

Career Guides

APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Should I Attend Graduate School?

- Consider if graduate school is required for the career field you wish to pursue. Careers in law, medicine, and clinical psychology (among others) require advanced degrees.
- Consider graduate school if you enjoy your field of study and would like to pursue an advanced degree prior to entering the workforce. In some fields, however, it is recommended that you obtain work experience prior to pursuing graduate work. Some business schools, for example, require experience before they will consider your application.
- DO NOT consider graduate school if you are unclear about your career goals or if you merely want to avoid the job search. If you are uncertain if graduate school is appropriate for you, schedule an appointment with a Career Services counselor.

Planning for Graduate School

Planning for graduate school may begin as early as your sophomore year (with selection of your major, building a strong academic record and developing relations with faculty) and continue through your senior year. The following is a general guideline to help you prepare for graduate study:

Junior Year

- Talk to the Career Services staff and faculty members to discuss your career interests and goals and to identify appropriate graduate programs.
- Research graduate programs. Review information in *Peterson's Guides to Graduate Study*. Gather information through the Internet. Write for catalogues and application materials from schools of interest.
- Explore the possibility of assisting faculty with research projects in your area.
- Consider faculty and/or employers you would like to serve as references.
- Attend local Graduate and Professional School Fairs. Check at Career Services for specific dates and locations.
- Visit schools of interest between junior and senior year.
- Begin to explore financial aid possibilities including scholarships, grants, and fellowships for graduate study in your area of interest.
- Register to take entrance exams as early as the summer following your junior year. MCAT and LSAT deadlines can even be as early as that spring.

Senior Year

- Register to take the appropriate entrance exams in the fall. Retake the exam in the spring, if necessary. General GRE Tests and GMAT tests are offered as computer-based tests 7 days per week. Subject Tests are offered November, December, and April.
- Begin working on application materials early. Most deadlines are in late fall or in early spring semester.
- Explore financial aid options at the institutions of interest to you. Note that financial aid application deadlines are often *earlier* than admissions deadlines.

Things to Consider When Applying to Graduate School

- Reputation of institution and of its library and facilities
- Admission requirements
- Reputation/training of faculty
- Accreditation of the institution
- Orientation of program (research, theoretical, applied)
- Faculty/student ratio
- Availability of financial aid (loans, assistantships, fellowships)
- Full-time vs. part-time program
- Size of program
- Success of graduates in the job market and available career and job search assistance
- Geographic location of institution

General Application Requirements

Application materials for graduate schools generally include:

- An application, including an original essay or personal statement, describing your interest in pursuing a graduate degree.
- Transcripts from each institution where you studied as an undergraduate.
- Recommendation letters from faculty and/or employers. (Three letters are usually required).
- Scores from Graduate Admissions Tests. The test required depends on your area of graduate study and the school to which you apply. Tests include the GRE (general and subject tests), LSAT, MCAT, GMAT, and MAT. MCAT applications are available from the Pre-Health Advisor. MATs are offered monthly through the Graduate Admissions office.
- Portfolio – for some programs of study (e.g. art, architecture, journalism) you may also be required to submit a portfolio of previous work.