

# Perspectives

Resources for  
minority applicants



**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



Visit [gsas.harvard.edu/diversity](https://gsas.harvard.edu/diversity) for more information about the graduate experience at Harvard

## A Message from the Dean

### I am delighted you are considering

graduate study at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University (GSAS). GSAS is a community where you can form and test your own ideas, expand your scholarly horizons, and deepen your knowledge while accessing world-renowned research centers, scholarly collections, and museums. Whether working with science and engineering faculty to discover or apply new principles or technology, or creating their own intellectual space in the humanities and social sciences, GSAS students are central to the intellectual mission of the University.

GSAS's diverse community represents many races, ethnicities, belief systems, nationalities, genders, and sexual orientations, and we strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and grow academically and personally. Student body diversity—including ethnic and racial diversity—is essential for GSAS and for Harvard to achieve their shared pedagogical and institutional objectives, preparing students to assume leadership roles in the increasingly pluralistic society into which they will graduate.

Our offices of Diversity and Minority Affairs, Academic Programs, and Student Affairs work closely with multiple student groups, who provide academic and social support through activities designed to enhance social and professional development experiences. We also promote opportunities for mentorship and career preparation.

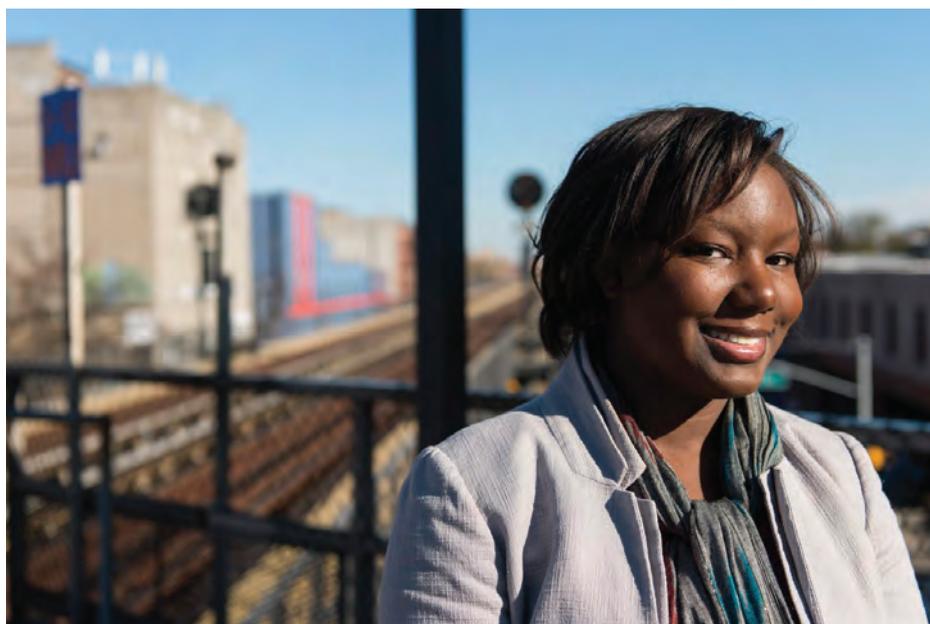
In this brochure, you will read more about our degree programs, Harvard's commitment to diversity, and the application process. I welcome you to explore this remarkable institution as you consider the next step for your academic and professional life.

#### **Emma Dench**

*Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences*

*McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History and of the Classics*





## GSAS at a Glance

- Degree candidates: **4,605** (4,392 PhD candidates; 213 master's candidates)
- Degree programs: **57**
- **47 percent** of GSAS students are women
- **34 percent** of GSAS students are international
- **11 percent** of GSAS students are underrepresented minorities

## A Commitment to Diversity

Harvard's policy is to make decisions concerning applicants on the basis of what each individual can contribute to the University's educational objectives and institutional needs. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, political beliefs, veteran status, or disability unrelated to job or course of study requirements.

