

How to Apply & Timeline

August 10th, 2021

Facilitators: Sivan Yair (she|her|hers)
Danielle De La Pascua
(she|her|hers/they|them|theirs)

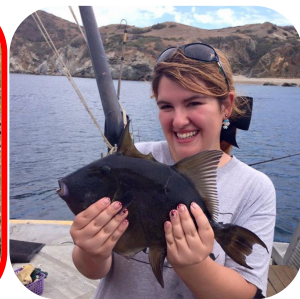
Preview Day Organizers & Presenters



Alexis
Roberts



Danielle
De La Pascua



Darien
Satterfield



Claire
Murphy



Keira
Monuki



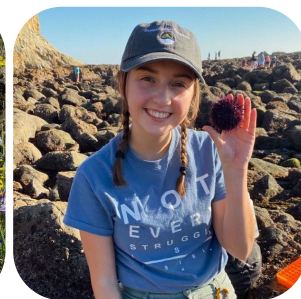
Katherine
Corn



Sivan
Yair



Elena
Suglia













Madison
Armstrong



Hannah
Nelson



Elise
Elwood

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Week 1	2	3  Nuts & Bolts of Grad School	4	5 Personal/Diversity Statement Workshop 	6
Week 2	9	10  How to Apply & Timeline	11	12 Office Hours 	12
Week 3	16	17  Funding & Grant Writing	18	19 Navigating Grad School Identity Panel 	20
Week 4	23	24  Find a Good Fit	25	26 Office Hours 	27
Week 5	30	31  Is this Right for Me?	1	2 Wrap-Up! 	<i>All sessions will be 5:00-6:30pm PST via Zoom</i>

Session Scope & Facilitator Roles

Scope

90 minute workshops are an introduction, with resources to dig deeper!

Roles

We are peer facilitators, here to help guide participants' discovery.

Session Norms



Please have video on, if possible



Stay muted unless speaking



Chat us if you have a question or comment



Be respectful, be curious

Session Goals

By the end of the session, participants will:

1. Understand the overall application process and timeline
2. Be better equipped to talk about specific research interests
3. Be able to translate experiences and interests into a competitive application

We are going to be going over a lot!

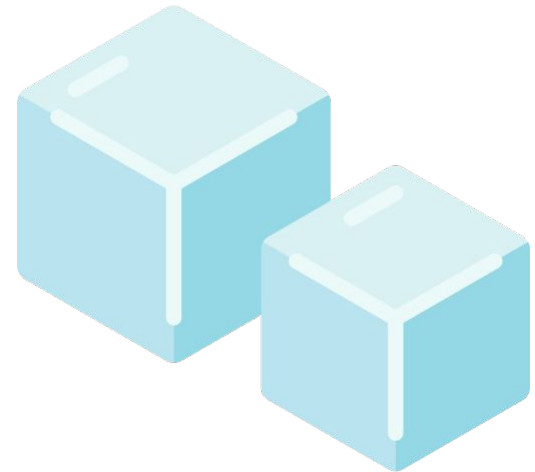
Overview

1. Preparing to apply
2. The application process
3. How to talk about your research

Icebreaker

Would you rather go forward in time to see your descendants/future relatives or go back in time to meet your ancestors?

Introduce yourself & share in breakout groups!

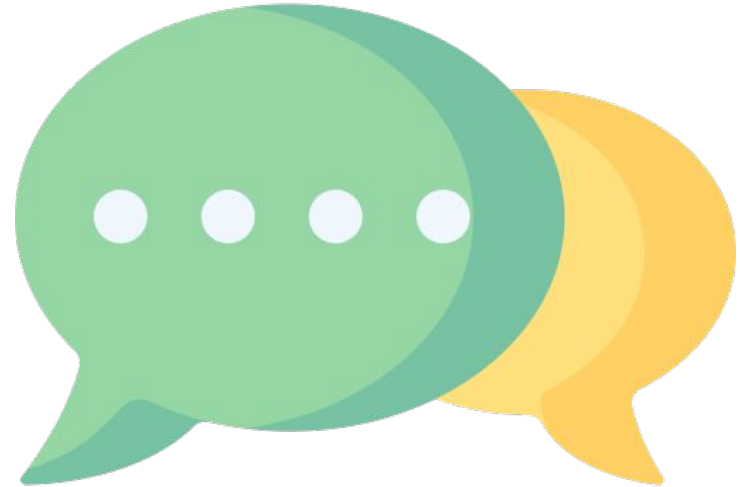


Overview

- 1. Preparing to apply**
2. The application process
3. How to talk about your research

What makes a great applicant?

***Post an idea
or two in the
chat!***



What makes a great applicant?

More important

Research experience

Shows you can engage in daily research activities

Looks better if you completed projects or had more responsibility

Curiosity & interest in research

Shows you are motivated to identify and pursue open research questions

Interest in the program and lab(s) you're applying to

Determination & Perseverance

For example, the ability to...

Push through when your projects aren't going as planned

Teach yourself new concepts

Try until something works (e.g. getting a research grant)

What makes a great applicant?

Background knowledge in research area of interest

Shows you have a strong foundation to build off of in graduate school

Programming & quantitative skills

Demonstrates you can analyze and interpret data

**Communication skills
(written and oral)**

**Potential to network &
collaborate**

**Leadership & ability to
work in teams**

What makes a great applicant?

**Research
experience**

**Curiosity &
interest in
research**

**Interest in the
program and lab(s)
you're applying to**

**Determination
&
Perseverance**

**Background knowledge in research area
of interest**

Programming & quantitative skills

**Communication skills
(written and oral)**

**Potential to network
& collaborate**

**Leadership & ability to work
in teams**

**Every professor will prioritize these qualities
differently!**

There isn't one right fit or formula

Finding a Mentor

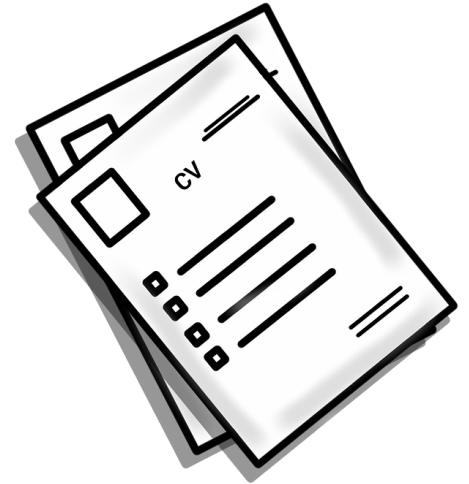
Faculty, postdoc, and graduate student mentors are great resources



Advice on the application process
& identifying potential programs



Writing letters of
recommendation



Reviewing application
materials

Finding a Mentor

Faculty, postdoc, and graduate student mentors are great resources

Look for professors
within your
school's biology
department

Reach out to
professors who
study topics that
interest you

Consider
graduate students
and postdocs as
potential mentors

Overview

1. Preparing to apply
- 2. The application process**
3. How to talk about your research

What does applying entail?

