Applying to Graduate School

Presented by:
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Why go to graduate school?

- Credential
- Career advancement
- Passion and research
- Lower unemployment
- Increased earning power
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment rate in 2013 (%)</th>
<th>Median weekly earnings in 2013 ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Professional degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All workers: 6.1%  
All workers: $827

Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Types of Graduate Degrees

- Law School – Juris-Doctorate. J.D.
- Medical School – Medical Doctor, M.D.
- Business School – Masters, M.B.A.
- Graduate School – Masters and Doctoral Degrees,
  - M.A., M.S., M.Ed., Ed.D., Ph.D.
Some differences between undergraduate and graduate study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Undergraduate</strong></th>
<th><strong>Graduate</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey courses</td>
<td>Narrow focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get by as a “passive learner”</td>
<td>Smaller class size and cohort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More structured</td>
<td>Overwhelming amount of unstructured reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class size</td>
<td>Strong research skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent tests</td>
<td>More intensive relationships with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still see faculty as teachers</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“C” is OK</td>
<td>Thesis/dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training in research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do I learn about graduate programs?

- Faculty
- Academic Journals in your field
- Campus visits
- Graduate School Fairs
- Professional organizations
How do I learn about graduate programs?

BrainTrack: College and University Directory

PhDs.org
- [http://graduate-school.phds.org/](http://graduate-school.phds.org/)

GradSchools.com
- [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)

Peterson’s.com
The Graduate School Application Process
Choosing a Graduate School

- Research University
- Faculty
- Reputation
- Size – small, large, urban, rural
- Climate and Location
- Selectivity
- Financial Assistance – fellowships, scholarships, graduate assistantship
Application Packet

- GRE (MAT, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, DAT)
- GPA
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose
- Interview
- Overall Evaluation of Application
The Personal Statement

- Serves as a reflection of your personality and your intellect
- Be specific
- Should be a demonstration of your best writing ability
- Explain any unusual hardships or obstacles that you overcame
The Personal Statement

What makes you a stronger candidate for graduate school than other applicants?
Letters of Recommendations

- Faculty
- Professional
- Military
- Focus on positive attributes
- Highlight academic and personal skills
- Ask for a copy
Funding

- Teaching and research assistantships: stipend plus (usually) tuition waiver
- Fellowships
- Scholarships and grants
- Loans
Graduate Assistantships

- Awarded by institution
- Available at most research universities
- Teaching, research, or administrative duties
- Monthly stipend for living expenses
- Tuition - waived, reduced, or assists in paying
- Requires good academic progress
Fellowships

- Awarded by university or outside agency
- No service (work) required
- Awards based primarily on merit
- Monthly stipend for living expenses
- Tuition usually waived or paid
- Single or multi-year
How to Decide (1)

- Read the acceptance letter carefully
  - What kind of funding?
  - What kind of aid is promised for subsequent years and are there any restrictions?
  - How long will it take to earn the degree?
  - Will you have to pay the tuition?
  - Housing and quality of life?
  - Look for what isn't there!
How to decide (2)

- Do your research!
  - Visit the school if possible
  - Talk with faculty members and graduate students
  - Do you think you'll be happy there?
  - Clarify what you don’t understand
  - Negotiate your package.
  - Don’t be shy: this is a major life decision
The Decision

- Standard reply date: April 15
- Notify each institution (the earlier the better)
- Get written release from funding acceptance if you change your mind after April 15 and want to go somewhere else
- Think about bridge financing (costs of moving, starting school, etc.)
Timetable for Applying to Graduate School

Junior Year/Summer

- Start browsing through guides to graduate schools and looking at their websites
- Call, write, or email schools to request catalogues
- Determine test requirements, application deadlines, test dates, admission requirements
- Take required standardized tests
- Connect with faculty members and advisors
- Contact schools for a campus visit
Timetable for Applying to Graduate School

Senior Year/Fall

- Have satisfactory scores on any entrance examination
- Finalize personal statement or statement of purpose
- Research financial aid, fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty members
- Order official transcripts from all institutions attended
- Submit applications
Timetable for Applying to Graduate School

Senior Year/Spring

- Discuss acceptances, rejections and other career options
- Continue to search for scholarships and financial aid
- Look into graduate housing and relocation costs
- Send final transcripts to graduate school
- Send thank you cards to everyone who wrote your letters of recommendation
Picture yourself here!
Questions?
Bibliography

  [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

• *Undergraduate vs. graduate school: A professor's perspective.* (2010). Retrieved from

• *Applying to graduate school: tips, timeline, and tools of the trade.* Retrieved from
  [www.cic.net/libraries/diversity/gradschoolguide.sflb](http://www.cic.net/libraries/diversity/gradschoolguide.sflb)