Georgia State University
Department of Psychology

Graduate Program Ratings of the Importance of Non-Objective Criteria

(means based on Low = 1, medium = 2, high = 3)

Criterion	1982 Data*	1993 Data@
Previous Research Activity	2.37	2.33
Work Experience	2.13	2.08
Extracurricular Activity	1.36	1.39
Clinically Related Public Service	2.12	2.03
Letters of Recommendation	2.65	2.72

*Data from Smith (1985); 530 programs rated criteria
@Data from Lawson (1995); 563 programs rated criteria

Important Factors in Graduate Admission

Keith-Speigel (1991) conducted a survey of 158 faculty who are active in the graduate student selection process at their schools. They were told that it was assumed that grades, test scores, and letters of recommendation were important and asked to rate 138 more subtle factors on the following scale:

+3 = Very impressive/significantly enhances applicant's candidacy
0 = Neutral/doesn't affect candidacy one way or the other
-3 = Very negative/detracts significantly from applicant's candidacy

The top 20 factors are listed below:

1. Applicant is listed as a senior author of a research article published in a refereed scholarly journal. **(M = 2.89)**
2. Applicant is sole author on a paper at APA, APS or a major regional association convention. **(2.49)**
3. Applicant has a letter from a mentor with whom applicant has done considerable work. **(2.45)**
4. Applicant has a letter from applicant's professor who is a well-known and respected psychologist. **(2.45)**
5. Applicant's personal statement reveals a sustained and focused interest in an area appropriate to your program. **(2.39)**

6. Applicant has earned a <u>junior</u> authorship on a research article published in a refereed scholarly journal. **(2.30)**
7. Applicant is i n the top 5% of the graduating class (overall GPA standing). **(2.28)**
8. Applicant writes very well. **(2.28)**
9. Applicant includes a <u>research paper</u> (independent study project) in submitted application package that is relevant to your program focus. **(2.19)**
10. Application materials indicate that applicant paid considerable attention to assessing a "match" (e.g., that applicant's interests and your program seem right for each other). **(2.09)**
11. Applicant is the sole author of a paper presented at an undergraduate research conference. **(2.05)**
12. Applicant was a research assistant as an undergraduate. **(2.04)**
13. Applicant is a "self-starter" (according to recommenders). **(1.96)**
14. Applicant was a junior author of paper at APA, APS, or a large regional association convention. **(1.96)**
15. Applicant won a departmental award in a research paper competition. **(1.92)**
16. Applicant is highly motivated to achieve (according to recommenders). **(1.86)**
17. Applicant participated in invited honors program in senior year. **(1.85)**
18. Applicant earned an A in required upper division statistics class. **(1.82)**
19. Applicant is responsible and dependable (according to recommenders). **(1.72)**
20. Applicant holds a membership in Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi (or other prestigious scholarship group). **(1.68)**