**Submit a written application,
which asks for:**

Personal statement

Diversity statement (sometimes)

Curriculum vitae (often called “CV”)

3 Letters of Recommendation

GRE Scores (sometimes)

Academic Transcripts

Professors whose labs you are
interested in joining

What does applying entail?

Submit a written application, which asks for:

Personal statement

Diversity statement (sometimes)

Curriculum vitae (often called “CV”)

3 Letters of Recommendation

GRE Scores (sometimes)

Academic Transcripts

Professors whose labs you are interested in joining

Admissions committee reviews applications, then invites top applicants for interviews

Reviewers take into consideration how excited a professor is about you joining their lab

You MUST make connections with potential faculty advisors before submitting your application!

What does applying entail?

The more professors you list in a program...

The less serious you seem about each one

The less focused your research interests appear

List no more than 3!

A professor might be affiliated with multiple programs

Ask the potential advisor about what program(s) they recommend

Who decides which applicants get accepted?

Two groups involved:

The Program's Admissions Committee

The Potential Advisors

Who decides which applicants get accepted?

Two groups involved:

The Program's Admissions Committee

More emphasis on program fit:

- General research interests
- General research experience and coursework
- Participation in research community

The Potential Advisors

Who decides which applicants get accepted?

Two groups involved:

The Program's Admissions Committee

More emphasis on program fit:

- General research interests
- General research experience and coursework
- Participation in research community

The Potential Advisors

More emphasis on lab fit:

- Specific research interests
- Relevant skills
- Ability to work well with other lab members

You will not get accepted without a potential advisor saying they want you to join their lab

**You need to make connections with
potential faculty advisors before
submitting your application!**

Financial considerations

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

Application fee waiver info can be found on program websites - usually on the same page that states the fees

Proof of financial need or membership of pipeline programs often required

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

GRE costs

\$205 per test in the US

Application fee waiver info can be found on program websites - usually on the same page that states the fees

Proof of financial need or membership of pipeline programs often required

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

Application fee waiver info can be found on program websites - usually on the same page that states the fees

Proof of financial need or membership of pipeline programs often required

GRE costs

\$205 per test in the US

Fee reduction program available for students with financial need or pipeline programs

Many programs are ditching the GRE

Use the 5 free scores sent on test day

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

Application fee waiver info can be found on program websites - usually on the same page that states the fees

Proof of financial need or membership of pipeline programs often required

GRE costs

\$205 per test in the US

Fee reduction program available for students with financial need or pipeline programs

Many programs are ditching the GRE

Use the 5 free scores sent on test day

In-person interview

Cost variable

Financial considerations

Application costs

\$50-\$100 per application

Application fee waiver info can be found on program websites - usually on the same page that states the fees

Proof of financial need or membership of pipeline programs often required

GRE costs

\$205 per test in the US

Fee reduction program available for students with financial need or pipeline programs

Many programs are ditching the GRE

Use the 5 free scores sent on test day

In-person interview

Cost variable

Costs vary from program to program

Many programs fully cover travel, food, and boarding - some cover some costs (e.g. partial travel)

Some programs reimburse travel expenses

Timeline

Identify potential advisors

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

Identifying potential graduate school advisors

Read research papers on topics you like

If you enjoyed the paper, find out which lab(s) contributed to it. First and last author tend to make greater conceptual contributions.

Ask for advice from your advisors, course professors, or TAs

Talk to people with research interests closer to yours

Attend conferences; watch virtual talks

Gives you the chance to sample many projects from different labs and connect with professors

Read about programs at different institutions, then browse through their faculty

See who has active research grants online

Find postings for graduate student (or “RA”) positions online

Twitter
See links in resources

Timeline

Sign up for & take GRE (if necessary)

Identify potential advisors

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

The GRE

GRE scores have no correlation with graduate student success

↓ Why?

The GRE is better at predicting **sex, race, and socioeconomic status** than it is predicting **academic success**

↓ So...

Many programs are moving away from requiring the GRE!

The GRE

Three parts of the GRE: verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing

Programs that require the GRE use it differently

Often GRE scores are evaluated alongside other materials (like GPA & coursework)

People with low GRE scores DO go to grad school & are successful!

Timeline

Ask for letters of recommendation

Sign up for & take GRE (if necessary)

Identify potential advisors

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

Ask for recommendation letters

A great letter provides examples of how you demonstrated important qualities for success in grad school

Ask people who you trust to:

- speak highly of you
- submit by the deadline
- provide examples of your work ethic

Tips

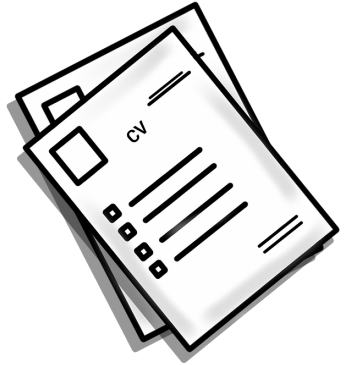
The earlier you ask for a letter, the more likely they'll write one

Send reminders to letter writers as the deadline approaches

Provide a spreadsheet of programs and deadlines

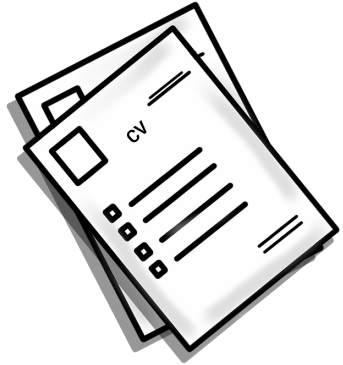
Provide your CV and personal statement to letter writers

What is a CV?



CV stands for curriculum vitae

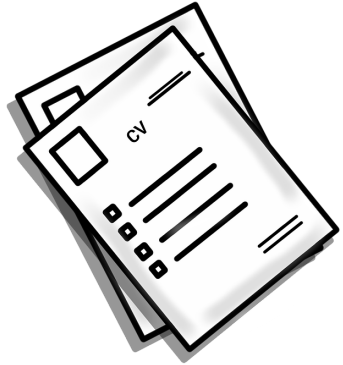
What is a CV?



