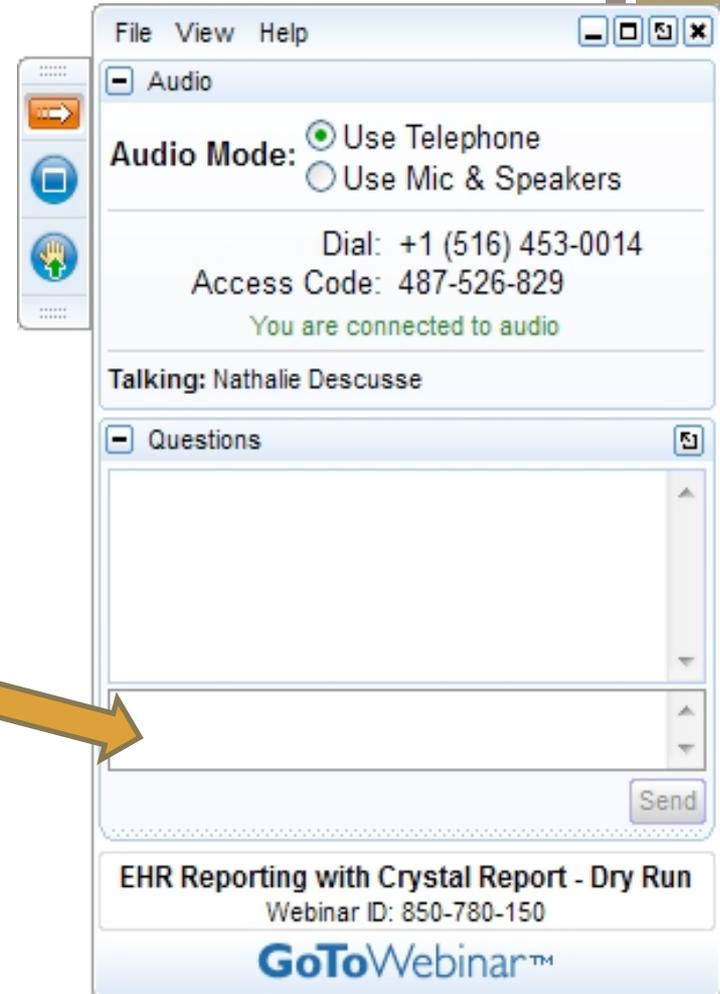


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## Getting Prepared for Graduate School: Websites for students and instructors

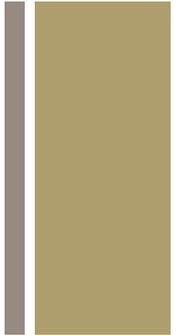
# +Technical Details

- Webinar is being recorded
- Presentation materials will be posted at [www.cacollegepathways.org](http://www.cacollegepathways.org)
- To submit questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “Send”
- Please complete our survey after the webinar





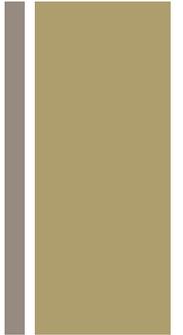
# The UC Davis Guardian Professions Program



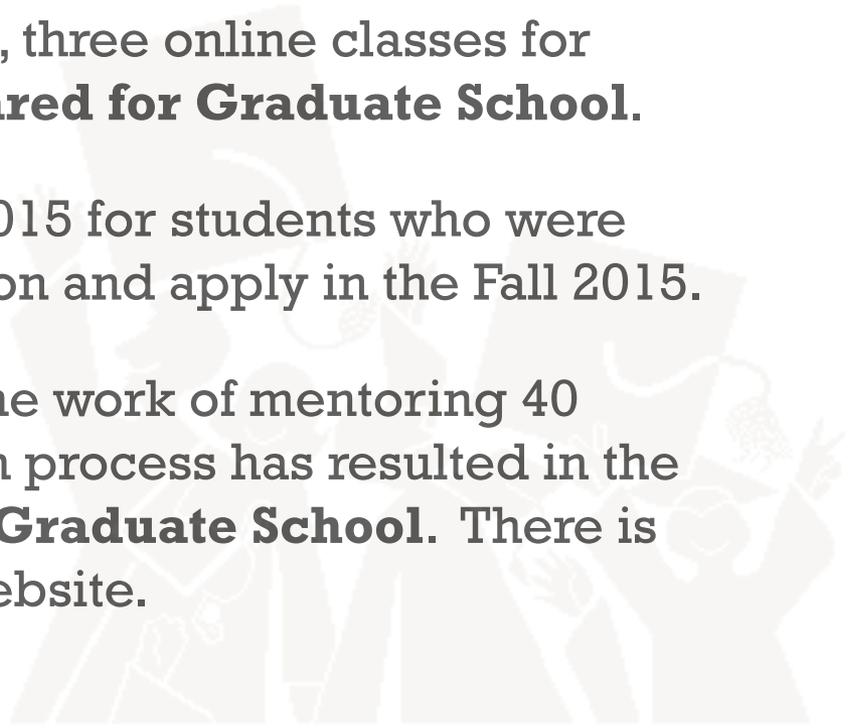
- A support program for students who are interested in pursuing advanced degrees and have a background in foster care.
  - Educate undergraduates about graduate school, the advantages of earning an advanced degree and the career opportunities.
  - Offer supportive services to former foster youth to apply for advanced degrees.
  - Coach applicants and provide small scholarships to cover the associated expenses.
  - Provide supportive services while enrolled in graduate school.



