

GRINNELL COLLEGE



Graduate and Professional School Guide

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Using this Guide

The Graduate and Professional School Guide is designed to help you with questions about graduate school, from whether you should attend, to more detailed information about how to apply and finance your education. Although the guide is divided into sections, all of the information interacts with one another. For instance, which school you select might depend on the financial assistance you receive. This guide should answer some of your questions and provide you with many resources for further research. However, sometimes it can only offer more questions you need to ask yourself. Answering these questions as you explore your options will assist you with the steps you need to take. Good luck during these challenging decisions and remember that the Career Development Office is a resource for you.

Defining Graduate School Degrees

When you consider graduate school, you may be thinking of professional school (law, medicine, business, etc.), Master's programs, or Doctoral programs, all of which require specialized knowledge and concentrated study in one area. Let's clarify our terms before deciding if graduate study is for you.

The **Professional Master's** gives you a specific set of skills needed to practice in a particular field, such as education, business, engineering, social work or other professions requiring specialized training. It is generally a final or terminal degree, and involves an internship, practicum or field work. Peterson's Guide, found in the CDO and Burling libraries, is a good resource for degree types, as is www.gradschools.com.

The **Research Master's** provides experience in research and scholarship and it may be a final degree or a step toward the Ph.D. A Master's Degree usually takes one or two years of study.

The **Professional Doctorate** is the highest degree for areas such as medicine, business and law and requires practical applications of knowledge and skills. The M.D. for medical practice and the J.D. for law are the most common professional degrees.

The **Research Doctorate** Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) is the highest earned academic degree and the primary credential for college level teaching. The Ph.D. typically involves both course work and an extensive and original research project. The Doctorate usually takes a minimum of four to six years of full-time study. Dual degree programs may also exist within your area of interest. Check the graduate school of your choice for more information.

Deciding if Graduate School is Right for You

Before applying for further study, you need to be fully aware of the working conditions, employment prospects, and physical and mental demands of the field you plan to pursue. In addition, the more immediate demands of research, course work and major papers are all part of the graduate school experience to be considered. Although there are defined course requirements in most graduate and professional school curricula, you are expected to be able to build a program for yourself based on your interests and goals.

Some individuals enter graduate study with the idea that they can postpone the inevitable—deciding on a career and searching for a job—for another year or two. If this is your sole motivation for entering graduate school, it could have serious implications for your career development. Therefore, before going any further, you may wish to carefully consider some important questions:

- What do I want to accomplish in my lifetime?
- What are my long and short-range professional goals?
- Is graduate study necessary for me to achieve these goals?
- Am I willing to invest the time and money to take on another academic program?
- Do I have the interest and ability to be successful in a graduate program?
- By going to graduate school, am I simply delaying my career decision-making?

Two of the reasons most frequently given by students who have dropped out of graduate programs are a dislike of concentrated academic work and a realization that they have not defined their career goals clearly enough. By answering the above questions honestly, you hopefully can avoid similar problems in the future.

Through research, you should be able to get a solid idea of whether or not you would benefit from graduate study. In the process, however, be aware that further education is not absolutely required for entry into every career field. It is, of course, if you are planning to enter such traditional professions such as law, medicine, dentistry, and teaching at the college or university level. If you haven't already done so, it's a good idea to look over occupational literature and talk with faculty, friends, and alumni—people who have the kinds of jobs in which you are interested. The staff of the Career Development Office will also be able to assist you in determining your job prospects in various fields at all degree levels.

The message is simple. If you don't have a general idea of what you want to do, you'll have a difficult time making sensible choices. If you don't know where graduate or professional school might lead you, your investment of time and money in additional education might have only limited benefits. Choose graduate school because you are working towards a goal.