CV stands for curriculum vitae

It is a comprehensive statement of your educational background, research, teaching experience, and broader impacts

What is a CV?



CV stands for curriculum vitae

It is a comprehensive statement of your educational background, research, teaching experience, and broader impacts

It is a standard way to present credentials in academia, it is a quick and straightforward way for someone to learn about you. See the handout for more details on writing a CV!

Questions

So far, we talked about ...

- What makes a great applicant
- Who decides who gets accepted
- Financial considerations
- Identifying a potential advisor
- The GRE
- Recommendation letters
- The CV



Timeline

Email potential advisors

Ask for letters of recommendation

Sign up for & take GRE (if necessary)

Identify potential advisors

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

Email potential advisors: writing the email

Email potential advisors: writing the email

Talk about your interests

A few sentences about specific research projects you are currently working on.

A few sentences on specific questions and subjects you are interested in studying in grad school.

Email potential advisors: writing the email

Talk about your interests	Talk about how you would be a good fit for their lab
<p>A few sentences about specific research projects you are currently working on.</p> <p>A few sentences on specific questions and subjects you are interested in studying in grad school.</p>	<p>1-2 sentences stating what you like about their research</p> <p>A few sentences on how you would contribute to the work that the potential advisor does in their lab</p>

Email potential advisors: writing the email

Talk about your interests	Talk about how you would be a good fit for their lab	Ask questions
<p>A few sentences about specific research projects you are currently working on.</p> <p>A few sentences on specific questions and subjects you are interested in studying in grad school.</p>	<p>1-2 sentences stating what you like about their research</p> <p>A few sentences on how you would contribute to the work that the potential advisor does in their lab</p>	<p>Ask a question about their research</p> <p>Ask if they are taking grad students and follow by asking if they are available to talk more over video call</p>

Email potential advisors: writing the email

Talk about your interests	Talk about how you would be a good fit for their lab	Ask questions
<p>A few sentences about specific research projects you are currently working on.</p> <p>A few sentences on specific questions and subjects you are interested in studying in grad school.</p>	<p>1-2 sentences stating what you like about their research</p> <p>A few sentences on how you would contribute to the work that the potential advisor does in their lab</p>	<p>Ask a question about their research</p> <p>Ask if they are taking grad students and follow by asking if they are available to talk more over video call</p>

Introduce yourself at the beginning, keep your email to the point, and include your CV!

Emailing potential advisors

Cast a wide net

Expect to not hear back from everyone, and expect that some you do hear from will not be able to accept graduate students

Follow up with the potential advisor if they do not respond

Timeline

Chat with potential advisors

Email potential advisors

Ask for letters of recommendation

Sign up for & take GRE (if necessary)

Identify potential advisors

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

Video call with potential advisors

Video call with potential advisors

**This is a 2-way
interview!**

Advisors use this to gauge which applicants to invite for an in-person interview, applicants use this to gauge interest in the advisors.

Video call with potential advisors

This is a 2-way interview!

Advisors use this to gauge which applicants to invite for an in-person interview, applicants use this to gauge interest in the advisors.

Talk about yourself!

Talk to prospective advisors in more detail about what interests you and why you think you're a good fit for their lab.

Video call with potential advisors

This is a 2-way interview!

Advisors use this to gauge which applicants to invite for an in-person interview, applicants use this to gauge interest in the advisors.

Talk about yourself!

Talk to prospective advisors in more detail about what interests you and why you think you're a good fit for their lab.

Not usually super formal

This interview is typically more conversational, and is used as a get to know you meeting.

Video call with potential advisors

This is a 2-way interview!

Advisors use this to gauge which applicants to invite for an in-person interview, applicants use this to gauge interest in the advisors.

Talk about yourself!

Talk to prospective advisors in more detail about what interests you and why you think you're a good fit for their lab.

Not usually super formal

This interview is typically more conversational, and is used as a get to know you meeting.

How to prepare:

Read the PI's website, a few of their more recent papers, and practice talking about your background and research interests

