

TIPS for Choosing the Best Graduate Program for YOU

1) Where is your desire to go to graduate school coming from?

- a. Are you interested in the degree as it will help you succeed in a career in the field?
 - b. Attending as a result of fear of entering the workforce, pressure from family?
 - c. Are you emotionally ready for one to three more years of academic work at a much more rigorous level than your undergraduate experience?
 - d. Can you articulate your academic and professional reasons for going to graduate school?
- Graduate School should be regarded as a step to carry you forward towards your career/ life objectives

2) Know the difference between Graduate and Professional Schools

- a. Graduate Schools- Places a greater emphasis on research and the field of academia.
- b. Professional Schools- Places a greater emphasis on career- related development

3) How to Choose the Right graduate Program for you

For most graduate programs you can choose to pursue 3 different types of degrees:

a. **PhD.(Doctor of Philosophy) 4-8 years**

The fundamental difference is that you are being paid to pursue a Ph.D. whereas, for all other graduate school programs, you are paying to pursue the respective degree.

b. **MA/MS (Master of Arts/Science) 2-3 years**

Armed with proof that they can do graduate-level work, master's graduates often are far more successful in being admitted to highly competitive programs than people who only have a B.A./B.S.

- c. **MBA/JD/PsyD (Master of Business Administration) 1-2 years**

Admissions to other graduate programs such as J.D., or M.B.A is a holistic process that takes secondary factors (extracurriculars, personality, etc.) seriously, because these schools want to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also personable and charismatic
- 4) Remember; always do your homework on the program of your choice. Research the program you are interested in thoroughly, look at the types of degrees offered, National program ranking and accreditation and Faculty.
 - a. Funding- Cost per year ranges from \$30,000to \$50,000 per year
 - i. Fellowships and Grants- granted on basis of academic achievement
 - ii. Assistantships (TA)- work up to 10-20 hours a week
 - iii. Educational Loans- up to 75%
 - b. Faculty.
 - i. Fine tune your choice-you need to know who they are going work with.
 - 1. Previous research (faculty.uci.edu)
 - 2. Accreditation
 - 3. Any special Recognition?
 - ii. Extensively look into the Department's reputation and talk to current graduate Students' perception about the program of interest.
 - c. Program Curriculum-
 - i. Do the program descriptions sound interesting?
 - ii. What specializations are important?
 - iii. Does the program focus on theory and research, or does it emphasize application of knowledge and skill?
 - d. Geography- "Taking geography into consideration should not result in elimination"

5) Graduate and Professional Schools-The Application Process

1. What you need to know!

- a. Grades- You do not necessarily need to have a perfect 4.0 to get in! You can strengthen your application with these following components:
- b. 60% of those selected based on GPA's end up dropping the program.

2. Academic Character- The New Selection Factor!

- a. Research- to maximize your chances of admission, you must show how you will be a valuable asset to the school in terms of producing research results.
- b. Work Experience/Internships- Graduate programs want to see professional skills, dedication and responsibility.
- c. Community Service- Graduate Schools and Employers want to see your contribution to the community (Business Schools)

3. Tools of Application

- a. Statement of purpose- Most Programs require you to answer at least one essay question, pertaining why you would be a good match for the program?
- b. Letters of recommendation- typically 2-3 letters of recommendation from mentors , faculty and supervisors
- c. GRE/GMAT /LSAT – Admissions testing