# Applying for an advanced degree is a complex process



- For application cycle 2014-2015, three online classes for different phases: **Getting Prepared for Graduate School**.
- Online class started in Spring 2015 for students who were ready to work on their application and apply in the Fall 2015.
- Material for these classes and the work of mentoring 40 students through the application process has resulted in the website: **Getting Prepared for Graduate School**. There is an accompanying Instructors website.



# Website homepage

Guardian Professions | Mail - Sylvia Sensiper | Mail - Sylvia Sensiper | California Youth | Google Calendar | SmartSite@UCDavis | myucdavis | Getting Prepared

https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/guardian-professions-program/

Apps | Espanol | Health | Writing | Foster Care | Furniture | Photography | Journals | Financial | Best Senior Care in Davis | Myths of Academia | Buddhist sites

Process and Discovery | Getting Things in Order | Put Yourself on Paper | Professional Schools/Portals | Teaching Cases | More Information

## Created by the UC Davis Guardian Professions Program

This site has been specially developed for California's former foster youth. Whether you are a working professional thinking about heading back for a graduate degree, an undergraduate exploring career options, or a high school student thinking about the future, this site has much of the information you will need. Applying to graduate school is a complex process, but we've broken it down into steps and processes. There are suggestions, links to resources and examples of essays of successful applicants. The information is based on two years of work with former foster youth who have been successful in their pursuit of graduate degrees. Our GPP students are attending graduate school programs at CSUs and UCs across California, as well as at USC, Stanford and Boston University. You can read some of their stories in the Teaching case section. You can find the contact information for the GPP Director at the bottom of this page.

### Process and Discovery:

[Start here](#) if you are interested in going to graduate school but aren't exactly sure of your direction, what discipline or disciplines you want to study and what kind of program (PhD, Masters, professional degree) you want to pursue.



### Getting Things in Order:

[Start here](#) if you know what kind of degree or program you want to pursue and want to find out about pre-requisites, tests you will need to take and some of the application essentials. If you are ready to make a timeline, this is a good place to start.



### Put yourself on paper:

[Start here](#) if you are ready to start working on a graduate school application. The application requires a number of written representations in the form of Statements of Purpose and Personal Statements, resumes, and scholarship statements.



### Professional Schools/Portals

Interested in pursuing a medical or dental degree, law degree, a Masters in Public Health or training as a Physician's Assistant? [Start here](#). You need to apply for many professional degrees through a singular 'portal' where your application materials are summarized and then sent to your top choice programs/schools.

### Teaching Cases provide profiles of successful applicants

[Start here](#) if you would like to read about some of our successful applicants and their journey's in pursuit of an advanced degree. You will also be challenged with questions that will help you apply their 'lessons learned' to your own situation.

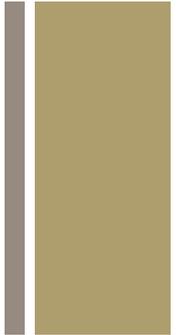
**UC Davis Guardian Professions Program**  
Office of Graduate Studies 250 Mrak Hall  
One Shields Avenue, University of California, Davis  
Davis, California, 95616

**Director: Sylvia Sensiper, PhD**  
(530) 752-5264

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# Website Address



<https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/guardian-professions-program/>

Also accessible from the UC Davis website:

<https://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/prospective-students/guardian-professions-program>



# Process and Discovery

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https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/guardian-professions-program/process-and-discovery