Personal and diversity statements

The Personal Statement

Describe your preparation & motivation

Interests, specializations, and career goals

Program fit

The Diversity Statement

How you would contribute to the diversity of the graduate program

Personal background

Be careful of triggering emotions that may come up as you craft your statements

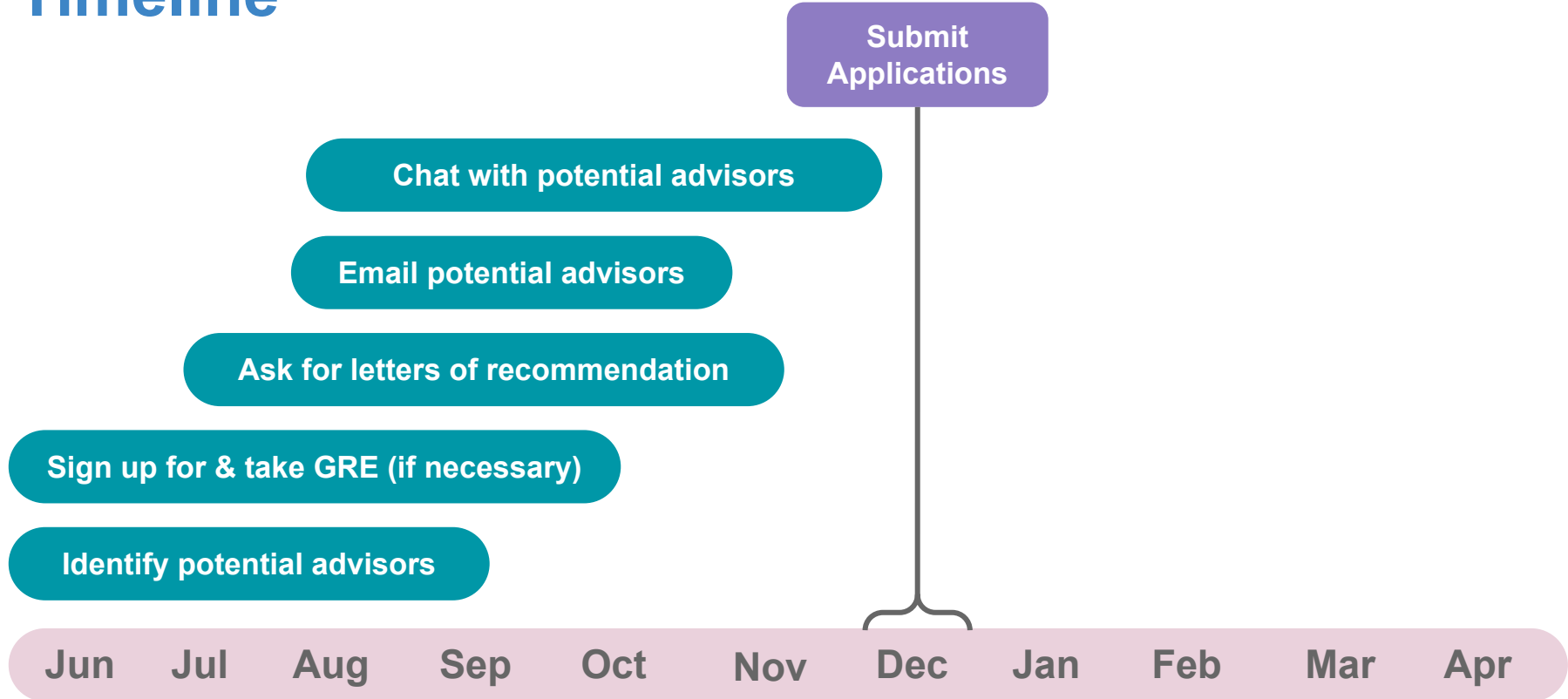
Statements and Trauma

“White America asks people of color to tokenize and exploit themselves in order to gain acceptance into programs and institutions we are otherwise barred from”

- *Deena Elgenaidi*

[How Applying to Grad School Becomes a Display of Trauma for People of Color](#)

