

Center for Black Studies Research
University of California
Santa Barbara

Graduate School Application Workshop
Series 1

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Graduate School Application Workshop: Series 1



Objectives

1. What is graduate school?
2. What are the types of graduate school we have in the US?
3. What does it mean to pursue a graduate degree?
4. What are the components of graduate school application and how do they fit together?

Main Menu

-  Introduction
-  What is Graduate School?
-  Types Graduate School
-  Types of Graduate Degrees
-  Before Applying
-  Admission Requirements
-  Additional Resources



Graduate School Application Workshop: Series 1

Introduction

Welcome to this Workshop!

- This workshop is not a lecture series but more of a hands-on practical training session.
- To benefit from this workshop we must all be ready to engage in the various exercises attached to this workshop.
- Graduate search & application requires the use of some basic research skills.

What is Graduate School?

- Graduate school is training in research:
 - Research = discovery of the unknown.
 - Are you an explorer?
 - Do you like to think creatively?
 - Are you eager to make a unique contribution to the world during your lifetime?
- Graduate school is preparation for careers including:
 - industrial research
 - government research
 - academic research
 - teaching

What is Graduate School?

- Graduate school is the pursuit of a Master's or Doctoral Degree
 - Master of Science (M.S.)
 - 2-year commitment
 - Research & writing
 - Industry or research technician, high school education,
 - Doctor of Philosophy in Science (Ph.D.)
 - 4-6-year commitment
 - Extensive research & writing
 - academics, research
- Post-Doctoral Position
-



Practice Exercise 1?

- Practice Session
- <https://www.niche.com/>

Exercise? Pick 2 States and Identify 2 Graduate Schools & go through the basic information provided about the graduate?

Types of Graduate Schools

- Every 5 years the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education categorize universities & graduate school into 3 major types:

- R1 – Highest Research Activity
- R2 – Higher Research Activity
- R3 – Moderate Research Activity

<https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/lookup.php>

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Practice Exercise 2?

- Practice Session

- <https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/lookup.php>

Exercise? Pick 2 States and Identify 2 Graduate Schools & go through the basic information provided about the graduate?

Types of Graduate Degrees

1. Masters
2. Doctorate

Professional & Research Masters

- Professional Master's Overview
 - Skills
 - Hands-on Experience
 - Fieldwork
 - Practice Oriented
- Examples:
 - Master of Arts (M.A.)
 - Masters of Education (M.Ed.)
 - Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A)
 - Masters in Applied Politics (M.A.P)
- Research Master's Overview
 - Academic Scholarly Focused
 - Research Oriented
 - Thesis

Example:

Master of Science (M.S.)

Professional & Research Doctorate's

- Professional Doctorate's
Overview

- Research related to professional practice
- Practical hands-on training

- Examples:
M.D., J.D.
Doctorate in
Psychology Psy.D.
Doctorate in Education
Ed.D.

Research Doctorate's Overview

Research related to contributing to the breadth of scholarly work.

Research-focused

Examples:

Ph.D. in Sociology

Ph.D. in History

Ph.D. in Chemistry

Master's Degrees

- Are awarded by graduate institutions
- Require 30 to 72 credit hours after a bachelor's degree is earned
- May also require a written thesis or dissertation
- Typically take two to three years of full-time study to complete
- Must have a Bachelors degree to obtain this degree

Graduate Institution: higher learning institution which grants graduate degrees

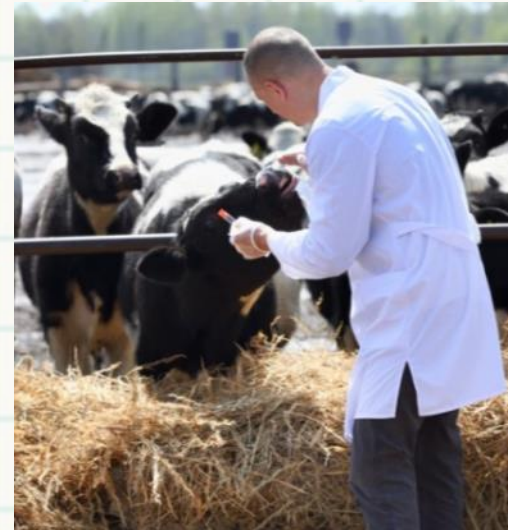
Dissertation: elaborate, comprehensive, independent research project contributing to the field of study