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Process and Discovery Updated Oct 6, 2015, 10:15 AM

ssensiper@ucdavis.edu

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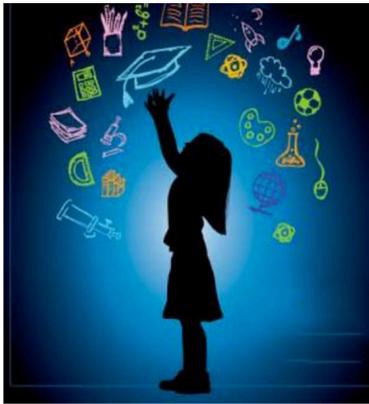
## Getting Prepared for Graduate School

Search this site

- Process and Discovery
- Getting Things in Order
- Put Yourself on Paper
- Professional Schools/Portals
- Teaching Cases
- More Information

- Talk with Others
- Attend Events
- Immerse Yourself

### Discovery



#### “But I’m not sure what I want to do.”

If this is what comes to mind when you are thinking about graduate school or a professional path, then you are not alone. To contemplate the future, however, you DO NOT HAVE TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. You do not have to name a profession or a job. The important thing is to have a direction that orients you towards the future -- which could be specific or somewhat vague and abstract.

You might have a very specific goal: you want to be a teacher, doctor, anthropologist, psychologist, or professor. Knowing this may seem to make things easier because it will define the kinds of steps you take forward. However, you will still have plenty of choices to make. Do you want to teach college-level classes or K-12? Do you want to be a pediatrician or a surgeon?

Your direction could be the idea that you would like to work in a particular field like healthcare or the arts. This would give your graduate program exploration some specificity as well as openness to different careers.

You might also simply want to go to graduate school because you want to learn more. Perhaps you like to do research or you know you want to work in a professional environment. You know you want a career that allows you to travel or even something flexible that allows you to have a family.

Another way of thinking about your interest in graduate school and what you should study is to think about what you like to do on a daily basis -- and think about how this activity could become a profession.

You may simply have the idea that you need to go to graduate school to get ahead in your career. And that is enough to start your exploration. In this section, there are ideas and resources about ways in which you can investigate what your future might be. **Talking to others** will give you some context and possibilities and **attending events** may introduce you to careers to consider. **Immersing yourself** in a particular discipline or career path by taking on a volunteer position, shadowing a professional

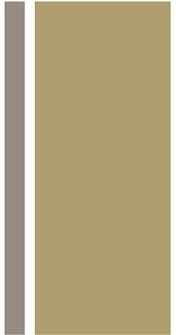
or assisting with a research project are other ways to investigate possibilities. Each of these approaches has a dedicated section in the pull-down menu. Read through these to find some valuable ideas to help get you started.

https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/guardian-professions-program/process-and-discovery

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# Process and Discovery

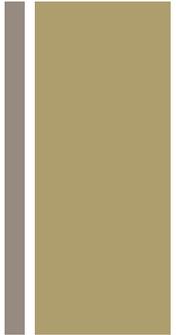


- Introduction sets the tone: going to Graduate School involves some uncertainty, doing your own research and asking lots of questions.
- You don't have to know what you want to do to start your investigation.
- Three sections offer suggestions on how to help students gain knowledge and information.





# Process and Discovery (Pt 2)



## Talk with others:

- Professors
- Graduate students
- Professionals
- Mentors

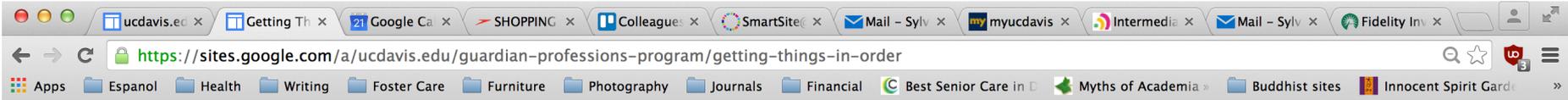
## Attend Events:

- Career fairs and information sessions
- Great way to find out a lot of information quickly.

## Immersive experiences:

- Volunteer or paid positions
- Shadowing a professional
- Internship
- Sit in on a class
- Conduct your own research or work for a professor
- Pipeline programs

# Getting Things in Order



Getting Things in Order Updated Oct 12, 2015, 4:24 PM



## Getting Prepared for Graduate School



- Process and Discovery
- Getting Things in Order**
- Put Yourself on Paper
- Professional Schools/Portals
- Teaching Cases
- More Information

### Getting Things

- Program Selection
- Tests and Test Prep
- Pre-professional Experience
- Advisors become references
- Masters, PhD or Joint Degree

Once you have a fair amount of information, complete the many tasks

advanced degree you wish to pursue, you can begin to make a timeline as to how you are going to bring together a competitive application.