## The Application Process

Admissions committees will weigh all your materials, not grades or test scores alone, paying special attention to your grades in your intended field of graduate study and/or closely related fields. Similarly, letters of recommendation by academics in your field who can comment on your scholarly work will be given considerable weight. Equally important to the decision process is your statement of purpose. The statement of purpose—an intellectual discussion of your past work and the questions

## Finding a Home at Harvard

**LaVaughn Henry, PhD '91, economics**  
Member of the Graduate School Alumni  
Association Council

In the spring of 1984, as I walked across Harvard Yard for the very first time—a yard so often crossed by past and future presidents, captains of industry, and renowned artists—a recurring question crossed my mind: “*Will I fit in here?*”

I recall meeting the other members of my entering doctoral class in economics. “Harvard,” “Yale,” “Stanford,” among many other well-known names, all seemed to recur as they introduced themselves. I was under no illusion that Rockhurst College, or the University of Missouri, places I had attended, would be among the ones they named. Although . . . guess what? The stories they told of how they got to Harvard, where they came from, and what they wanted to achieve did not seem for me to be that distant.

In class, when we formed study groups, or met for lunch or drinks, I came to understand that the presumed difference between myself and the other students, even the faculty whom I had come to know, was a presumption based on ignorance, not on fact. I started to ask myself another question: “*Is it possible that I might belong here?*”

Harvard University is a cornucopia of information, insight, and involvement. While on the Yard, I became president of the Graduate Student Council of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, a member of the Student Advisory Committee of the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School, and an active participant in the Student Coalition against Apartheid in South Africa. These are just a few examples of the diversity of opportunities and opinion that the University offers to all, regardless of background, who pass through its gates. I ultimately came to ask myself one more question: “*How much of a difference can I make while I am here, and after I leave Harvard?*”



“How much of a difference can I make while I am here, and after I leave Harvard?”

—LAVAUGHN HENRY



you wish to pursue—should reflect your qualifications, enthusiasm, and commitment to graduate study in your field of interest. You may also be asked to provide a writing sample or portfolio of your work.

### **Crafting a Compelling Statement of Purpose**

A statement of purpose is an opportunity for the admissions committee to hear directly from you why you are qualified for graduate study. Written as an essay, the statement should describe your research interests and the questions you are interested in pursuing, conveying this information in a scholarly manner. Some students find it best to present their research experiences as a series of intellectual turning points; others focus on a single culminating one—often the undergraduate thesis. These experiences can be used to show why you wish to continue

exploring a certain theme or why you wish to turn in a new direction. In either case, the discussion should provide a vivid picture of your intellectual profile: how you formulate research topics, how you pursue them, and how you articulate any interesting findings. You should also discuss why you wish to study in a particular department or with a particular faculty member.

The statement of purpose is not an autobiography, nor should it be a recitation of your resume or transcript, though you can include brief personal information as it pertains to your scholarly goals. You want the faculty committee to get to know you on an academic and intellectual level and understand that you are prepared for the rigors of a competitive graduate program.

Writing a competitive statement of purpose is a lengthy process, so give yourself adequate time to write a tightly-organized and polished piece of work. This will require obtaining feedback from past or current mentors and others regarding content and structure. When you are done, ask someone to proofread your final draft for typographical and grammatical errors.

## About the GRE

The Graduate Record Examination general test scores must be no more than five years old, if required by your program. Educational Testing Service ([www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)) provides information about GRE registration, fee waivers, and free preparation assistance. Be sure to review GSAS's degree programs ([gsas.harvard.edu/programs-study](http://gsas.harvard.edu/programs-study)) for your department of interest to determine if the GRE General Test or subject test are required or recommended; if the subject test is recommended, only take the exam if you feel well-prepared.

No single factor determines admissions success at GSAS, and no minimum test score will ensure admission to the program of your choice. If you have questions about your score and want advice about retaking the test, consult with professors or other advisors who are familiar with the graduate admissions process. You can also contact the graduate department to which you are applying.

## Letters of Recommendation

As part of the application, you will need to provide the names and email addresses of three individuals to write letters of recommendation in your behalf. These letters should provide an informative and well-documented evaluation of your potential for graduate study in your field of interest, focusing on your academic qualifications, research

**“If it takes a village to raise a child, the Du Bois Society can be likened to that village, and we as graduate students are its children. Along my graduate journey, the Du Bois Society has provided a sense of community, solidarity, and security. Despite the challenges of graduate school, I always have the resources I need to succeed. Moreover, I'm never alone in my pursuit of success; I have a village!”**

**—BRANDON WOODS,  
PHD CANDIDATE  
IN BIOLOGICAL AND  
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

*Continued on page 10*

# Programs Offered in 2018–2019

GSAS grants degrees in 57 departments, divisions, and committees in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. It is the only Harvard School that confers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.

