

The Center

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & OUTREACH



Applying to Graduate School



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TRiO

RONALD E. McNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

UNLV

Why go to graduate school?

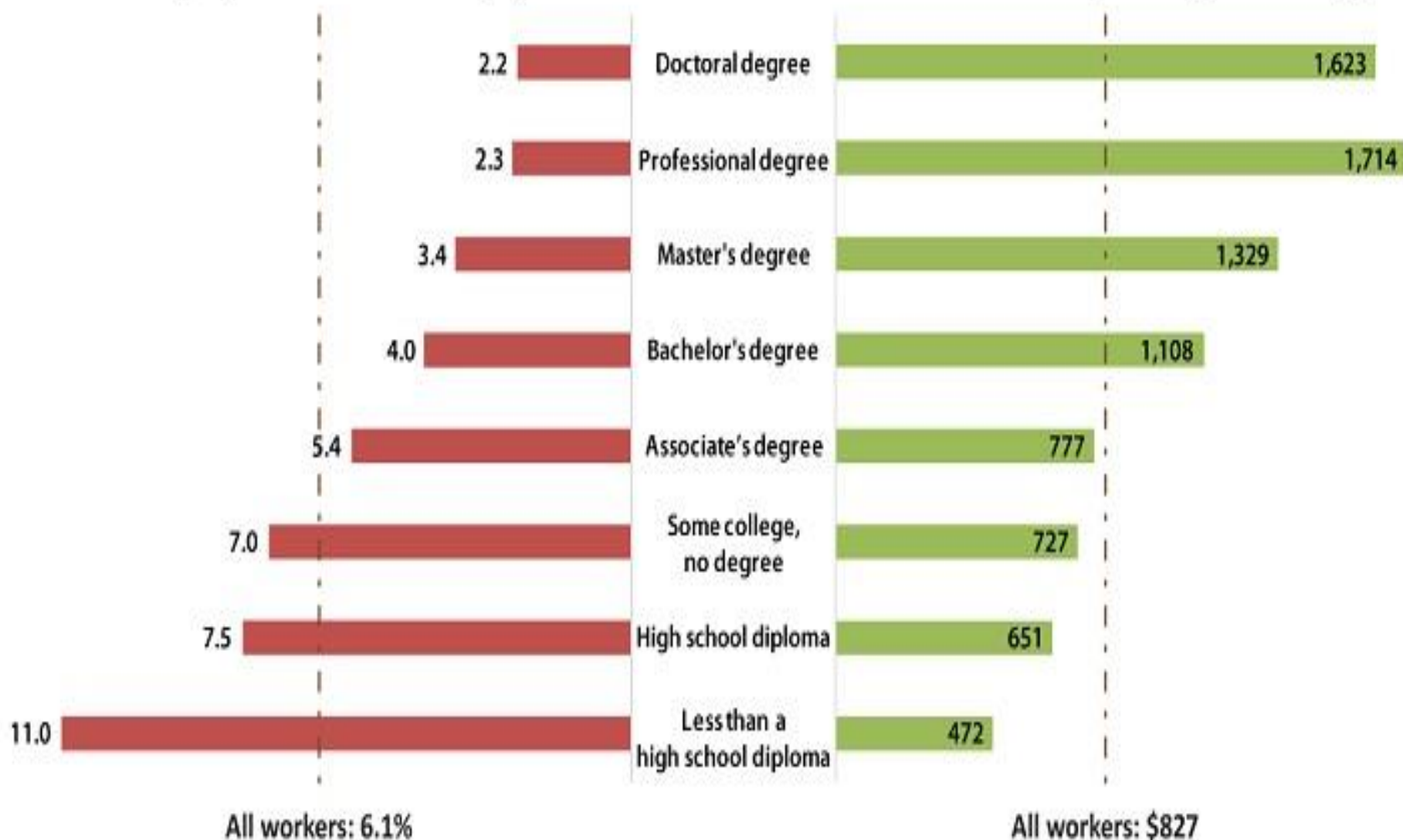
- Credential
- Career advancement
- Passion and research
- Lower unemployment
- Increased earning power



Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment

Unemployment rate in 2013 (%)

Median weekly earnings in 2013 (\$)



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

Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

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

Undergraduate


- Survey courses
- Get by as a “passive learner”
- More structured
- Large class size
- Frequent tests
- Still see faculty as teachers
- “C” is OK

Graduate

- Narrow focus
- Smaller class size and cohort
- Overwhelming amount of unstructured reading
- Strong research skills
- More intensive relationships with faculty
- Comprehensive Exam
- Thesis/dissertation
- Training in research



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

- www.braintrack.com/us-colleges-by-state

PhDs.org

- <http://graduate-school.phds.org/>

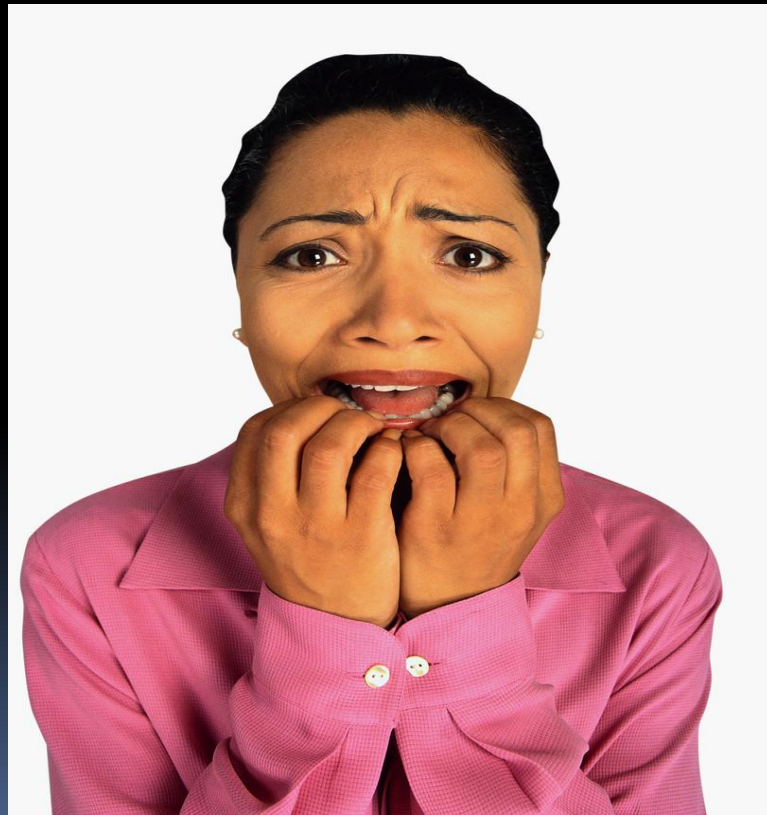
GradSchools.com

- www.gradschools.com

Peterson's.com


- <http://www.petersons.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

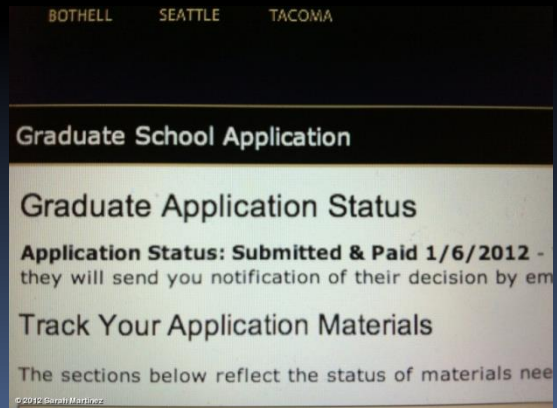


Fellowships

- 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
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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
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Picture yourself here!





Questions?

Bibliography

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