However, please remember that this is not always a linear process. You might start out thinking you want to be a teacher and then, as you continue to explore and find out the requirements or what kinds of positions are available if you obtain a credential, you may find that an MSW is more useful. Or, you may start out thinking you want to work in public policy only to find out that a joint degree that includes an MS in environmental science will give you the expertise that you need and make you more employable. Exploring various programs will help you understand their distinctions and differences in terms of pre-requisites and the curriculum offered. You will also need to familiarize yourself with the tests you need to take and if there is either a stated or implicit pre-professional requirement. And you will want to start talking with professors and supervisors who know your work and are available to write you excellent recommendations. This section address these issues and the pull-down menu tabs feature discussions on how to select programs, what tests you need to take and how to prepare, figuring out if you need pre-professional experience, how working with advisors may provide you with references, and discovering whether your best choice is a PhD, Masters or joint degree.

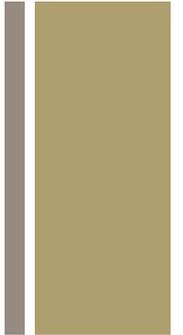
Many things can shift your thinking about your future. You may find the costs of some graduate school programs prohibitive or be stretched to consider a program in another state because of the curriculum or particular expertise of one of the professors. Taking time to explore options and continuing to talk with graduate students, professors and professionals will help guide you in the direction you want to go. You may discover you will be a more viable candidate if you take a year to work or decide that the test score you received necessitates you to re-take an important required exam. Narrowing your focus to a particular area of study and/or program is progress towards your ultimate goal of applying to graduate school but you still have many decisions to consider.

Once you have assembled a possible list of programs you will want to organize them into a visual document that helps you easily see requirements in terms of essays, deadlines and required tests. This will help you compare programs and also allow you to see overlaps in the types of essays that are required, when applications are due and how much each will cost. Some programs do have fee waivers for application fees or make exceptions for certain populations and the list can also help you see what kind of funds you will need in order to apply. The number of programs you apply to will depend somewhat on the kind of degree you are applying for, but three to five is a reasonable number for most PhD and Masters students. (The healthcare field has very different application protocols and applicants in these fields often apply to many more.) If you are applying for a PhD or Masters degree, applying to multiple programs often gives you options and also some negotiating power for funding if you are accepted to more than one program. Many graduate school application deadlines are in the fall with some extending into the following spring, and some programs have a series of deadlines. Medical school and other healthcare advanced degrees have their own schedule.





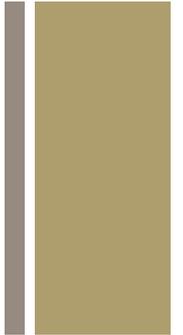
# Getting Things in Order



- Creating a timeline of tasks, tests and documents.
- Applying for an advanced degree is sometimes iterative and not often a linear process.
- Five sections to help students get acquainted with some of the requirements.



# Getting Things in Order (Pt 2)



**Program selection**: you now have an idea of what you want to do. What program will best prepare you for that field/job/career?

**Experience**: Do you need pre-professional experience, volunteer, paid employment, research?

**Tests**: What kind of test(s) do you need to take? Many programs require a standardized test.

**References**: Who will write the three letters of reference that most programs require?

**Degree**: Do you want to do a PhD or Masters degree? Or a joint degree?

# Put Yourself on Paper

**Getting Prepared for Graduate School**

Process and Discovery | Getting Things in Order | **Put Yourself on Paper** | Professional Schools/Portals | Teaching Cases | More Information

## Put Yourself on Paper

The application for an advanced degree is a written product. Some numerical representations of your past accomplishments, express your desires and goals for the future, and attest to your strength and determination in your past accomplishments, express your desires and goals for the future, and

**REPRESENT YOURSELF**

In addition to filling out a form and writing drafts in advance or the application deadline, will help you prepare for nearly any kind of question you might be asked.

**A few other important issues about applications:**

**All universities now have online applications** but they aren't open year-round and changes are often made in the summer months. It is best to check the application requirements a year ahead if possible or review the application as soon as it opens, even if you aren't going to apply until the deadline.

**There is often a general graduate school application** for any program at a given university, with each degree program having special requirements. Make sure you check the department page for your degree to make sure you have followed all application instructions.

