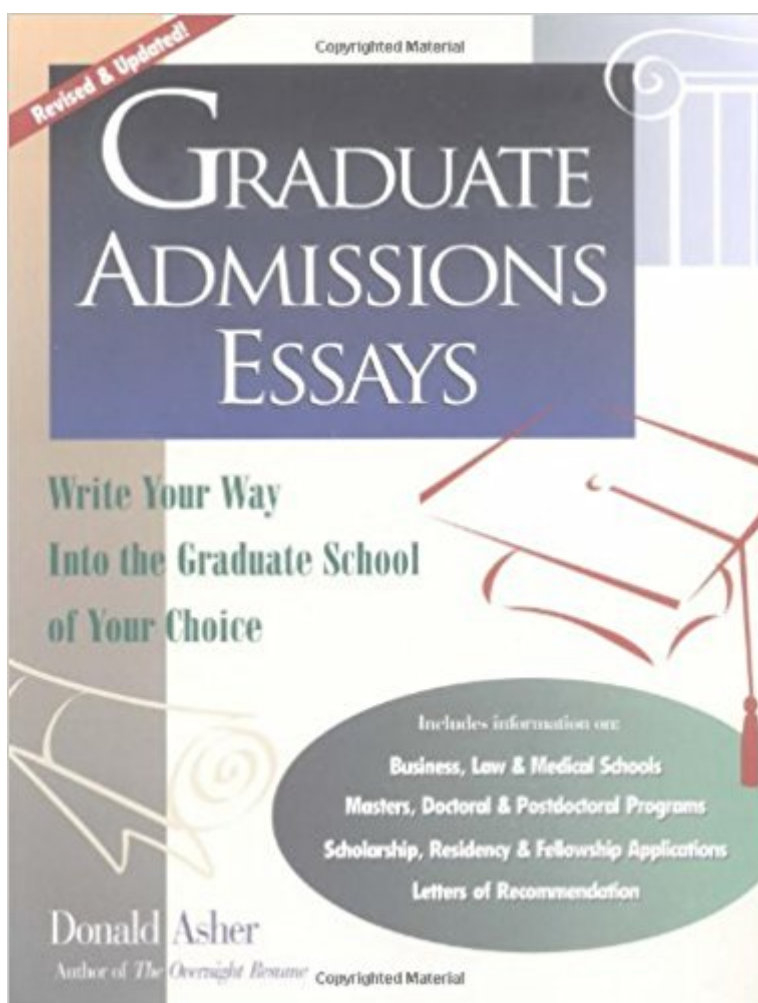


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# Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way Into The Graduate School Of Your Choice



## Synopsis

Veteran higher-education consultant Donald Asher demystifies the graduate school application process and offers a detailed action plan that has proved successful for some of the most competitive programs in the country. The 50 sample essays-selected from thousands of candidates-showcase the best of the best, while the Essay Hall of Shame identifies common pitfalls to avoid. Sample letters of recommendation and essays for scholarships, residencies, fellowships, and postgraduate and postdoctoral applications cover all stages of the application process. Teaches how to craft a winning essay with 50 state-of-the-art samples to inspire, instruct, and all but guarantee a top-of-the-pile application. Updated third edition includes an entirely new chapter dedicated to online applications and how they're managed, processed, and considered. Previous editions have sold 100,000 copies. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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## Customer Reviews

\* Updated third edition includes an entirely new chapter dedicated to online applications and how they're managed, processed, and considered. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Career consultant DONALD ASHER is a featured speaker at more than 100 colleges and universities every year, coast to coast. A columnist for MSN Encarta and contributor to the Wall

Street Journal's CareerJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com, he divides his time between Nevada and San Francisco. From the Trade Paperback edition.

