Applying to Graduate School

Graduate School: Is it for Me (Now)?

Good Reasons to Go to Graduate School

- You know what career you want to pursue
- You love scholarly work passionately
- You understand the costs of graduate school

Poor reasons to go to Graduate School

- You don't know what else to do. There are no jobs right now anyway.
- You just want to delay the moment when you leave school and have to find a job.
- You just think you won't be able to get a job unless you go to graduate school.
- You are being pressured into going by family, friends, or teachers.

Pick a Program not the School

- Not all programs in a given area are the same
- Consider program emphasis & goals
- Research the programs website, printed material, insight from your current faculty to learn about program priorities
- Learn about their Faculty:
  - Who are they?
  - What is their expertise?
  - Are they distinguished?
  - Do they publish with students?
  - Make sure your interests and goals align with those of the program you choose and not necessarily the school’s reputation
  - You should attend the best program for your field of STUDY

What’s the difference between research degree and practitioner degrees?

Doctoral Degrees

- 4 to 7 year programs
- research or practitioner degrees
- specialized in a specific field of study

Master Degrees

- 1-2 year programs
- Usually are practitioner degrees

Taking the GRE vs. GMAT

- Standardized Tests are required by almost all Graduate programs
- Some programs will specify the scores they would like applicants to achieve
- Schools will also indicate the last test date they will accept
- GRE is the most universally accepted graduate standardized test
- GMAT is typically only required by Business Graduate schools
Statement of Purpose

• What you want to study at graduate school?
• Why you want to study your chosen field?
• What experience do you have in your field?
• Mention what faculty you would love to work with
• What you plan to do with your degree once you have it? Long term goals?

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

• Most schools require 3 letter of Recommendation (2 academic; 1 professional)
• Letter writers should:
  o Know about your academic and/or professional performance in detail
  o Attest your ability to begin graduate study
  o Come from professors in your major field of study
• Build a relationship with your professors – it’s not too late!
• What to do when asking for your letter:
  o Face-to-face, in person
  o 6-8 weeks in advance
  o Gentle reminders of deadlines
  o Keep in touch – especially if taking a Gap Year

Funding options

• Graduate School funding is limited (Merit based scholarships, Financial Aid/ Student Loans, Independent Scholarships)
• Ph.D programs are traditionally fully-funded. Master degree programs are traditionally not funded.
• Most students take out loans for the majority of their tuition and expenses for graduate school.

Making the most of your undergraduate experience

• Mentorships
• Conduct Research
• Study Abroad
• Find Internships
• Get to know your faculty

Making the most of your Gap Year(s)

Reasons to Take a Gap Year after college:
• Better transition into the real world
• Great way to learn adaptability, independence, and other life skills
• Opportunity to explore possible career interests
• A chance to add experience to your resume or graduate school applications
• After you start working, you might not have another opportunity to take a break!

Gap Year Options:
• Internship programs for recent graduates
• Full-time/Part-time employment
• Teaching Programs
• Volunteering/Service programs or Cultural Exchange Programs