Deciding if You Should Attend Now or Later

You may need more time to clarify your professional goals. This isn't uncommon. A frequently asked question about graduate school is “Should I attend now or later?” The following table will show some advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a graduate degree immediately after graduation. It is highly advisable to speak with faculty advisors and with people currently pursuing programs of interest to you in order to hear their perspectives on immediate entry versus delayed. But remember, what you hear from others is based on their experiences and may not impact you in the same way. Some of the pros and cons of immediate entry and delay of graduate study follow:

Advantages and Disadvantages of Pursuing a Graduate Degree Immediately after Graduation

Pros

- Immediate entry is somewhat easier because there are many resources on graduate programs available on campus while an undergraduate.
- Faculty members will be more likely to remember your achievements for recommendation purposes.
- Study habits are generally well-developed and will help ease the transition to advanced course work.
- Some professional schools, especially medical and dental, prefer to recruit students directly from undergraduate programs.
- Financial responsibilities
- Personal obligations
- Enjoy study and research

Cons

- Many graduate schools, and particularly those with well-known programs, tend to be more selective in their admission process.
- Often, preference will be given to individuals with a few years life/work experience behind them (e.g., MBA programs). The argument given in favor of this selection process is that work experience tends to give persons more knowledge on which to base their decisions.
- Academic burnout
- Lack of work experience
- Expense

However, once a decision has been made in favor of graduate study, you will want to determine when the best time would be for you to begin. You may want to consider these questions before making your decision:

- Would related work experience help you clarify ambiguous career goals?
- Is there a strong possibility that you could change your career goals after a taste of the working world?
- Would work experience enhance your application?
- Would you have difficulty readjusting to student life after a break?

If you are uncertain about the field you would like to study and whether it would be advantageous to gain some work experience and/or take some time off, it may be a good idea to delay graduate school. If you do decide to delay graduate study, yet plan to begin a program within three to five years, you may want to take the appropriate standardized entrance examinations during your senior year of college, or shortly after, as scores on most of these tests are generally valid for this period of time.

Choosing a Specialization: Resources

Once you have decided that you are very interested in continuing your studies, you should begin researching graduate schools and their programs. Useful resources for gathering information include: graduate/professional school directories, national graduate school rankings, internet resources, and faculty and alumni knowledgeable in your field.

Graduate School Directories

Comparative information about various programs of study is readily available. You may find the following directories particularly useful as you attempt to gain an overview of the many programs available for advanced study.

Peterson's Graduate Programs Directory profiles more than 1,500 accredited institutions offering Masters and/or Doctoral programs of over 300 disciplines in the U.S. and Canada. Profiles include general institutional information, a directory of institutional offerings, academic contact persons, and a listing of departmental faculty and their research interests. A recent addition to the Directory provides 800+ listings of academic centers and institutes. It is suggested that you first peruse Book I, which offers directories of programs, institutional offerings, and combined degree programs in addition to information about financial aid, testing and applications. These directories are located in the Career Development Office Library and Burling Library as well as www.petersons.com.

Graduate School Guide is an annual guide that profiles more than 750 graduate schools in the east and midwest. Profiles include tuition, degrees offered, majors and the dean's e-mail and internet addresses. This guide is available at the Career Development Office and at www.gradschoolguide.com.

Peterson's Guide to MBA Programs is a comprehensive directory of graduate business schools in the U.S. and Canada with a select number of international business schools. Each profile includes academic programs, student statistics, financial aid, and placement contacts. There are also indexes of programs, schools, and areas of concentration as well as essays about attending and financing your MBA education. This guide is available at the Career Development Office.

Medical School Admissions Requirements is a publication by the Association of American Medical Colleges that provides listings of U.S. and Canadian medical schools with information and advice about applications and financial aid. This guide is available at the Career Development Office.

Barron's Guide to Law Schools provides profiles on 175 American Bar Association Approved law schools. Each description provides admission data, cost, enrollment, median LSAT scores and GPAs, financial aid and application procedures. This updated version provides new information on placement services and statistics indicating chance of admission to all ABA approved schools. This guide is available at the Career Development Office. More information on law schools and the application process can be located at www.lsac.org.

