

# McNair Scholars Program Central Michigan University

## SRI HANDOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

There are generally two main things you will be working on this summer – your research projects and preparing to apply to graduate schools. As part of this preparation process, you will produce what we are terming a “Graduate School Action Plan” that will encompass various components. As you work to assemble each piece and progress in your thinking about the direction you would like to head, you will find that having this plan “ready to go” this fall will benefit you greatly with regard to not having to worry about these items as you try to keep up with your normal course load AND apply to schools. Talk to any scholar who has gone through this process and they will tell you that having everything in order prior to the semester starting makes a world of difference!

**Recommendation:** Make the most of your time this summer, continue to fine-tune each element of your action plan as you learn more about prospective graduate programs and devise a plan that will effectively and efficiently work according to your own time schedule. Even if you are officially applying to schools next year, it is to your advantage to have these items prepared ahead of time so that you only have to update them with minor changes when it comes to actually submitting them.

### Primary Components

1. List of top-ten target schools including reach, mid-tier and back-up schools
2. Matrix for top-six schools including important information such as deadlines, faculty contacts and research areas, financial support options, minimum GRE and GPA requirements, etc.
3. Timeline for application process including things like when you plan to have a final drafts of your personal statement completed for each school, when you will request letters of recommendation and when you need to actually send your materials and apply to each program
4. Personal statement
5. Curriculum vitae
6. Draft correspondence to potential faculty advisors and graduate students
7. School visit plan including legwork you will do to establish contact with prospective graduate programs, connections you have made with faculty and an overview of travel costs associated with “getting there”
8. Anything else you view as necessary for your successful entry into graduate school

### **The program will provide you with a template for your grad school matrix and action plan.**

This will help make sure that you include all required components in the proper format. I would like to stress that even though the program requires certain elements, these plans are ultimately your own and are meant to address your particular needs and circumstances as you develop them. Approach them with an open mind and update, tweak and improve them over the summer. Having a strong draft of your personal statement ready to go will be most critical as it will help focus your goals and put your mind at ease as it really is one of the most significant pieces of your application. It is also useful when approaching faculty to write letters of recommendation, providing them with a clear sense of your plans and accomplishments.

*Good luck and enjoy the process!*