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Graduate Study

Frequently Asked Questions

What is graduate study?

Graduate and professional schools focus on specialized areas of knowledge. Many graduate programs include some forms of research, an internship, and/or a formal written research paper such as a thesis or dissertation. A student may choose different levels of graduate study leading to the master's degree, doctorate degree, or a professional degree.

Why should I pursue a graduate degree?

Making the decision to pursue a graduate education requires some self assessment and some research. You must make an honest evaluation of your academic strengths and your professional interests. A graduate degree can determine the level of responsibility you may be given by your employer and influence your salary. There are also some professions that require advanced degrees (i.e. law, medicine, engineering, etc.). Ask yourself if you need a graduate degree to enter your chosen profession. If you don't know, then you should research that information using resources available in the Career Services Office.

How do I choose a graduate school?

First you must decide the type of degree you are seeking. You can then identify resources in the Career Services Office that have descriptive information about graduate programs. In addition you can click here [1] to review the most current Graduate School Guide online.

There is some basic information that you should seek: program offerings, location, size, campus environment, and student population. Some students are concerned about the academic reputation of the school. The university's reputation is based on research facilities, the prestige of the faculty, and the graduates. To find out about rankings of graduate schools, consult the GOURMAN REPORT available in the Career Services Office.

Admission requirements: Admissions requirements for graduate study may involve a number of factors including: grade point average, tests scores, research and writing experiences, letters of recommendation, and the quality of the personal statement. The usual graduate school application includes an application which must be completed with accuracy and clarity. Most often a fee is required. Some institutions may waive the fee if you can demonstrate financial need.

The grade point average is one indicator of academic success. Generally, graduate schools are seeking candidates with at least a 3.0 G.P.A. on a 4.0 scale. A lower grade point average may require you to provide an explanation of unusual circumstances that affected your grades. Transcripts should be obtained from the Records Office.

Most institutions require a specific score on a standardized test. Tests include the Graduate Records Examination or an appropriate test such as the LSAT (Law), GMAT (Business), MCAT (Medicine), DAT(Dentistry). Make sure you understand which test is required. Plan to take these tests early enough to meet the institutions application deadlines. The Career Services Office has printed, video and computerized study resources to help you prepare for these tests or you can use the resource listed below.

Test Preparation Center for the GRE, SAT, GMAT, LSAT and MCAT exams [2]

Letters of Recommendation from faculty members from your undergraduate institution can be very beneficial as they support your ability to be successful in advanced academic study. Make sure you ask faculty members who know you well and can provide a detailed assessment of your strengths and interests. They should mention each activity in which he or she has evaluated your work. Provide him or her with copy of your personal statement or resume. The Career Services Office will maintain copies of your letters of recommendation in your Educational Credential file and will send a complete set to graduate schools to which you apply.

The Personal Statement is important because it give the graduate school admission committee an idea of your career plan and how it pertains to that graduate program. Also writing this statement can help you to clarify your goals. This personal statement should include your reasons for applying, your area of interests, your academic and research accomplishments and your career goals. The admissions committee is looking at your motivations, your writing style, and those specific experiences that are indicators of success.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid information from the institution will be part of your application packet. You will have to apply separately for loans. Financial aid money is limited so it is important you adhere to deadlines. Types of aid include fellowships or assistantships. These types of aid are tied into merit and full-time enrollment at the institution. Some institutions award a certain number of years of financial support to highly qualified students. Visit the Career Services Office to identify other financial aid sources.

Where do I get information about graduate study?

- Visit the Career Services Office
- Ask your academic advisor who may be familiar graduate programs
- Research graduate school catalogues in the Library
- Attend graduate education conferences and recruitment fairs
- Write or visit the school to inquire about admission requirements
- Search the Internet

Graduate/Professional School Web Sites

- JobWeb [3] - Graduate and Professional Schools
- Peterson's [4] - Graduate Schools and Programs
- FastWeb [5] - Free Scholarship and College Searches Plus Financial Aid Tools and More
- FinAid! [6] - The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid
- CollegeScholarships.com [7] - College Connection Scholarships
- FAFSA [8] - Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Source URL: http://desu.edu/career-services/graduate-study

Links:
[1] http://www.schoolguides.com/
[2] http://www.majon.com/testprep/
[3] http://www.jobweb.com/Career_Development/gguides.htm
[4] http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx
[5] http://www.fastweb.com/
[6] http://www.finaid.org/
[7] http://www.collegescholarships.com/
[8] http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/