

# DECIDE, CHOOSE, & APPLY FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL



Career Planning  
& Resource Center

## MAKING THE DECISION TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

### Ask Yourself:

- Have I explored all my options carefully?
- Can I find an appealing job with my bachelor's degree?
- Will career options be better with a graduate degree?
- Do I meet the entrance requirements for admission to the graduate programs I am considering?
- How committed/prepared am I to handle the course load and other requirements of the program?
- Can I manage the financial obligations?
- Is it better for me to work for a few years before applying to graduate school?

### Consult multiple sources of information:

- Professors, alumni, and professionals in the field (use LinkedIn)
- Current graduate students in the program
- Graduate student organizations in the field
- Friends and family who know you and can provide opinions regarding your readiness
- Attend a graduate level class as a guest undergraduate

## APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

When do I apply and how much are application fees?

How will my GPA be calculated?

Who should write my letters of recommendations?

What admissions tests do I need to take?

How do I write my personal statement?

**Get Answers to These Questions  
on the Back of this Page**

## IDENTIFYING GRADUATE SCHOOLS

**Peterson's** [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

**GradSchools.com** [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)

**America's Best Graduate Schools** [www.usnews.com/](http://www.usnews.com/)

**Professional Associations**

**Faculty on campus and at other institutions**

## CHOOSING A GRADUATE SCHOOL

### Strength of the Program and Institution:

- Is the program accredited?
- Does the program emphasize areas that fit your interests and personal/professional goals?
- Do the faculty have special academic reputations based on research projects and publications?
- How will the ranking/prestige of the institution affect job prospects?
- What internship, practicum, clinical, and research opportunities are provided?
- What is the quality of physical facilities, labs, equipment, and libraries?

### Campus Atmosphere and Location:

- What do you prefer – a small quiet campus, a large campus in a college town, a rural or urban setting, cold or warm weather, etc.?
- What are class sizes and student/faculty ratio?
- What campus activities and resources are specific to graduate students?
- What is the student profile of the institution and program (diversity, age, interests, etc.)?

### Financial Support:

- Does the program offer assistantships, scholarships, or work study to provide financial assistance and/or include tuition remission?

Updated: 7/15

# APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

## **When do I apply?**

Some programs have specific deadlines for materials to be submitted by and may admit students only during the fall semester where as other programs accept applications on a continual basis and admit students during all semesters. Generally, application deadlines for fall programs are between December and February and spring programs between August and October. You will need to complete an application form for the graduate school and some schools will require you to submit another application form to the academic department.

## **How much are application fees?**

Application fees are between \$30 and \$90. Factor this into consideration if you decide to apply to five or six schools.

## **How will my GPA be calculated?**

Schools vary as to which years of your undergraduate degree they use to determine if you meet their minimum GPA requirements. Some include all years, some may omit your freshman year, and others may just include your last two undergraduate years. Transcripts of your grades from all colleges you attended are usually required. Most universities will accept only an official transcript bearing the embossed seal of the undergraduate institution.

## **Who should write my letters of recommendation?**

Faculty usually provide recommendations but you could also ask internship supervisors, job supervisors, or other people who know your abilities.

## **What do I need to know about admissions tests?**

The most well-known admissions tests are the GRE (Graduate School), GMAT (Business School), MCAT (Medical School), and LSAT (Law School). Not all programs require admissions tests. Plan to complete tests well in advance of admission deadlines.

*For test dates, test centers, and registration info see:*

- GRE [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre)
- LSAT [www.lsac.org/](http://www.lsac.org/)
- GMAT [www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam.aspx](http://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam.aspx)
- MCAT [www.aamc.org/](http://www.aamc.org/)

*For tips, strategies, and practice tools see:*

- Princeton Review [www.princetonreview.com/](http://www.princetonreview.com/)
- Peterson's [www.petersons.com/](http://www.petersons.com/)

## **What should I include in my essay?**

The application essay may be referred to as an essay, statement of purpose, or personal statement. You might be asked to include: reasons for pursuing this degree, motivation and commitment to the field, why you selected this university, relevant skills or training, and long-term career plans.