Timeline



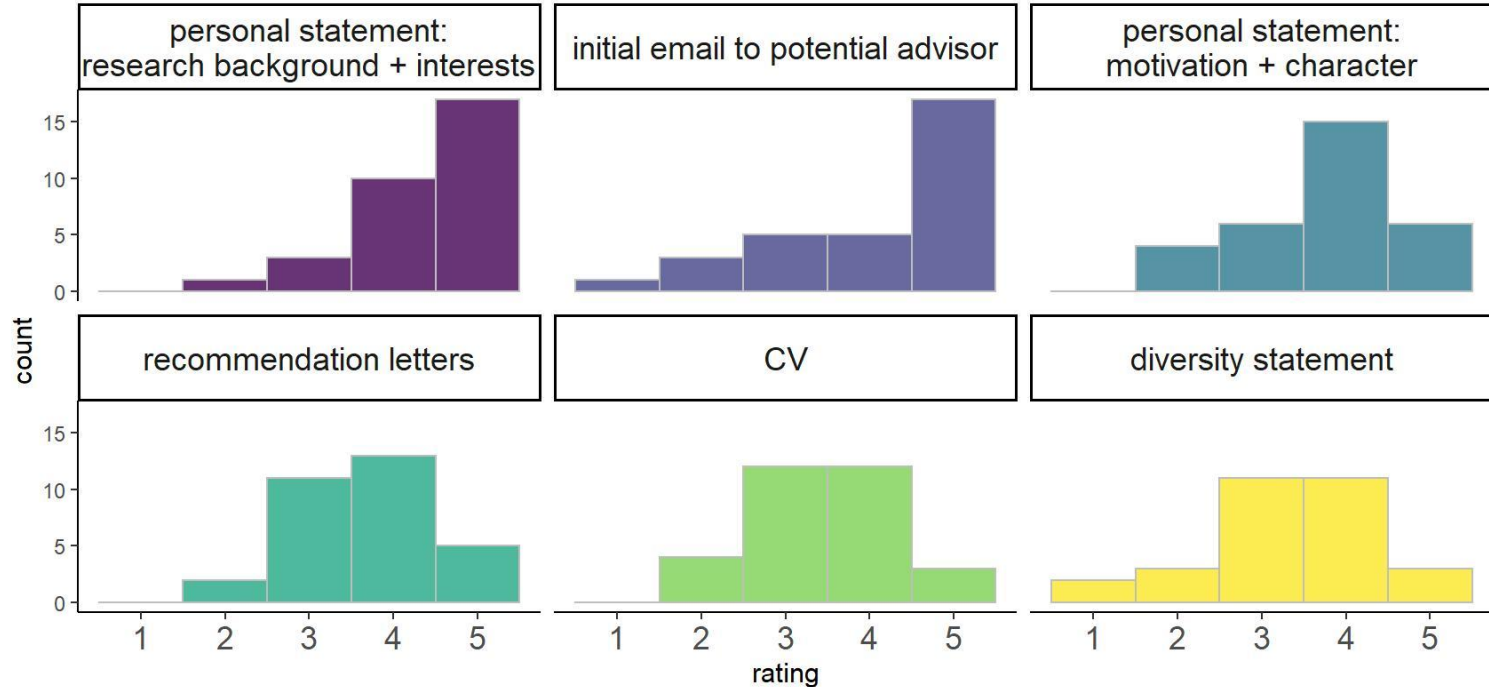
Submitting the application

Most deadlines
fall between
December
1st-15th

All applications
are reviewed at
the same time

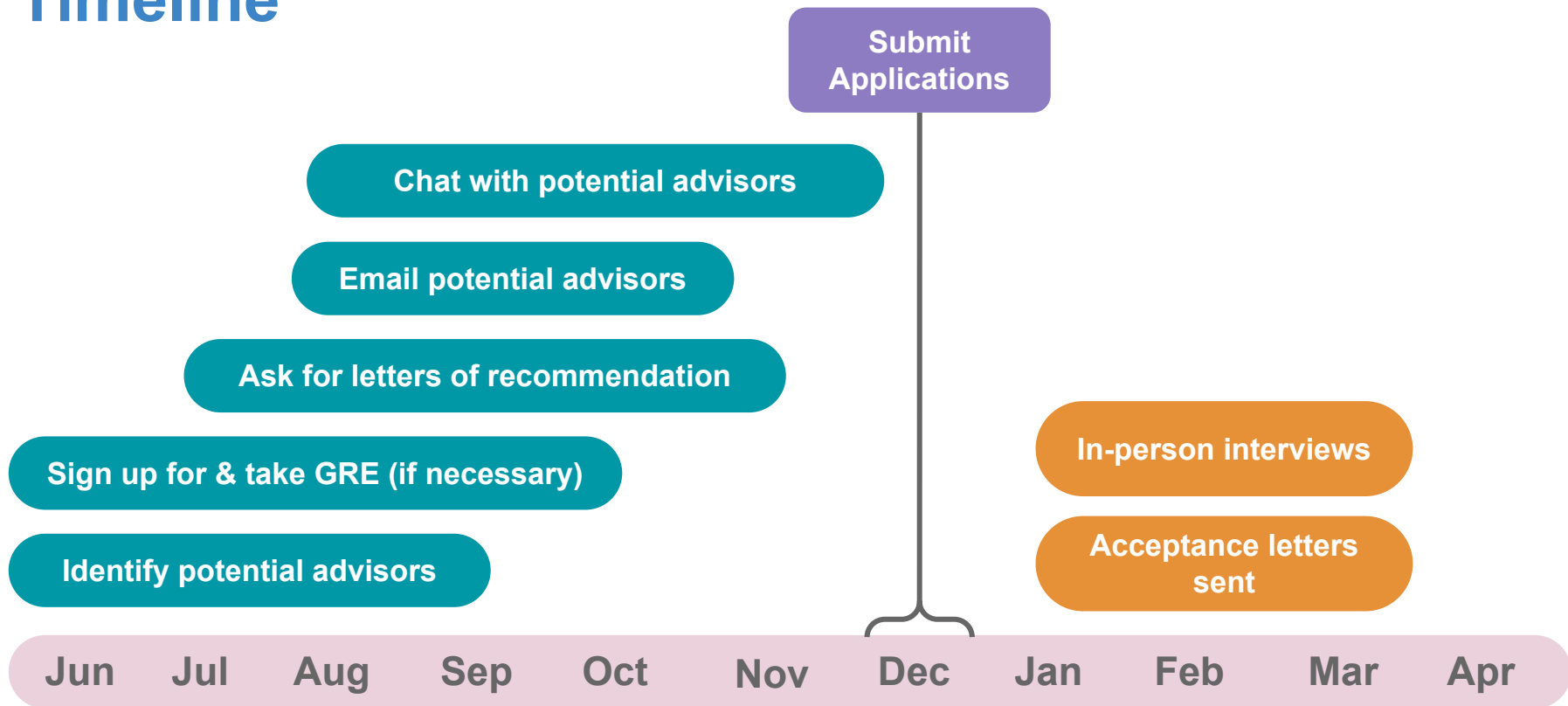
Check each
program's
application
website to see if
you qualify for
fee waivers

Faculty perspectives on importance of materials

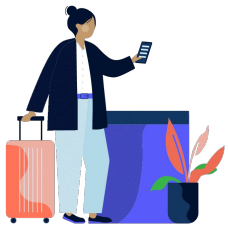


not at all important (1) → extremely important (5)

Timeline



Interview weekend



Typically stay at hotel or
home of graduate student

**Expect virtual
setting & weekday
meetings with
COVID-19**



Meetings with
faculty
(30 min – 1 hour)

**Conversations and
dress are more
casual than typical
interviews**



Social activities,
mostly with
graduate students

**The interview goes
both ways!**

How to prepare for the interview

Perspectives from Professors

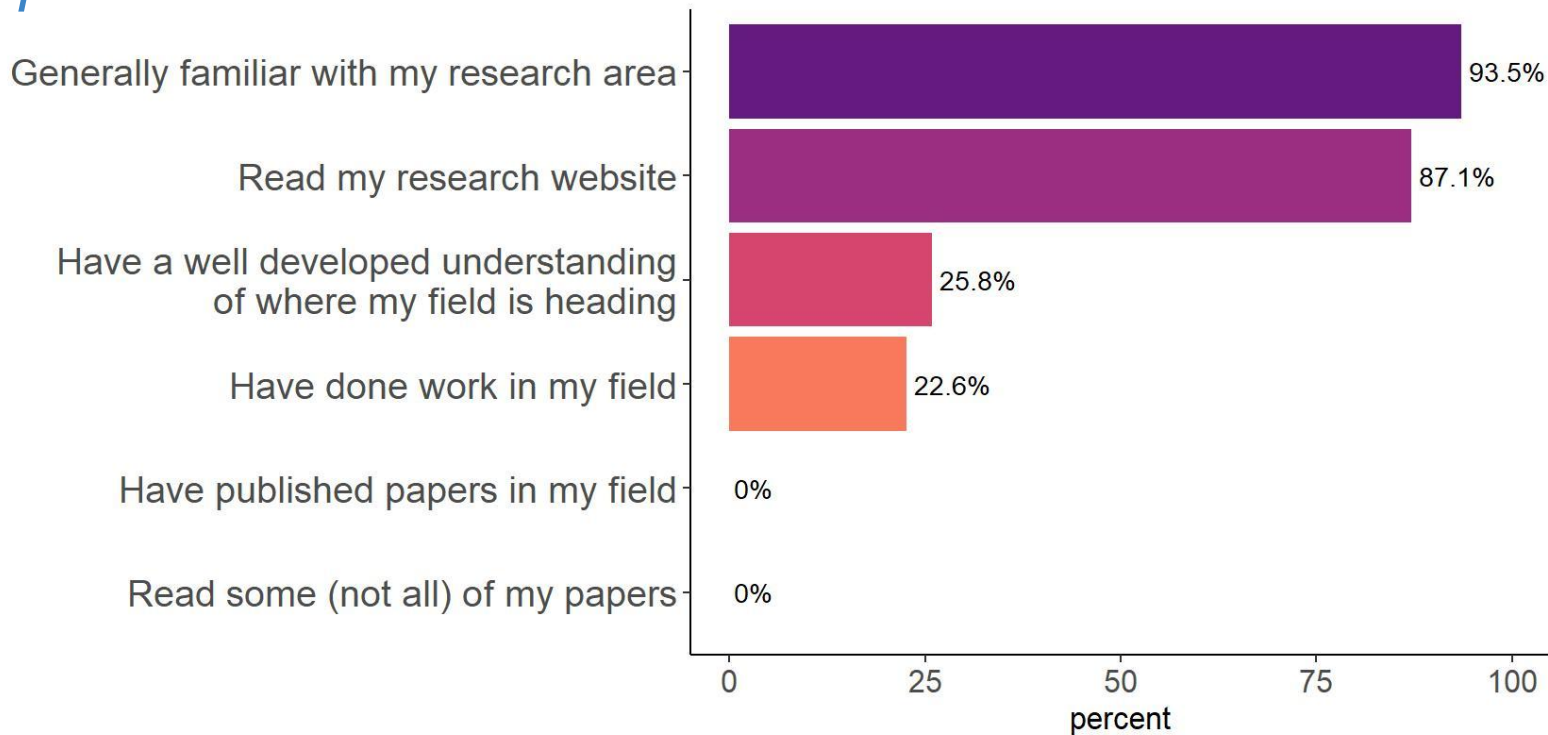
We asked 31 professors at UC Davis doing E&E research:

What preparation do you expect for prospective graduate students interviewing for your lab or your program?

