

Applying to Graduate School



Choosing to attend graduate school as part of your career path is a complex process. First, determine if graduate school is right for you at this time or in the future. If so, ensure you choose the best program for your needs and prepare to submit a strong application.

Is graduate school right for me?

Things to consider:

- What type of graduate or professional program do you want to pursue?
- How do you envision that this program will help you progress in your professional goals?
- How do you envision that this program will help you progress in your personal or educational goals?
- When would you like to start a graduate program?
- What are the pros and cons of starting a graduate program right after finishing your undergraduate degree versus applying after obtaining professional experience?

I am ready for graduate school, now what?

Research a range of programs

- Review a list of schools and programs in your academic area. What are the three schools that are highest on your list? Why have you ranked these programs highly?
- What are three more schools that are still attractive, even though they are not your highest priority? What is appealing about these schools?
- Connect with an individual currently enrolled in the program(s) or that has graduated to get an insight on the courses and culture.
- Research and connect with professors who teach within the program. Does their research align with your passion of what you want to study?
- Does your program have a campus tour or an info session you can attend to ask questions and learn more about the institution and program?

Consider your strengths as an applicant

- What are your strongest assets as an applicant? Consider factors such as academics, previous employment, professional programs, standardized tests, and extra-curricular involvement.
- What are your potential weaknesses as an applicant and how can you improve in these areas?

Prepare your applications

- When are your applications due? Most graduate programs require applications be submitted no later than January for a fall start date. Some programs, such as medical school, require much earlier application submission dates.
- When are you going to take your graduate admission exam for your chosen program? Some exams, can be taken any time, but there are some that are only offered at certain times during the year. (GRE, GMAT and LSAT)
- When and how are you going to ask faculty members and other professional contacts for letters of recommendation? You should typically allow one month for someone to write a quality letter.
- When do you want to begin and finish writing your personal statement? This is really the only piece of the application in which you have complete control. Take your time and get feedback from people you trust throughout the process.
- Make sure that you are looking through all the requirements for the application process. Graduate programs might have different steps and requirements ranging from essay questions, interviews, and a range of prerequisite courses.

Helpful Resources and Career Tip:

US News Graduate School Rankings [usnews.com/best-graduate-schools](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools)
Petersons Guide to Graduate Schools [petersons.com/graduate-schools](https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools)
Free Application for Federal Student Aid fafsa.ed.gov
The Princeton Review Test Prep Courses [princetonreview.com/partner/asu](https://www.princetonreview.com/partner/asu)

Want to review your content? Meet with a career advisor and schedule an appointment today at: <https://asu.joinhandshake.com>

Looking to review grammar and spelling? Connect with the writing center at: <https://tutoring.asu.edu/student-services/writing-centers>

Graduate school comparison

Now that you have decided that graduate school is for you. Take this opportunity to check out graduate programs that might be of interest to you. Use the chart below to help you get started as you evaluate what programs would fit best with your career goals.

	College Name	College Name	College Name
Admission Requirements Deadlines Required tests Average test scores & GPA Special requirements			
Location City, State Online or in-person			
Size Enrollment Physical size of campus			
Academics Special requirements Accreditation Typical program size			
College Expenses Tuition fees Estimated total budget Application fees, deposits			
Financial Aid Deadlines Required forms Scholarships & grants Fellowships & assistantships			
Housing Availability Cost of living Type & size			
Campus Visits When Virtual info sessions			
Other			