Graduate Directories and Advice on the Internet

The following sites are useful for acquiring more information or applications:

Graduate School Guide On-line (Graduate degree programs in the Northeast and Midwest)

<http://www.schoolguides.com>

College and University (Very extensive collection)

<http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ.html>

Peterson's Education Center Guide (Geographic or keyword search)

<http://www.petersons.com/graduate>

The MBA Explorer (Link to graduate schools, search database, access GMAT info)

<http://www.gmat.org>

Hieros Gamos Legal Directories (Law schools, cost, LSATs and more)

<http://www.hg.org/schools.html>

Association of American Medical Colleges (Medical schools by name and location)

<http://services.aamc.org>

Guide to Graduate School by Monstertrak (Applications, law, business, medical, financial)

http://www2.monstertrak.com/help_manuals/gradschool/

Law School Admission Council (LSAT registration; free sample LSAT; LSDAS subscription, Candidate Referral Service (CRS), Law School Forums, MILE Program (Minorities Interested in Legal Education), and Test Preparation Publications and Law School Guides)

<http://www.lsac.org>

You are encouraged to request catalogs directly from the institutions you have identified for further consideration. Most graduate and professional schools are happy to provide catalogs and other descriptive information at little or no cost. In addition, you may be able to request more information/applications from the graduate school's homepage.

Graduate School Rankings

A common concern of individuals considering graduate education deals with which institution has the "best" program of study. Contrary to student opinion and wishes, there is no single reliable hierarchy of graduate schools. National rankings do exist and are available in the Career Development Office. The internet addresses are provided below. Pay attention to the criteria used to rank the schools to find out if those criteria coincide with your own personal criteria:

The U.S. News Graduate School Rankings On-Line

http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php

Wehrli's Graduate School Rankings (includes Gourman Report and National Research Council) <http://www.virtualref.com/abs/282.htm>

Faculty

The numerical rankings assigned to various school programs are based on a number of different criteria and should not be taken as the final consensus. You may get more accurate information by talking to faculty in your chosen field. Discuss with them your interests, asking them which institutions would be most appropriate for meeting your goals.

It takes a lot of research to identify the program that best meets your needs. The advice and rankings provided by others are useful, but it is important to establish your own personal criteria to compare graduate schools.

Personal Criteria for Evaluating Graduate Schools

Institutions and departments in which you might be interested may vary greatly in one or more of the following factors: programs available, size, location, cost, facilities, faculty interests, reputation, and requirements. Matching your own abilities and personal requirements against the varying factors above is an important task in selecting the institutions to which you wish to apply. Once you have determined that programs in your field of interest are available, you may want to take the following factors or questions into consideration as you evaluate various programs:

Admissions - What are the admissions requirements? Do you have the test scores, courses, research and experience required for the program? What types of students does the program attract?

Programs - What specializations are available? Does the program focus on theory and original research, or does it stress the practical application of knowledge and skills? Do the research facilities suit your needs?

Geographic Location - The climate, the political and social temper of an institution, and its setting (whether urban or in a smaller community) are all worth considering.

Size - How large is the institution and the department in which you're interested? The number of students, and particularly the student/faculty ratio, will affect the amount of individual attention you will receive.

Faculty - Who are they? Are there specific people doing the type of research in which you are interested? Could you contact these people? What have they published?

State Regulations - Many state universities are required by law to give preference to in-state applicants.

Philosophy of Education - What is the average length of time spent in the program? Do opportunities exist for specialization in areas of your own interest? Some institutions may approach the subject matter theoretically where others may be more pragmatic in their approach.

Residence Requirements - How much time must you spend taking courses at a particular institution in order to earn your advanced degree? If you are at a public university, residence requirements also determine whether you pay in-state tuition.

Available Work Experience - Are there opportunities for teaching, research or assistantships?

Placement Services - Will you receive assistance in your job search when you are ready to graduate? You will want to check with the career center at each institution to find out what types of employers express interest in graduates of the department you're considering. Keep in mind too that departmental faculty often get actively involved in helping their graduate students with the employment process. What are alumni of that program doing now? Do those career choices interest you?

Financial Aid – The amount of financial aid awarded will vary by student and by institution. The reasons may have as much to do with university budgets as an applicant's merits. This matter is discussed at length later, but bear in mind that while awards may vary, graduate aid is based largely on merit, not need.