Professional Degrees

- Are graduate degrees which focus on skills and practical analysis over theory or research
- Are often required to work in certain professions or are intended to prepare the student for an exam required to work in a certain profession

Professional Degrees

- Include:
 - Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)
 - needed to be a medical doctor
 - Juris Doctor (J.D.)
 - needed to be a lawyer
 - Master of Divinity (M.Div.)
 - needed to be a priest or pastor
 - Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.)
 - needed to be a veterinarian



Doctoral Degrees

- Are also known as doctorates
- Are awarded by graduate institutions
- Require 48 to 72 credit hours after a master's degree is earned OR in place of a master's degree.
- Also require a written thesis or dissertation
- Typically take 3-10 years of full-time study to complete
- Must have a Bachelors degree.

Doctoral Degrees

- Are required or recommended in the following career fields:
 - law
 - medicine
 - veterinary medicine
 - research science
 - animal science
 - dentistry
 - biological science
 - Political science
 - History

Practice Exercise?

- Practice Session
- <http://www.myplan.com>

Exercise? Identify a profession you are interested in and check the basic information you can about it from the website below?

Before Applying to Graduate School?

- Questions to consider:
- How might graduate school affect my career plans?
- Will a graduate degree enhance or narrow my employment prospects?
- Do I need to attend right away?
- Do I know exactly what discipline I want to study?

Before Applying to Graduate School?

- Questions to consider:
- Does my past academic record suggest potential for graduate study?
- Is a Master's degree enough, or will I need to pursue a Doctorate?
- Where will I choose to go?
- How will I afford it?
- What is your commitment level to applying & pursuing graduate school?



Before Applying to Graduate School?

- Best Reason for going to graduate school:
 - The love for a particular subject and the desire to study it in depth.
 - The need for an advanced degree to enter the profession of your choice.



Practice Exercise 4?

- Practice Exercise
- <http://www.myplan.com>
- <https://graduateguide.com/>

Exercise? Identify a profession you are interested in and check the basic information you can about it from the website below?

What is Needed?

- Evaluate Program
- Time-line
- Admission Tests
- Resume/CV
- Statement of Intent or Purpose
- Letters of Recommendation
- Securing Funding
- Transcripts

Factors to Consider When Evaluating Programs

- Program Curriculum
- Faculty
- Program reputation
- Cost
- Campus Facilities
- Career Services
- Geographic Location