**Some applications are 'dynamic'** which means you won't see all the application requirements until you input the program you are applying for -- then the application adjusts and opens the required tabs or links for that particular program. Make sure you are aware of all the documents you need to prepare for an application so you can plan your time accordingly.

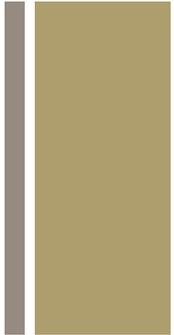
Below is a short description of each component. You can find more information and examples from successful applicants by going to each page from the pull-down menu above.

- o **Statement of Purpose:** This essay summarizes your achievements to date, describes your research interests, and articulates your future goals.
- o **Personal History or Personal Statement:** Your personal history is not necessarily that "personal," and you want to maintain a professional tone. You do not need to give intimate details of your life. This essay gives the reader a sense of you as a person outside your research and career goals. You can describe family background, obstacles you've overcome, extracurricular and/or activist activities. You can also address academic difficulties that might raise a red flag for the reader and help them understand unusual circumstances such as taking time off for an illness or how issues with a family member affected your academic work.
- o **Personal Statement for professional schools:** Law schools, medical and dental schools, and other medical and health related professional schools often ask for an essay called a personal statement. This is usually written as an essay that combines elements of the Statement of Purpose and the Personal History. The prompt is usually some variation of: Explain why you want to be a lawyer, doctor, dentist and/or physician assistant.
- o **Fellowship Statement or Scholarship Statement:** Some schools use the Statement of Purpose and Personal History Statement to award funding but other schools require an additional essay. (This award may also be called a scholarship). This could be a general merit based award of funding provided for a specific program or population. The essay can included information from your other essays but should be written to

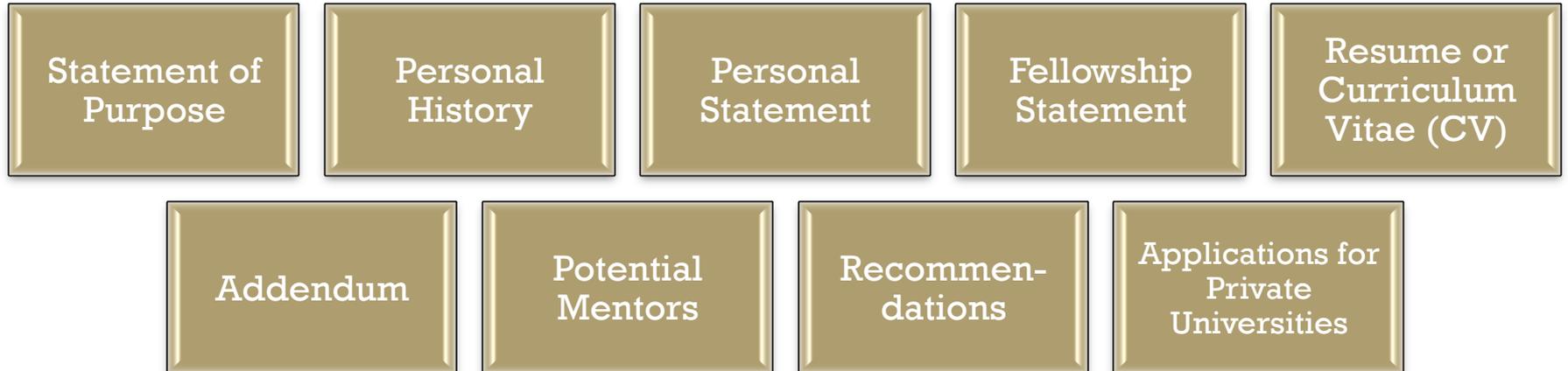
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# Put Yourself on Paper

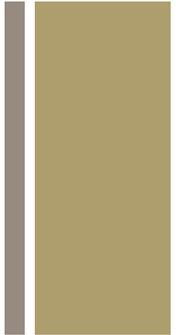


- Each applicant will present their strengths and experience with various documents.
- Nine sections, each dealing with a different general component of the application. Not all degrees will require all components.





# Other Features



- **Professional Schools/Portals:** Many professional schools, medical and dental school, law school and certain health professions have 'portals' where students can submit a singular application with each school then asking for secondary information particular to their program. Links to portals and information sites.
- **Teaching Cases:** Narratives about successful applicants. Each case poses a challenge or problem to engage the reader.
- **More Information:** Catch-all category for important items that don't fall under the other categories.