Other Considerations - Some graduate programs require demonstrated competence in one or two foreign languages before the advanced degree is awarded. Universities may also require, or in some cases permit, a substitute for a foreign language—knowledge of a research tool such as computer programming. Similarly, you will want to investigate how much major research effort you will be expected to make and whether or not a thesis is required at the master's degree level.

Applying to Graduate School

Formal applications vary from one institution to the next, but each usually consists of the following:

- An application
- Graduate admissions test scores
- Official transcripts
- Application essay
- Letters of recommendation
- Separate financial aid application

As you research each institution, keep a record or file noting admission requirements and application deadlines. It is very important to pay attention to each program's distinct instructions and requirements throughout the process. Some graduate programs require a personal interview; most require a nonrefundable application fee of \$40-\$120 (which may cause you to limit the number of schools to which you may actually apply.)

Assembling a Competitive Application

Application Forms

All application forms, whether hard-copy or online, should be completed in a thoroughly professional manner. Carefully follow instructions. Be aware of application deadlines listed in graduate school bulletins. If admissions are handled on a "rolling" basis (i.e. qualified applicants are accepted as they apply), it is to your advantage to apply at the earliest possible date in order to show your enthusiasm and give them more time to evaluate your application. Early application is also an advantage if you are applying for financial aid. Medical, law and veterinary schools have centralized applications. For more information, go to www.aamc.org/students. There are also LSDAS books in the Career Development Office.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

One potential piece of many graduate school applications is the curriculum vitae or CV. While a resume typically consists of one or two pages, a CV is often much longer and includes all academic activities and achievements, research and publications, and other relevant information. You want graduate schools to have the most complete image of you as possible, and the CV can include information that might not fit in other sections of the application. As you prepare to write your CV, make a list of all of your accomplishments and arrange them in logical categories. Here are categories for undergraduate students to consider:

Personal Information: Include your name, phone, address, and email.

Education: Although graduate programs will be receiving a copy of your transcript(s), you should still include an education section on your CV. List academic awards here if you have just one or two, or in a separate section that will draw more attention to your strengths.

Awards and Honors: Note each award, where it was received from, the date awarded, and a brief explanation if needed/applicable.

Research: List relevant research that will demonstrate your strengths and ability to perform in graduate school. Use strong, descriptive verbs to clarify skills you used, level of responsibility, and if you were researching independently or as part of a team (both are valuable experiences). Be certain to include where the research was completed, supervisor, and dates.

Teaching Experience: While this section will become more relevant during graduate school, some undergraduate students will have experience as a teaching assistant or tutor that may assist them in being awarded a graduate-level TA or other position. State the institution, nature of your responsibilities, and supervisor.

Publications: Document each publication in your discipline's citation style.

Presentations: This category can be subdivided into sections for posters and presentations.

Professional Experience (Work Experience, Employment Experience): Start with your title and the organization where you worked, then include the city, state/country, and dates. Describe

accomplishments, items you took initiative on, tasks completed, and skills used or improved. Quantify items as much as possible.

Leadership: Follow the same format as the Professional Experience section. This section may be combined with Community Service or Extracurricular Activities.

Community Service: Demonstrate your commitment to your community and others around you by listing service you've engaged in formally or informally. Follow the same format as Professional Experience.

Extracurricular Activities: Graduate schools are interested in how involved you were in campus activities, whether it was athletics, the arts, etc. Mention if you founded or co-founded an organization, your level of commitment, and tasks accomplished. Again, follow the same format as Professional Experience.

Professional Affiliations: List professional organizations of which you are a member and any leadership roles you have held.

Skills and Interests: Include skills such as laboratory, computer, languages, etc. Listing your interests offers the graduate school a more complete representation of who you are and possibly offers a glimpse of your character (i.e., marathon running, rock climbing, chess).