How to prepare for the interview

Lab

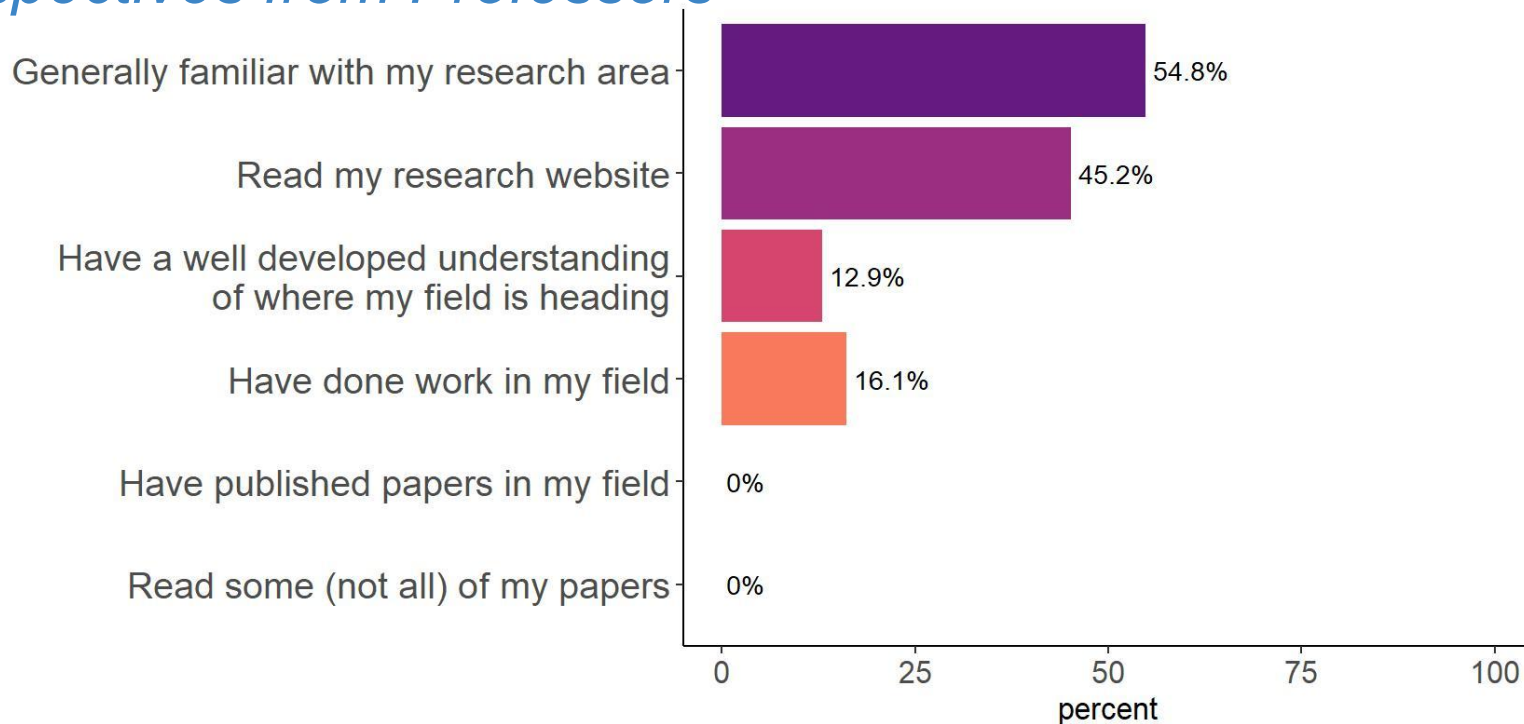
Perspectives from Professors



How to prepare for the interview

Perspectives from Professors

Program



Interview weekend

What you want to find out

Is the lab and program a good fit for your research interests?

Will you be happy in this lab, program, university, town?

Examples of what to consider

- Advisor's expertise
- Coursework
- Research community

- Advisor's mentorship style
- Financial support
- Social community

Interview weekend

What you want to find out

Is the lab and program a good fit for your research interests?

Will you be happy in this lab, program, university, town?

Examples of what to consider

- Advisor's expertise
- Coursework
- Research community

- Advisor's mentorship style
- Financial support
- Social community

How to get informative answers to your questions

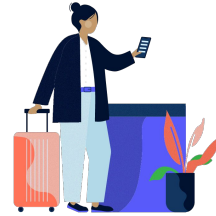
Talk to graduate students!

Feel like everyone's focusing on the positives? Try:

- What's your least favorite thing about...?
- What would change about...?
- Has anyone in the lab/program/department... [experience you are worried about]?

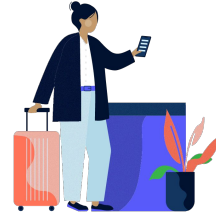
How to prepare for the interview

1. Before the interview, read the website of all the faculty you meet with



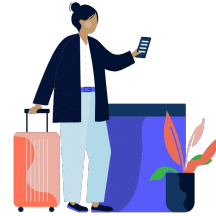
How to prepare for the interview

1. Before the interview, read the website of all the faculty you meet with
2. Practice talking about yourself and your research/interest