# Instructors website

**Instructors Site: Getting Prepared for Graduate School**

Process and Discovery | Getting Things in Order | Put Yourself on Paper | Teaching Cases/Facilitator Guides

## Created by the UC Davis Guardian Professions Program



**Curriculum & Instruction**

This website is for instructors, program advisors and Directors of undergraduate support programs for California's alumni of care. It was developed as a companion site to **Getting Prepared for Graduate School**, a website devoted to the exploration of advanced degree options and useful information about how to apply to various degree programs.

You will find that the tabs on this site correspond to the same tabs on the **Getting Prepared** site. Under the first three, Process and Discovery, Getting Things in Order, and Put Yourself on Paper, you will find a summary of what each section covers as well as a suggested class syllabus as to how you might use the information in that particular section to guide your students. The tabs follow a progression and corresponding classes could be taught in order, yet there is also some overlap of assignments among the syllabi from class to class. The tab labeled Teaching Cases/Facilitator Guides includes the Teaching Cases that are included on the **Getting Prepared** site *as well as* facilitator guides that accompany each case. Each guide summarizes the case and offers teaching points and pedagogical suggestions about how to use the case to develop a class discussion.

We have found that making the exploration of graduate school and career options into "assignments" for students somehow makes these tasks easier. Students like getting class credit for doing the work and it also takes away some of the embarrassment and/or reluctance that students have with asking for help.

We have not included a tab here for the Professional Schools/Portals section. This section on the **Getting Prepared** site describes the 'portal' system used to apply to many professional programs and is primarily a set of links for students and applicants.

The information on the **Getting Prepared** site takes as a starting point this important fact noted by one of our students, Cristal Harris. "It's not that some people aren't intelligent or aren't able to master a topic...it [just] takes time to learn to do school well." The same can be said of a competitive graduate school application. Preparing the essays, asking for recommendations and studying for and taking the required tests takes an immense amount of time. It is also important to learn the proper language and form of presentation. The **Getting Prepared** website is intended to help students discover a graduate school path they might want to take and ensure they prepare an application that skillfully represents their talents, ambitions and experience.

Please feel free to use the materials from the **Getting Prepared** sites in whatever way you think might be most helpful to your students. Contact the Guardian Professions Program at UC Davis if you have any questions, comments or recommendations.

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**UC Davis Guardian Professions Program  
Office of Graduate Studies 250 Mrak Hall  
One Shields Avenue, University of California, Davis  
Davis, California, 95616**

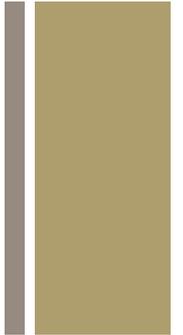
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**Director: Sylvia Sensiper, PhD  
(530) 752-5264**

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# Teaching cases and Curriculum



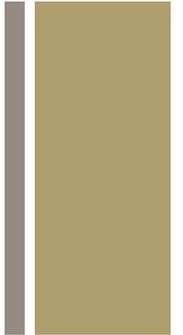
Getting Prepared for Graduate School Instructors  
website:

<https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/instructors-site-gpp/>





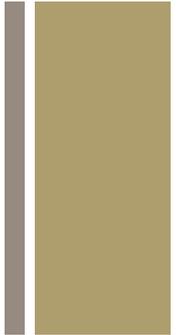
# Instructors Website and Teaching Cases



- Getting Prepared for Graduate School can be used as a self-directed tool by potential applicants.
- It can also be used as a resource for instructors and facilitators who want to teach about the possibilities of advanced degrees and associated careers.
- The Instructors site contains the same tabs as the Getting Prepared for Graduate School site and there is a summary of the section under each tab. There is also a syllabus under each tab that proposes how to teach the material in that section.
- Teaching Cases: The teaching cases are posted with accompanying facilitators guide.



# Mentoring Class



- Notice to all programs directors/advisors in early Spring to have students sign up for mentoring.
- Using the website as the 'curriculum.'
- It is never too early to start considering an advanced degree. For some degrees, in fact, it is necessary.
- If a student wants to do a PhD and doesn't participate in some kind of research as an undergraduate then they may have to do a Masters degree. Most degree programs will want to see some kind of pre-professional training and work.
- If you know students who have already expressed an interest in graduate school, please have them contact me.



# UC Davis Guardian Professions Program



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**For more information contact:**  
**GPP Director, Dr. Sylvia Sensiper**  
530-752-5264  
[ssensiper@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ssensiper@ucdavis.edu)  
<https://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/>

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