Programs of Study	Fields of Study Include	Degree(s) Offered
<b>Natural Sciences</b>		
Astronomy		PhD
Biological Sciences in Dental Medicine*		PhD
Biological Sciences in Public Health*		PhD
Biophysics*		PhD
Biostatistics	Bioinformatics; Biostatistics	PhD
Chemical Biology*		PhD
Chemistry and Chemical Biology*	Chemical Biology Chemical Physics* Inorganic Organic Physical Theory *Candidates will be admitted to the Committee on Chemical Physics	PhD
Chemical Physics	All applicants to Chemical Physics must apply through Chemistry and Chemical Biology.	PhD
Division of Medical Sciences	Bioinformatics and Integrative Genomics (BIG); Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS); Immunology; Neuroscience (PhD in Neurobiology); Speech and Hearing Bioscience Technology (SHBT); Virology	PhD
Earth and Planetary Sciences		PhD
Engineering and Applied Sciences	Applied Mathematics (PhD); Applied Physics (PhD); Computer Science (PhD); Computational Science and Engineering (SM, ME); Engineering Sciences, Bioengineering (PhD); Engineering Sciences, Electrical Engineering (PhD, SM, ME); Engineering Sciences, Environmental Science and Engineering (PhD); Engineering Sciences, Materials Science and Mechanical Engineering (PhD)	PhD, SM, ME
Mathematics		PhD
Molecular and Cellular Biology*	Engineering and Physical Biology; Molecules, Cells and Organisms	PhD

\*Harvard Integrated Life Sciences (HILS) federation

Organismic and Evolutionary Biology*		PhD
Physics	Experimental Astrophysics; Engineering and Physical Biology; Experimental Physics; Theoretical Astrophysics; Theoretical Physics	PhD
Population Health Sciences	Environmental Health; Epidemiology; Global Health and Population; Nutrition; Social and Behavioral Sciences	PhD
Statistics		PhD
Systems Biology*		PhD
<b>Social Sciences</b>		
American Studies		PhD
Anthropology	Archaeology (PhD only); Medical Anthropology (AM only); Social Anthropology (PhD only)	PhD; AM
Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning		PhD
Business Administration	Accounting and Management; Management; Marketing; Strategy; Technology and Operations Management	PhD
Business Economics	Behavioral Economics; Development; Econometrics; Economics of Organizations; Economic Theory; Entrepreneurship; Finance; Industrial Organization; International Economics; Labor Economics; Macroeconomics	PhD
Economics		PhD
Education	Culture, Institutions, and Society; Education Policy and Program Evaluation; Human Development, Learning, and Teaching	PhD
Government	American Government; Comparative Politics; International Relations; Political Thought and Its History	PhD
Health Policy	Decision Sciences; Economics; Evaluative Science and Statistics; Management; Political Analysis	PhD
History	African History; Ancient History; Byzantine History; Early Modern European History; East Asian History; International History; Latin American History; Medieval History; Modern European History; Middle Eastern History; Russian History; South Asian History; United States History	PhD
History of Science	Ancient/Medieval; Early Modern; Human/Behavioral Sciences; Life Sciences; Medicine; Physical Sciences	PhD; AM
Human Evolutionary Biology		PhD