First, let me state this: I followed the advice in this book and for it, I was accepted to graduate school. I was accepted to one MS program, and had the impression that an additional MS program and a PhD program were interested in me, but couldn't offer acceptance for lack of financial support (both were public schools that lost a lot of funding in the recession). There are a few short requisite sections on things relating to graduate school: why you should (or shouldn't) go, how the application process works, etc. These are simply to provide framework for how you'll write your essay. They aren't authoritative on such, and as a result, are somewhat lacking. That's ok though, since that's also not the book's mission. For a more complete look at the entire admissions process, I recommend *Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning an M.A. or a Ph.D.* with gusto. Then the actual essay section. It comes in two sections: advice and examples. The advice section is extremely good. It tells you how to structure an essay. How to develop and stick to a theme. How to address something on your record which may be problematic. And it also covers a large number of "Don't do this!" items. This part was crucial in helping me craft a personal statement. For me, the advice was crucial. I had a crappy undergraduate GPA, but good experiences and great GRE scores. The advice in this book really helped me to develop my strengths and use them to not only outshine my weak GPA, but even to mitigate it. Also, for reasons lost on me, this book is not available from (as a seller). It's only available from third parties. I don't know why doesn't stock it considering the magnitude of good reviews. But I encourage anyone to buy the book even though you'll need to get it from a third party. Now it needs to be noted that the book also has a MAJOR downside. Every example essay- EVERY SINGLE ONE- is written by someone who has some amazing superlative on their record which they can build a theme around. I just flipped to three examples and found: 1) A student who while working as a CA at her undergraduate school helped her residents evacuate the residence hall during a major earthquake. 2) A student who earned a double major as both a BS and a BA in Biology. 3) A student whose academic adviser and research mentor was Glenn Seaborg, better known as the man who discovered (was the first to isolate) plutonium. Luckily for me, I had some extremely unique community service experiences from which I could draw to build an essay around. But I admit they were a stretch (not at all on par with the actual essays given in the book). The bottom line is that if you're a student who showed up to class and did alright but didn't really do anything of significance in college or life otherwise, every single one of the sample essays will be worthless. Moreover,

they'll probably be disheartening. Every sample given is written by someone who has a stellar background and simply needs to know how to get those superlatives into essay form. There aren't any sample essays for someone who had a crappy time in college and transferred partway, or someone who has a good record but didn't test well on the GREs, or who really wants to get a research assistantship yet was unable to ever beg his/her way into a professor's lab as an undergraduate. For this, I deducted one star from my review of the book. Do note that the book isn't useless for someone whose background has shortcomings. You'll find some guidance for this in the advice half of the book which talks strategies and techniques for crafting your statement. It's just entirely absent from the section with example essays.

The samples are unhelpful if you are faced with a 250-500 word limit and asked to respond to four or more questions--which happens to be the case for all of the masters in counseling programs to which I am applying. Nor are there any samples that guide professionals seeking to change fields, e.g., giving up legal practice to become a mental health counselor. What's truly irritating though is that some of the authors are so smug and self-satisfied that I would like to smack them. "I was so smart that the teachers had to place me in a corner and have me teach myself so that they could devote all of their time to teaching the 40 'average' kids who needed them more." I certainly wouldn't want to sit next to this guy in class. And I could do him one better. I attended 22 schools, skipped the eighth grade, and was named a national merit finalist. I just think that a large measure of credit for my success goes to my teachers. This guy thinks he engineered his own DNA in the womb. Yes, the writing processes and tips are good. But I'm glad I wrote my law school admissions essays before looking at these samples. Otherwise, Yale, Stanford, Penn, Virginia, and the rest would have thought I was a conceited windbag.

Outstanding book. It is about much more than only admissions essays. The author provides detailed explanation of every step of graduate application, giving abundant sources to expand. The essay section is vast in examples, allowing the reader to see the different approaches depending on career, school and document (includes grants/fellowships application essays!). I purchased this book to write (actually, to polish, since I had some drafts) my Statement of purpose, and after 3 weeks I think the result is splendid. I am very satisfied with the improvement guided by this book. If I went 1 year in the past and had to start my application process all over again, I would start by reading this book and using its techniques since early (reading, contacting and familiarizing with faculty and university in general).

I have been preparing for graduate school for several months now. I have ordered GRE review books and talked with several grad students and advisers. This book is by far the best resource that I have come across. It is written in a very accessible manner and answers many questions that I had (far beyond the scope of just admission essays). If you are considering grad school this book is a must have.

Pretty useful. I didn't go through every single sample essays but the ones I read were certainly inspirational to stir my own writing juices. I got in the school I wanted - of course this book wasn't the only, or one of the most important, factors but it certainly helped.

I am very rarely inspired to write a review, but this book was truly incredibly helpful. I bought it on a recommendation from my cousin as we were both struggling through graduate school applications. She said "I just got THE BEST BOOK," in a tone that made me take notice. I was not disappointed in the least. This book is about MUCH more than just essays, but talks you through the whole process in a way that takes a lot of the paranoia and uncertainty out of it. There are great tools in here for everything from making sure grad school is the right decision to breaking down the essay and letter-of-recommendation writing processes so that they are much less intimidating. I got into both of my top programs, and while I'd like to think it wasn't \*all\* because of this book, it definitely helped a great deal.

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