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Building a Bridge: Configuring your CSDCAS Portal Page

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The prelaunch configuration portal is now open, and programs have already begun to the process of building out their pages. Before starting this process, programs should conduct a systematic review of their portal to identify areas for improvement. It is critical to consider how the application is presented to applicants and how the requirements provide useful information to inform admission decisions. Knowing which information is valuable to your program should drive any changes you make to your portal. Programs should limit low-value or unnecessary requirements, ensuring there are limited barriers for applicants to apply.

When reviewing the different sections of the configuration portal, consider the following:

- Home Page (Branding)
 - Provide a brief program overview that also shares what stands out about your program.
 - List the requirements for your program, including information for international applications, such as foreign transcript evaluations and English proficiency.
 - Provide characteristics of what you are looking for in an applicant.
 - Limit links that take the applicant away from the application process.
- Questions Page
 - Ensure there are no duplicated questions that have already been asked within the standard application.
 - Outside of institutionally required questions, are your questions providing valuable insights?
 - If you have short-answer questions/essays, provide clear prompts that are tied to a rubric.
- Prerequisites Page
 - List all prerequisite courses that you will require.
 - List the courses with a general title that could represent courses taken from a variety of institutions.
 - For each course, provide a description or list topics that should be covered.
- Documents Page
 - Ensure the documentation you are requesting from applicants is of high value to your program and ask yourself the following questions:

- Does requiring a CV/resume provide you with more information that is not already collected in the experience and achievements section of the application?
- Do the Personal Statements/Essays provide you with insights that accurately represent applicants' skills, abilities, or motivations?
- Do you have an optional essay for applicants to provide more insights that were not already previously captured?
- Provide structured prompts that are paired with a well-defined rubric to ensure the review team has the proper tools to evaluate applicants consistently.

Next Steps: We have developed a new configuration portal best practices webpage on the CAPCSD website to help guide programs through this critical pre-launch setup. This page is an all-encompassing resource that includes important configuration cycle details, best practices, a webinar, and direct links to relevant Liaison help center information. Additionally, a configuration portal checklist is included to help ensure everything has been reviewed and is ready to be launched