\*Harvard Integrated Life Sciences (HILS) federation

Middle Eastern Studies	Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies (PhD); History of Art and Architecture and Middle Eastern Studies (PhD); History and Middle Eastern Studies (PhD); Regional Studies: Middle East (AM)	PhD; AM
Organizational Behavior	Psychology Track; Sociology Track	PhD
Political Economy and Government	Economics; Government	PhD
Psychology	Cognition, Brain, and Behavior; Developmental; Experimental Psychopathy and Clinical; Social Psychology	PhD
Public Policy	Environment and Natural Resources; Judgment and Decision Sciences; International Development; Macroeconomic and Growth Policy; Security Studies/International Relations; Social Policy; Science and Technology Policy	PhD
Regional Studies–East Asia	China; Japan; Korea	AM
Regional Studies–Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia		AM
Social Policy	Social Policy and Government; Social Policy and Sociology	PhD
Sociology		PhD
<b>Humanities</b>		
African and African American Studies	Anthropology; Comparative Literature; Economics; English; Government; History; History of Art and Architecture; Linguistics; Music; Philosophy; Psychology; Religion; Romance Languages and Literatures; Sociology	PhD
Celtic Languages and Literatures		PhD; AM
Classics	Ancient History; Byzantine Greek; Classical Archaeology; Classical Philology; Classical Philosophy; Medieval Latin; Modern Greek	PhD
Comparative Literature		PhD
East Asian Languages and Civilizations	Chinese History; Chinese Literature; East Asian Arts/Film/Cultural Studies; History and East Asian Languages; Inner Asian; Japanese History; Japanese Literature; Korean History; Korean Literature; Religion/Philosophy; Tibetan	PhD
English	18th Century/Enlightenment; 19th Century British/Romantics/Victorian; 20th Century British; 20th Century American; Criticism and Theory; African American Literature; Drama; Early American (to 1900); Medieval; Poetry; Renaissance/Early Modern; The English Language; Transnational Anglophone/Postcolonial	PhD

Film and Visual Studies		PhD
Germanic Languages and Literatures	German Literature; Other Germanic	PhD
History of Art and Architecture	17th Century; 19th and 20th Century Architecture; Africa; African American; American; Ancient; Chinese; Contemporary; Early Christian and Byzantine; Islamic; Japanese; Latin American; Medieval; Modern (18th and 19th Century); Modern (20th Century); Northern Renaissance; Photography; Renaissance Architecture; South Asian and Indian; Southern Renaissance; Other (historic, diaspora, contemporary)	PhD
Inner Asian and Altaic Studies		PhD
Linguistics	Historical Linguistics; Linguistic Theory	PhD
Music	Composition; Cross-Disciplinary Music Studies; Musicology/Ethnomusicology; Musicology/Historical; Music Theory; Performance Practice (AM only)	PhD; AM
Near Eastern Language and Civilizations	Ancient Near Eastern Studies; Histories and Cultures of the Islamic World; Jewish History and Culture	PhD; AM
Philosophy	Classical Philosophy	PhD
Religion	African Religions; Buddhist Studies; Comparative Studies; East Asian Religions; Ethics; Greco-Roman Religions; Hebrew Bible; History of Christianity; Islamic Studies; Jewish Studies; Judaism and Christianity; New Testament and Early Christianity; Philosophy of Religion; Religion and Society; Religion, Gender, and Culture; Religion in the Americas; Religions of Late Antiquity; South Asian Religions; Theology	PhD
Romance Languages and Literatures	French; Italian; Portuguese; Spanish	PhD
Slavic Languages and Literatures	Linguistics; Literature	PhD
South Asian Studies		PhD; AM

GSAS enables PhD students to coordinate their studies for an additional advanced degree. The MD/PhD Program coordinated with Harvard Medical School is for students who plan careers in biomedical research and academic medicine. The SM/MBA Program allows students to earn an MBA from Harvard Business School and a Master of Science degree. GSAS PhD students from any program may participate in a coordinated degree program with Harvard Law School that leads to a JD/PhD. Prospective students must apply to and be separately admitted to each school to participate.

**The fields of study noted do not necessarily reflect all areas of study available in a given program.**

accomplishments, and potential as a scholar, furnishing detailed information that grades alone cannot reveal.

At least six weeks prior to the application deadline, contact three individuals who know your work best and who have been most positive about and supportive of your work. These should be professors in your field or closely related fields who can discuss your critical-thinking skills and ability to conduct original research. For those in the workforce, recommendations may come from managers or others who can comment on your academic potential for graduate work. Whenever possible, make your request for a recommendation in person, by appointment, or during office hours. Bring along any materials that could help a recommender produce a well-documented evaluation of your qualifications: a resume or curriculum vitae, a paper or an exam that you wrote for a course, a transcript of your grades, and, if you are at the application stage, a copy of your statement of purpose. You should also be prepared to explain why you want to do graduate work and describe your career goals. Be sure to confirm that the recommender has no reservations about writing a letter for you. If you are also applying for national fellowships, request those letters at the same time, keeping in mind that fellowship deadlines may be earlier than admissions deadlines.



Be sure to send your recommenders a thank-you note to let them know the outcome.

If you have recently graduated from college and are not yet ready to apply to graduate school, be sure to stay in touch with former course professors and research mentors who are supportive of your work, keeping them informed of your activities in the field and your interest in doing graduate study at some point. When the time comes to apply, choose those professors who have shown the strongest interest and most sustained support for your future goals as a graduate student.

#### **WAIVING YOUR RIGHT TO SEE THE LETTERS**

During the application process, you will be asked whether or not you waive your right to see the letters of recommendation. In academia, many feel that confidential letters have greater credibility than non-confidential letters. If you are not comfortable waiving your right, you may wish to consider asking another individual to provide a letter. Visit [gsas.harvard.edu/right-inspect-letters-recommendation](https://gsas.harvard.edu/right-inspect-letters-recommendation) to learn more.



## **The Application Timeline**

### **Summer/Early Fall**

- Gather application materials and review application requirements.
- Visit or contact GSAS with questions.
- Take the GRE general test and the subject test, if required.
- Begin drafting statement of purpose.
- If you haven't already done so, identify and ask individuals if they are willing to write strong letters of recommendation.
- Request official transcripts.
- Consider applying for national fellowships, as they require the same set of materials as the GSAS application.

### **Late Fall/Winter**

- Submit application materials. Admissions deadlines are in December and January. Be sure to check the GSAS website for the department's deadline.
- If your program of interest interviews applicants (either in person or via Skype), prepare by arranging mock interviews.

### **Spring**

- Look for a decision letter in late February or March.
- Visit campus. You will be invited to visit campus as a guest of GSAS for several days of informational and social meetings with faculty, administrators, and current students. This visit provides a more

- complete picture of the Harvard experience and will help you make an informed decision about whether to accept the offer of admission.
- Reply to the offer of admission by April 15.

### GSAS Application Fee Waiver

The application fee is \$105. You may request a fee waiver form by emailing the GSAS Office of Admissions at [admiss@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:admiss@fas.harvard.edu) or the Office of Diversity and Minority Affairs at [minrec@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:minrec@fas.harvard.edu).

### To Apply

Visit [gsas.harvard.edu/apply](https://gsas.harvard.edu/apply) to apply online and to learn more about programs of study.

### Financing a Graduate Education

GSAS offers a comprehensive program of financial support, including grants and fellowships from internal and external sources, traineeships, teaching fellowships, research assistantships, other academic employment opportunities, and several types of loans. All PhD candidates receive at least five years of full financial support, with students in the humanities and social sciences receiving a dissertation completion fellowship in their final year. Students in the sciences typically receive funding until they complete their degree.

### Non-Degree Programs

GSAS offers two options for study in a non-degree program as special students or as visiting fellows. For information, contact the Special Students and Visiting Fellows Office at [special@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:special@fas.harvard.edu) or 617-495-5392, or visit Programs of Study at [gsas.harvard.edu](https://gsas.harvard.edu).



## A Supportive Community

### Minority Biomedical Scientists of Harvard (MBSH)

When **Patrice Groomes** was deciding which graduate program to join, she asked current students three questions: Are you happy? Do you sleep? Have you found love? “I wanted to get a sense of the work-life balance,” the PhD candidate in chemical biology explains. “The students here passed the test.”

Work-life balance was also on Groomes mind when she was deciding which lab to join. Unable to choose and armed with spreadsheets, she turned to more senior members of the Minority Biomedical Scientists of Harvard (MBSH) at one of the groups biweekly coffee & cookies social events. “Everyone offered different perspectives and this helped me make a decision.”

Now as an MBSH board member, Groomes is making sure younger students are asking the same hard questions. Beyond providing a supportive community for minority PhD and postdocs, MBSH also organizes professional development events focused on giving members the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in graduate school. Events address fellowship applications, choosing a lab, and overcoming imposter syndrome, for example. And, through partnerships with other groups at Harvard, MBSH members serve as mentors for minority high school students and undergraduates, fostering the next generation of scientists.

**Jordan Todd**, a PhD candidate in biological and biomedical sciences, knew of MBSH even before he arrived at Harvard. “I had gone to the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) where I met students in MBSH,” says Todd. According to him, coming to Harvard was a hard transition. “Therefore, I really wanted a community that I felt connected to and that gave me a great support system,” he explains. “MBSH provided the sustained connections I was looking for.”



“MBSH provided the sustained connections I was looking for.”