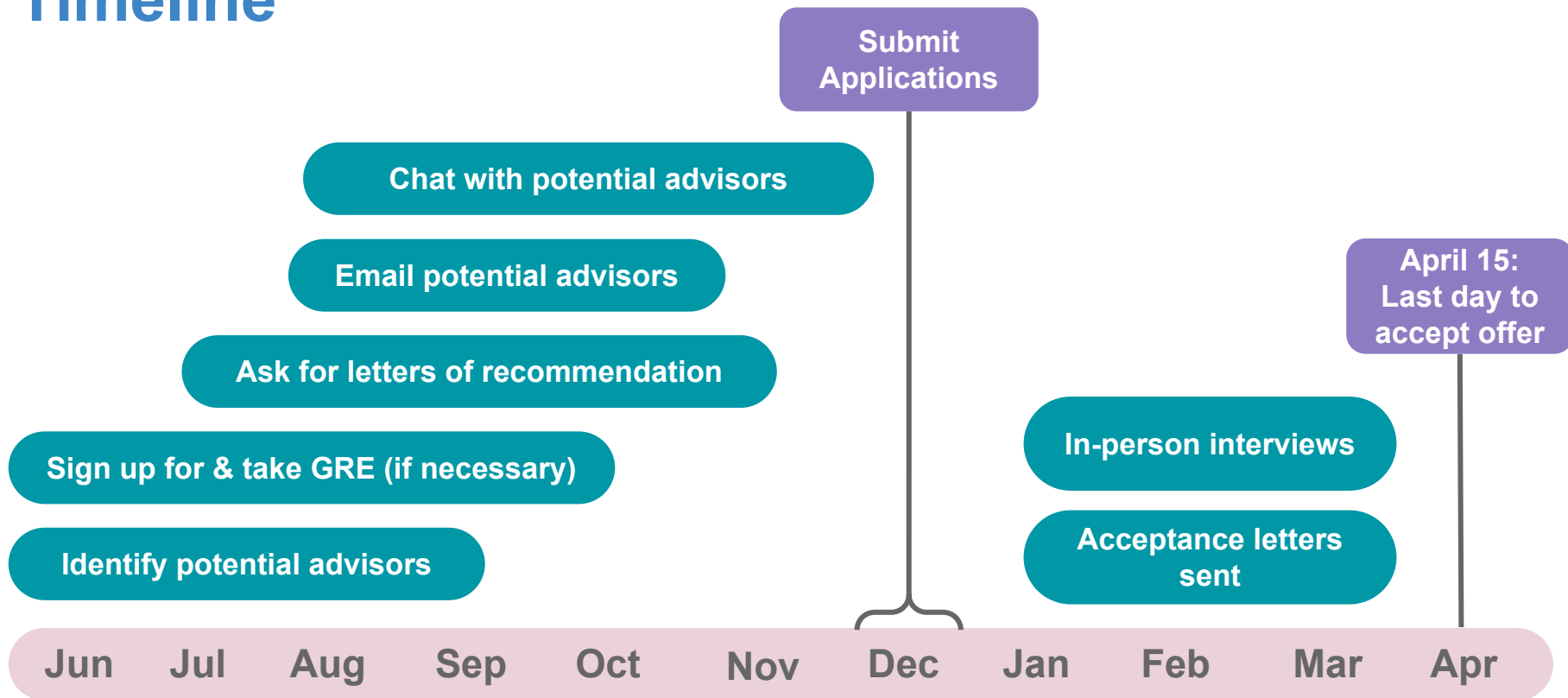


How to prepare for the interview

1. Before the interview, read the website of all the faculty you meet with
2. Practice talking about yourself and your research/interest
3. Think of questions to ask graduate students, including topics such as health insurance, GSR and TA unions, social communities, etc

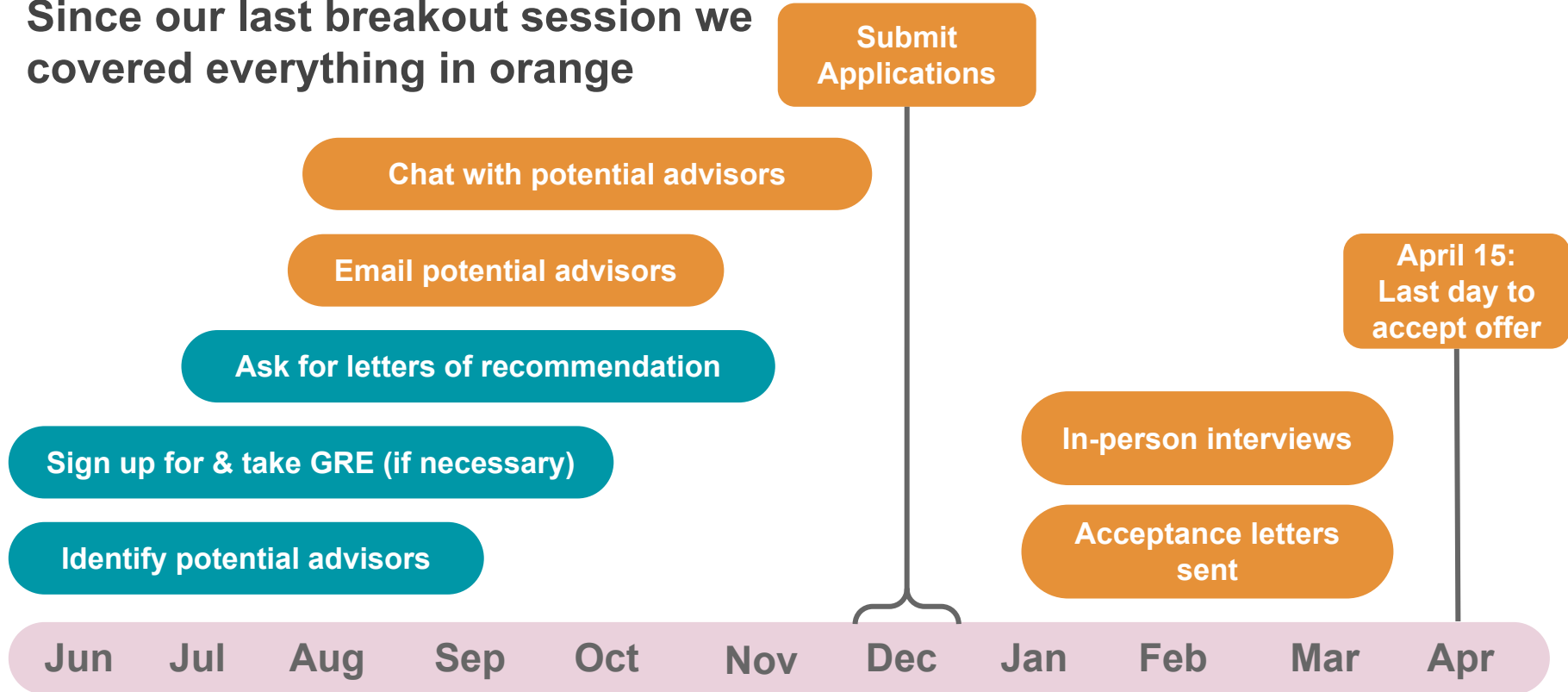


Timeline



Breakout room Q&A #2

Since our last breakout session we covered everything in orange



Overview

1. Preparing to apply
2. The application process
3. **How to talk about your research**

How to talk about your research

How to talk about your research



Be specific (include study system, scaling, subfields, etc)

How to talk about your research



Be specific (include study system, scaling, subfields, etc)



Include questions that you want to ask or are asking

How to talk about your research



Be specific (include study system, scaling, subfields, etc)



Include questions that you want to ask or are asking



Practice your “elevator pitch” with peers and advisors

How to talk about your research

In this breakout session, you will have the opportunity to practice talking about your research. Take a moment to jot a few notes down to prepare for the elevator pitch breakout session.