Once you've put together your CV, we encourage you to have a career counselor at the CDO review it for formatting suggestions, targeted content, and errors. In addition, professors and work site supervisors should be consulted regarding specific skills, accurate descriptors of tasks, etc. For samples of curriculum vitae formats and more detailed information about what things to include in your CV, we encourage you to consult reference books in the CDO library and review websites such as:

www.cvtips.com

<http://gradschool.about.com/cs/curriculumvita/a/vitae.htm>

www.gradschools.com

Application Essay

Most institutions will ask that you submit a statement of purpose or personal statement in addition to basic data requested on the application form. Personal statements provide you with the opportunity to supplement standard application materials with your own goals and objectives with respect to the program; therefore, they should not be taken lightly. Typically, when a personal statement is requested or required, the institutions will offer suggestions on items to consider, such as your reasons for applying in relation to personal goals and professional expectations. Good grammar and writing styles are extremely important. Before writing anything, stop and consider what your reader might be looking for; the general directories or other parts of the application may

give you an indication of this. Admission committees may be trying to evaluate a number of things from your statement, including the following:

- Motivation and commitment to the field of study
- Expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- Educational background
- Reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- Writing ability
- Major areas of interest
- Research or work experience
- Immediate and long term goals
- Personal uniqueness – what you would add to the diversity of the entering class
- Maturity

Don't hesitate to seek help from faculty members and the Career Development Office in preparing your personal statement or other application materials.

Graduate Admissions Tests

As previously mentioned, most graduate and professional schools require that you take one or more standardized examinations before they decide upon your application for admission. Listed below are some of the more commonly required examinations:

GRE: This test is required for entrance to most graduate programs. There are two parts to the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE General Test is designed to measure analytical, verbal, and quantitative ability. Be advised there is also an analytical writing component. The GRE Subject Test is an examination in a major field of study. Graduate schools may require one or both parts of the test; investigate this before you spend time and money preparing and taking a test that is not needed. **Please note:** The GRE has been substituted for the Veterinary College Admission Test (VCAT) as a requirement for admission to veterinary college.

GMAT: The Graduate Management Admission Test is a requirement to assess students planning to attend management and business schools.

LSAT: The Law School Admissions Test is a requirement for students interested in attending law school. Interested students should also complete the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS).

MCAT: The Medical College Admission Test is given to applicants for admission to medical schools. Interested students must also complete the American Medical College Applications Service (AMCAS).

DAT: The Dental Admission Test is a requirement for admission to dental school.

PCAT: The Pharmacy College Admission Test is a requirement for admission to pharmacy school.

TOEFL: The Test of English as a Foreign Language evaluates English proficiency of people whose native language is not English.

MAT: The Miller Analogies Test is a high-level mental ability test accepted by over 2,300 graduate school programs. Performance on the MAT is designed to reflect candidates' analytical thinking, an ability that is critical for success in both graduate school and professional life.

Note: Due to increased competition for admission and financial assistance, it will work to your advantage to take the appropriate standardized test early in your application process. Those wishing to enter a graduate program in the fall of a given academic year will want to consider testing up to a year in advance of this desired entry date. In any event, remember that test registration deadlines are well in advance of the actual test dates, and subject tests are given only a few times a year. See www.ets.org for more details, current test dates, fees, etc.

Letters of Recommendation

Most institutions will request between 3 and 5 letters of recommendation on your behalf. As with application forms and test dates, it is important to pay close attention to application deadlines, so you can contact people whom you wish to write letters well in advance of the deadline date.

Letters of recommendation are useful to graduate admission committees only if the letters tell them something about you that is not particularly evident in the rest of your application packet. It is best to obtain recommendations from those persons qualified to evaluate your academic and/or work potential and performance based on personal observation—namely, college faculty or staff members. Do not request letters from former employers unless so instructed by your graduate and professional school.

You may also wish to obtain a recommendation from a professor in an unrelated discipline in order to show the breadth of your academic interests.

It is essential that the reference person know you well enough that he or she can make a good assessment of your academic and work abilities. Do not hesitate to ask references if they feel they know you well enough to write a good recommendation. Ask if they are willing and able to support you and discuss any reservations. You might find it very worthwhile to have your faculty interview you before they write your letters of recommendation. If they agree to an interview, give them a copy of your application essay in advance. In any event, you will want to share with faculty your reasons for applying to graduate or professional school. Give your recommenders updated personal and professional data as needed, such as a resume or previous work done for faculty, recommendation forms (if required by the institution), and a list of deadlines. It is also a good idea, as well as courteous, to provide stamped, addressed envelopes.