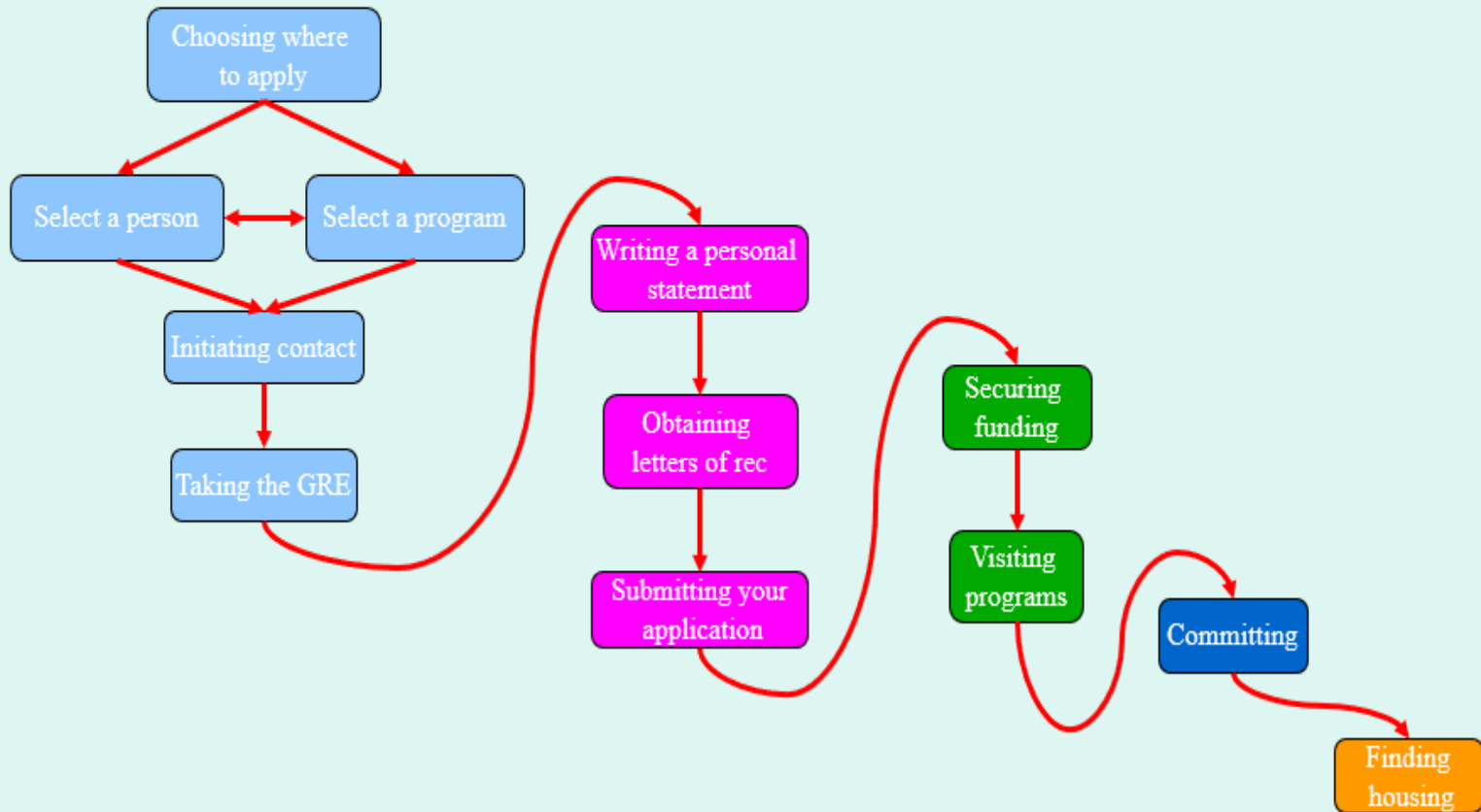
Time-Table: Junior Year

- Research areas of interest and identify appropriate schools and programs
- Develop and prioritize a list of programs to apply to.
- Take admissions test(s) if ready.
Otherwise begin preparation process.
- Request letters of recommendation.
- Begin writing application statement/essay₂₇

Time-Table: Senior Year

- Have application statement/essay critiqued by a faculty advisor.
- Visit top choices if possible.
- Take admissions test(s).
- Mail in completed applications.
- Complete financial aid forms and apply for relevant scholarships.
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation forwarded to programs.

Time-Table: Senior Year



Admission Test

- Graduate Records Exam (GRE) - www.gre.org
- Miller Analogies Test (MAT) - www.milleranalogies.com
- Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) - www.lsac.org
- Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) - www.mba.com/mba
- Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) - www.aamc.org/students/mcat
- Dental Aptitude Test (DAT) - www.ada.org
- Veterinary Aptitude Test (VAT) - aavmc.org
- Optometry Admissions Test (OAT) - www.opted.org
- Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT) - www.pcat.info
- Teacher Testing (PRAXIS) - www.ets.org/praxis

Resume & CV

- **What should be on your Curriculum vitae:**
 - Undergraduate degree and date expected
 - List of related courses and grades that applies to your application
 - GPA (at least 3.0 & above)
 - GRE scores
 - Research experience
 - In class/lab & in research lab
 - