



GRADUATE SCHOOL

****Prior to entering a graduate school program, make sure that you have done extensive research about your career goals, the financial implications, and the fit of the program.****

Think about your reasons to attend graduate school. Ask yourself questions such as:

- Why do I want to go to graduate school?
- Am I applying to graduate school because I do not think there are career options?
- What are my career goals? How can a graduate degree help me achieve my goals?
- Have I identified an area where I am interested in advancing my career goals?

Research areas such as:

Location

- Is the school located in a geographic area of interest to you? How far is it from your current home? What is the campus like?

Finances

- You must find out what the cost of the program will be and if you will need to take out any loans
- Find out if there are scholarship/fellowship opportunities, as well as graduate assistantships
- What is the cost of living on or near campus?
- Are there early scholarship deadlines?

Academics

- Are there program concentrations/specializations?
- What is the reputation of the program?
- Are there opportunities for additional degrees/certifications?

Students and Faculty

- What are the demographics of the school and program?
- What percentage of applicants are accepted; and of those accepted, how many complete the program?
- What is the student-faculty ratio? How big are the class sizes?
- Are there faculty members with research projects that align with my interests?

Careers

- What are the post-graduation rates for full time employment?
- Who are some of the employers that hire interns and full-time employees?
- What is the average starting salary for a graduate from this program?
- Where do many of the alumni from this program work geographically post-graduation?
- Are there alumni I can connect with to speak with about their current role?

Other considerations:

- Application criteria and fees, professional accreditations, deadlines to apply/rolling admissions, and how much time it takes to complete the program
- Discuss your career options/interests with your faculty, career advisor, and/or alumni

Graduate School Web Resources

GradSchools.com - <http://www.gradschools.com/>
Peterson's - <https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx>
Quint Careers - <http://www.quintcareers.com/graduate-school-criteria/>
US News & World Report - <https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools>
Financial Aid - <http://fafsa.ed.gov>
Scholarships - <http://fastweb.com>
Graduate Guide - <http://graduateguide.com>

Planning Timeline for Graduate/Professional School

The following is a suggested timeline to help you plan your application process. Remember to do your own research on specific graduate programs since some have earlier timelines you will need to meet.

9 Months - 1 Year+ Prior to Application Deadline

- Research programs (i.e. utilize web resources, talk to people, collect school catalogues)
- Complete necessary pre-requisite coursework
- Register for graduate admissions test and study

6 - 9 Months Prior to Application Deadline

- Initiate contact with potential references and assess their willingness to write a letter for you
- Research financial aid options and opportunities for on-campus compensation
- Complete all financial aid forms including FAFSA
- Continue to complete necessary pre-requisite coursework
- Take graduate admissions exams if required
- Begin online application(s) where possible
- Register, if necessary, for the common application required by school

0 - 6 Months Prior to Application Deadline

- Provide references with supporting materials and collect letters of recommendation
- Complete applications and write application essays
- Order multiple copies of your official undergraduate transcripts
- Submit applications by deadlines, read instructions thoroughly

What will you need for your applications? Remember that admissions requirements vary by program and school.

- Undergraduate GPA (Overall and in Major)
- Required coursework
- Test scores (i.e., GRE, LSAT, MCAT, GMAT, MAT)
- Previous experience; resume/CV
- Letters of recommendation
- Personal statement
- Interview

For the Personal Statement, create a portrait that is persuasive and personal:

- Discuss different topics such as your motivations for this career path as well as the skills and experience you possess that will allow you to contribute to the program
- Address why you want to become a part of that *specific* program
- Highlight what you plan to do with this degree
- Three key components of the personal statement include your preparation for graduate school, your career goals, and how this program will help you achieve your goals