Thank You Notes

It is good practice to send a thank you note or thank you e-mail to individuals who have assisted you in your graduate/professional school application process. In addition, once accepted, it is thoughtful to let your recommenders know of your acceptance.

Transcripts

All transcripts must be "official"; that is, transcripts must be sent to admission offices directly from the Office of the Registrar. If you receive your transcript first and then send it on, there is no proof that it is "official" and therefore it will be considered invalid. For additional information on transcripts, contact the Office of the Registrar.

How Your Application Will Be Processed

When the material from admissions is received by a professional or graduate school it is usually referred to an admission committee for the particular program or school for which you are applying. This faculty committee reviews your application, reaches a decision, and makes a recommendation to the dean or the associate dean of the graduate school. In either type of school, the candidates that show strength in a combination of the requirements—academic preparation, test scores, and recommendations—have the best chance for selection.

Follow up with the school to make sure your application is complete (leave enough time to follow up on a letter of recommendation if needed.)

Strengthening Your Application

Admission Test Preparation Books and Manuals

You may wish to purchase a preparation manual for the specific test you are planning to take. These preparation manuals have been published for most of the major examination programs, and are available for sale at bookstores. These manuals typically contain several practice tests based on different units of each examination, as well as "refresher" sections designed to assist in updating your skills in recall, judgment, and mathematics.

In addition, private "short courses" exist to help applicants prepare for examinations such as the MCAT and LSAT. Before investing money into one of these services, it is advisable to check them out thoroughly with faculty members or persons currently or formerly enrolled in them.

Research

It is highly recommended that you engage in research, either as your own independent project or as an assistant to a professor. Ask professors for suggestions. Research experience will be looked upon favorably by the application committee.

Interview

An interview can be important for you to persuade an institution's admission officer or committee that you would be an excellent manager, doctor, lawyer, dentist, etc. Interviews are usually required by medical schools and often suggested by business schools and other programs. Interviewers will be interested in the way you think and approach problems and will probably concentrate on questions that enable them to assess your thinking skills, rather than questions that call upon your grasp of technical knowledge. Bear in mind that the interviewer is more interested in *how* you think than *what* you think.

Study guides and additional resources are available in the Career Development Office Library.

Financing Graduate/Professional School

Monetary support to attend graduate/professional school is available from several sources: universities, government sources, banks, and private foundations. One major problem lies in discovering what is available at any given time. New sources are continually being created, and in the case of government aid, the amount available is subject to and regulated by current executive and legislative policy.

Financial aid information can be found in graduate/professional school catalogs and in descriptive literature published by universities, government, and foundations.

Typically, deadlines are quite early for financial aid applications. If you will require financial assistance, be sure to request a financial aid application at the same time you request an admission application. In most instances you will be required to submit a completed copy of the Student Financial Statement (SFS) or the Parents' Confidential Statement (PCS), or a copy of the Family Financial statement (FFS) to the American College Testing Program. Some graduate schools will accept any of the three; others require a specific one.

Many graduate and professional schools are using the Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GAPSFAS) as a means of selecting graduate students who need financial assistance. Applications for this GAPSFAS are available from the Financial Aid Office at the institution where you are applying. These forms are typically used by financial aid administrators to ascertain your financial need, so it is important to fill them out carefully.

Types of financial aid available for graduate study are somewhat different from aid you may have received as an undergraduate student. General types of aid include:

Fellowships - On the graduate level, the equivalent of a scholarship is a fellowship. It is usually a straight monetary award given on the basis of scholastic achievement. Fellowships are often tax-free unless they involve teaching or researching; in these cases they will most likely have to be reported for income tax purposes. Specific institutions have their own fellowships, which you may identify by contacting the school's Financial Aid Office. The federal government also supports some fellowships for which applications may be made through the institution to which you are applying.