—JORDAN TODD

“MBSH is crucial because it catalyzes interaction between underrepresented students and creates events that bring students in contact with professionals in various biomedical fields who are from underrepresented backgrounds.”

— IVAN SANTIAGO,  
PHD CANDIDATE IN  
NEUROBIOLOGY

## Academics and Professional Development

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is committed to helping you develop and sustain a productive and supportive relationship with your advisors and mentors. Although the advising structure and role may vary by program, all entering graduate students will have one or several advisors to assist them in navigating their academic path. Harvard faculty are uniquely invested in the success of their graduate students, and GSAS places great emphasis on making the advising role as meaningful as possible. It is important to take advantage of the resources your faculty advisor can offer.

No one individual, however, can meet all of your needs, so be proactive about seeking out other mentors, both within and outside of your field, for support both academic and professional. Be sure to take full advantage of Harvard resources, such as the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Career Services, and student groups, like Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering.

## Dudley House and Student Life

Through activities at Dudley House, the Graduate Student Center, GSAS supports graduate students in their intellectual, professional, and social lives beyond the classroom and laboratory. Located in Harvard Yard, Dudley House provides a place for students in any GSAS program to grab lunch or coffee and to take part in a wide range of engaging and entertaining activities.

GSAS also sponsors graduate student groups, ranging from religious and environmental groups to those affiliated with an ethnic group or academic discipline.

Visit [gsas.harvard.edu/student-life](https://gsas.harvard.edu/student-life) for information.

## Du Bois Graduate Society

The W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society sponsors numerous activities and meets with GSAS administrators to address issues of concern to Harvard's minority community. Named for the first African American to receive the PhD at Harvard, the Du Bois Society is a multicultural student group that plans potluck dinners, student research forums, faculty-student lunches, and a student-run conference.

Visit [projects.iq.harvard.edu/duboisgrad](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/duboisgrad) for information.

*continued on page 16*

## Seeing beyond the Horizon

### The W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society

“There’s a perception of what type of community you’ll get at Harvard,” says **Daphne Penn**, a PhD candidate in education. “Many minority students are afraid they won’t find a community when they get here.” To assuage this fear, the W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society hosts newly admitted students at their monthly social gathering during the spring visiting weekend. “Multiple students have told me that this event made a difference,” says Penn. “It showed them that Harvard can feel like home and not just a school.”

Since its foundation in 1983, the Du Bois Society has served the needs of underrepresented minorities in GSAS. Penn, a leader in the society, divides these needs along three general themes: social, academic, and wellness. One academic-focused initiative that Penn is particularly proud of is the Harvard Hacks series, a mix of information sessions and workshops that help students navigate life at Harvard. One such Hack is geared toward fellowship applications and it has already begun to bear fruit. “This year the majority of students who won the Ford Foundation Fellowship had attended our discussion panel or used resources from our Hack,” says Penn with pride.

For **Aaron Benavidez**, the faculty dinners, a mainstay of the Du Bois Society, are an important source of inspiration. “There is a concept called ‘envisioning process,’ which is the idea that you can see beyond the horizons that were given to you at birth,” the PhD candidate in sociology explains. At these dinners, professors share their journey to Harvard and answer questions about work-life balance, activism, and their approach to life in general. “As both a first-gen college and graduate student pursuing a PhD, I found that my peers and professors have really promoted this sense of what is possible in a life.”



“I found that my peers and professors have really promoted this sense of what is possible in a life.”

—AARON BENAVIDEZ

### Harvard University Native American Program

The Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP) is committed to advancing the well-being of indigenous peoples through self-determination, academic achievement, and community service. In addition to public forums, lectures by tribal leaders, and an annual powwow, HUNAP offers the 1665 Fellowship (commemorating the graduation in 1665 of Harvard's first American Indian graduate) to assist advanced PhD students whose work will specifically benefit Native people.

Visit [hunap.harvard.edu](http://hunap.harvard.edu) for information.

### Minority Biomedical Scientists of Harvard

The Minority Biomedical Scientists of Harvard (MBSH) is a graduate student group dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion in the life sciences community at Harvard. MBSH provides a welcoming and enriching environment to a diverse population of graduate students, research assistants, and undergraduates interested in a career in science. MBSH aims to improve the experience of underrepresented graduate students in the sciences by organizing community-building and career development events throughout the academic year. The group promotes these objectives through various interactions with senior faculty as well as non-academic scientists and administrators who can provide counsel and guidance to help minority students thrive in their doctoral studies.

