

Graduate & Professional School



Considerations When Thinking About Graduate School

- Have you taken advantage of research, shadowing, conferences, presentations, and community involvement opportunities?
- What are my short-term and long term goals? Will a graduate degree help me achieve my goals?
- Do I enjoy this field enough that I'd want to study it for the next several years?
- Would I be good at the type of work I'll be doing in graduate/professional school?
- Am I willing to commit the time, effort, and financial resources that it takes to get a graduate degree?
- Am I going to graduate/professional school because I am not sure what I want to do?
- What am I hoping to accomplish from graduate/professional school?

Comparing Graduate Programs

Consider these factors for both the institution and the specific grad program.

- Specializations
- Course Offerings
- Faculty & Advisors
- Program Size & Diversity
- Stability of Program
- Funding Availability
- Residency Requirements
- Location
- Costs (tuition & living)
- Research vs. Practical Focus
- Accreditation/ Reputation/ Ranking
- Facilities/ Resources
- Time to Degree
- Career Assistance/ Support
- School/ Work/ Life Balance

Doing Your Research

- The best source of information on a program will come from the school itself. Check out the program's website, ask for program materials to be sent to you, and **talk with faculty, current students, and alumni**. If possible, try to visit the school to learn more about your program of interest.
- View **program rankings** in industry-related publications. (Note: Rankings are not always an indicator of program quality)
- **Web resources:** www.petersons.com, www.GradSchools.com, www.GradSource.com, www.PrincetonReview.com
- Evaluate **faculty to student ratio, research interests, faculty supervision, and supervision style**.
- Many **professional associations** have information on related graduate programs.

Professional Associations that may be of interest to you:

- American Bar Association
- American Medical Association
- American Marketing Association
- The Professional Accounting Society of America
- Entrepreneurs' Organization
- American Psychological Association
- North American Society for Sport Management
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

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How many programs should I apply to?

The answer to this question depends on a lot of factors, including your qualifications and cost to apply. Once you have a realistic picture of how competitive you are as a candidate, then apply to a range of programs, including:

- Competitive programs you'd love
- Programs you're likely to get into
- "Safe bets" that you know you'll get into

Graduate School Funding

- Grants, scholarships, fellowships, military benefits, employer tuition reimbursements
- Assistantships – GAs, TAs, & RAs
- Government or private loans

Assistantships

Assistantships can help pay for grad school while gaining experience. The benefits of assistantships may include full or partial tuition remission, a stipend, insurance, event housing!

- GA – Graduate Assistant
- TA – Teaching Assistant
- RA – Research Assistant

Contact the graduate program you're applying to, the university student affairs office, housing office, or departments on campus that align with your degree/ experience.

- Visit <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/> to browse associations affiliated with your major or field of interest.

Setting Yourself up for the Best Chance of Getting into Graduate/Professional School

- **Application:** Read through and complete your applications carefully and clearly. Make copies of any paper applications you get so that you'll be able to re-do it if mistakes are made.
- **Test Scores:** Take tests (GRE, GMAT, MCAT, LSAT, etc.) early enough so that you have time to repeat them if needed. Make sure that you understand each program's requirements (i.e. how many attempts they'll accept, if they average scores).
(Note: Many grad/professional programs require a specific type of test. Research what your field of interest requires!)
- **GPA:** Be aware that some programs may calculate your GPA their own way. Find out if retaking classes will help raise your GPA.
- **Recommendations:** Choose references who know you well and can speak specifically about your strengths. Help your references write the best letters for you by giving them plenty of time to write your letters (4 weeks+) and everything needed (your resume, names of grad programs, stamps, envelopes, etc.). Faculty references are preferred.
- **Personal Statement:** Readers are looking for how you think, your commitment to the profession, the strength of your decision to go to grad school, and how well you "fit" with the program. Proofread carefully and take advantage of the Saunders Writing Center on campus.

Managing the Admissions Process

Find advice and tips online (search for "grad school") at...

- www.princetonreview.com
- www.gradschooltips.com
- www.usnews.com
- www.quintcareers.com
- www.gradschool.about.com

Faculty members and pre-professional academic advisors in your professional area of interest are valuable resources, too!