Assistantships - Teaching or research assistantships are often available through the academic department or program of study. Assistantships usually involve working 10-20 hours per week in exchange for some stipend and/or fee remission. Although fee remissions are common, be aware that in accepting a graduate assistantship you may still be responsible for partial payment of your tuition and/or fees. Requests for information on graduate assistantships and applications should be made directly to the department or program of interest to you.

Resident Assistantships - Some institutions have programs in which graduate students earn a stipend, room and board, or both by working as assistants in undergraduate residence halls. If you do not receive information on such a program, along with your application materials, you might contact the school's director of residence life to inquire about such opportunities.

Long-Term Educational Loans - Most institutions have loan programs for which graduate students may be eligible. Such programs include private, state, and federally sponsored Guaranteed Student Loan Programs. The institution's Financial Aid Office will be able to explain these loan programs to you.

College Work-Study Program - Under this program, eligible undergraduate and graduate students are provided part-time employment opportunities during the academic year, as well as part-time or full-time positions during the summer. Generally, these programs are administered by financial aid officials, and they can explain application procedures in detail.

Other Employment - University communities often provide good opportunities for part-time work. In some cases, schools may have cooperative agreements with neighboring businesses and industries and governmental agencies whereby graduate students might be employed for research and/or consultation. Check with the institution's financial aid office, or the chairperson of the department to which you are applying, regarding possible part-time employment opportunities in the local community.

A general word of caution: Financial support of graduate education may vary widely from institution to institution. Therefore, it is essential for prospective applicants to thoroughly investigate the availability of financial aid in all its various forms as they go about the admission process. Both the sources and amounts of financial aid are important considerations. This is another reason why students considering further education should begin the process early.

Some Closing Suggestions

The information found in graduate and professional school catalogs may be of only limited value because by design it is directed at a general audience. In other words, catalogs may not answer specific questions you may have about the particular program you wish to pursue.

Admission officials and faculty members at the institution you would like to attend can help you with this information. Furthermore, you can request updated course work and faculty lists since some catalogs cannot be reliable for the most recent information. Do not hesitate to contact them by phone, letter or even a personal visit. In some cases a three dollar telephone call can save a fifty dollar application fee or more importantly, can prevent you from making an unfortunate choice of an academic program.

If further education at this point in time looms as an alternative to the job search, you may wish to reexamine your career objectives to see if they "fit" with the opportunities the chosen program offers. As practical work experience is an education in itself, a combination work/study arrangement may be a possible solution.

Graduate or professional study can be a worthwhile and rewarding career additive; it should not be a disappointing employment alternative.

The Timetable

When to Begin	What to Do
Junior Year Fall/Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start browsing guides to graduate programs and deciding where you would like to apply • Call or write admissions offices to request information • Determine test requirements, application deadlines, test dates, etc. • Meet with faculty members and career counselors to discuss programs • Sign up for standardized tests • Take practice tests • Investigate national scholarships • Take standardized tests
Senior Year September/ October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take standardized tests, if you haven't yet • Write a draft of statement purpose/personal essay • Research financial aid sources, fellowships, and assistantships • Meet with a faculty member and career counselor for a critique of 'statement of purpose' draft • Request recommendations early from faculty members • Apply for fellowships, grants and assistantships
November/ December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order official transcripts from the Office of the Registrar • Ask the Office of the Registrar to send a transcript with your fall term grades in time to meet the deadlines • Finalize statement of purpose according to questions asked on the application • Mail, or submit electronically, your applications. Even if deadlines are later, it is good to get applications in early
December/January/ February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact schools about the possibility of visiting and scheduling an interview • Fill out appropriate financial aid forms. If you are applying for need-based aid, you may have to file a copy of your federal tax return • Contact your school at least two weeks before the deadline to make sure your applications are complete
March/April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss acceptances, rejections, and other career options with a faculty member or a Career Development Office staff member • If you would like to defer enrollment for one or two years, contact your graduate department concerning that possibility. If you are rejected it may be helpful to contact the school and discuss the reasons for your rejection and obtain suggestions on how to get admitted in the future • Send thank you notes to people who wrote your recommendations or assisted you in the process.