Visit [www.mbsb.website](http://www.mbsb.website) for information.

### Outreach Programs

Participating in research can help you decide whether a PhD is right for you and, if you do apply, makes you a stronger applicant. If you are looking for a short-term research experience, consider a paid summer internship organized by GSAS, Harvard departments, and Harvard-affiliated teaching hospitals. GSAS also offers a post-baccalaureate program, the Research Scholars Initiative, which enables college graduates to take part in a long-term research experience.

Learn more at [gsas.harvard.edu/diversity/outreach-programs](http://gsas.harvard.edu/diversity/outreach-programs).

### Other Resources

For students whose intellectual interests involve issues of race and ethnicity, Harvard offers a wide range of relevant research groups and programs, including the Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, the Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy, and the Center for the Study of World Religions.

## Applying to GSAS—Commonly Asked Questions

### How should I start?

Review the **Programs of Study** ([gsas.harvard.edu/programs-study](https://gsas.harvard.edu/programs-study)) to learn more about the department you are interested in. If you have questions afterward, contact the program administrator.

### Do I need to visit campus prior to applying?

Visiting campus is not required before you apply. However, if you do choose to visit, be sure to connect with the program administrator, who can help you determine the best time to visit and suggest the best way to make an appointment with the faculty members you are interested in studying with.

### Can I speak with a current GSAS student?

Yes, we are happy to connect you with current students. Email Stephanie Parsons, assistant director of diversity and minority affairs, at [minrec@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:minrec@fas.harvard.edu).

### Should I contact faculty in my program of interest?

For some programs, connecting with faculty in advance of applying is critical; for others, such contact is unnecessary. Program administrators can help you decide if contacting faculty would be appropriate.

### If I do plan to contact a faculty member, how should I prepare?

Before reaching out to a faculty member, be sure to do your homework. Visit their Harvard webpage, review their research, and be prepared to discuss your own interests and how you see your work connecting. If you reach out to the faculty member by email, remember that this is a formal communication and the first impression you are making. Be sure to address them as professor and clearly communicate why you are contacting them, including why you are interested in working with them. Accuracy is key: ask someone to proofread your email before you send it. After you connect, don't forget to follow up with a formal thank you.

### How are admissions decisions made?

Admissions decisions are made by a faculty committee based in the department you hope to join, weighing all your materials, not only grades or test scores.



## For more information

The Office of Diversity and Minority Affairs is available to answer questions about the application process, student life, and minority recruitment.



**Sheila Thomas, PhD,**  
Dean for Academic  
Programs and  
Diversity



**Stephanie Parsons,**  
Assistant Director  
of Diversity and  
Minority Affairs



**Karina Gonzalez  
Herrera, PhD,** Assistant  
Director of Diversity  
and Minority Affairs



**Katie Saibara,**  
Program  
Coordinator



**Alyssa Hernandez,**  
Diversity and  
Inclusion Fellow



**Freddy Valencia,**  
Diversity and  
Inclusion Fellow

## Contact Information

### The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University

Richard A. and Susan F. Smith  
Campus Center  
1350 Massachusetts Avenue,  
Suite 350  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-495-5315  
[gsas.harvard.edu](http://gsas.harvard.edu)

### Office of Diversity and Minority Affairs

[minrec@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:minrec@fas.harvard.edu)  
[gsas.harvard.edu/diversity](http://gsas.harvard.edu/diversity)

### Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

[admiss@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:admiss@fas.harvard.edu)  
[gsas.harvard.edu/apply](http://gsas.harvard.edu/apply)

## Harvard Student Groups

**Graduate Student Council**  
[gsc.harvard.edu](http://gsc.harvard.edu)

**Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering**  
[projects.iq.harvard.edu/hgwise](http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/hgwise)

**LatinX**  
[gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/harvard-resources/harvard-gsas-latinx-student-association](http://gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/harvard-resources/harvard-gsas-latinx-student-association)

**LGBTQ@GSAS**  
[gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/harvard-resources/lgbtqgsas](http://gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/harvard-resources/lgbtqgsas)

**Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science**  
[projects.iq.harvard.edu/sacnasharvard](http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/sacnasharvard)