Be specific



Include questions you want to or are asking



Practice your “elevator pitch”

How to talk about your research

In this breakout session, you will have the opportunity to practice talking about your research. Take a moment to jot a few notes down to prepare for the elevator pitch breakout session.

Facilitators and mentors, please give your examples first, then students will have a chance to practice their elevator pitches



Be specific

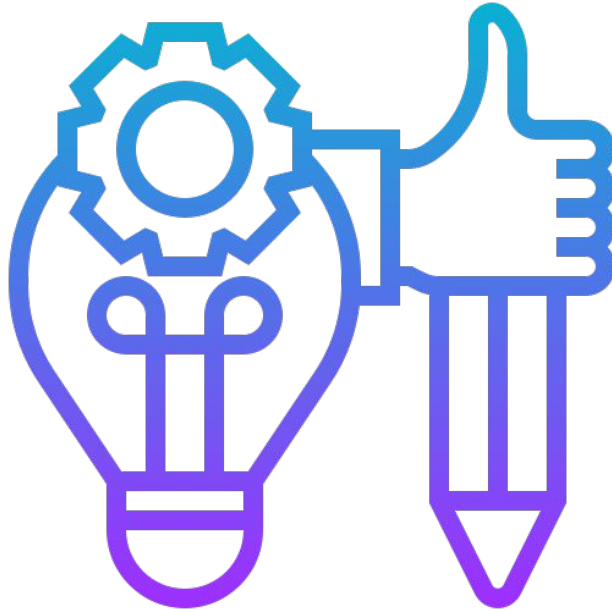


Include questions you want to or are asking

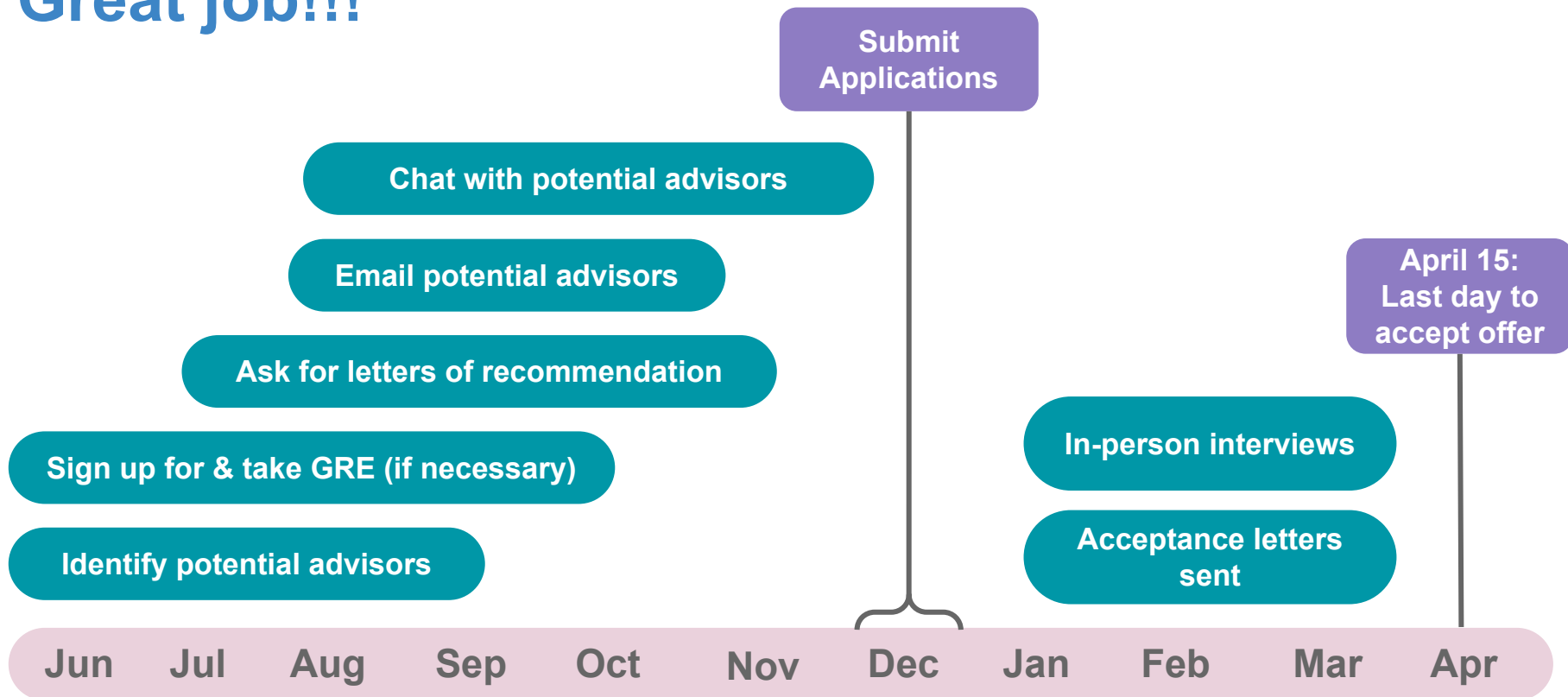


Practice your “elevator pitch”

Great job!!!



Great job!!!













Workshop Feedback

Your feedback is important to us. Please take a few minutes to complete evaluations for this session.



Nuts & Bolts of Grad School

tinyurl.com/preview21feedback

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Week 1	2	3  Nuts & Bolts of Grad School	4	5 Personal Statement Workshop 	6
Week 2	9	10  How to Apply & Timeline	11	12 Office Hours 	12
Week 3	16	17  Funding & Grant Writing	18	19 Navigating Grad School Identity Panel 	20
Week 4	23	24  Find a Good Fit	25	26 Office Hours 	27
Week 5	30	31  Is this Right for Me?	1	2 Wrap-Up! 	<i>All sessions will be 5:00-6:30pm PST via Zoom</i>

Dig Deeper with Us



Chat with your **mentor**



Visit our **website**: eegradpreview.weebly.com



Follow us on **Twitter**: [@eegradpreview](https://twitter.com/eegradpreview)



Contact us by **email**: eegradpreview@gmail.com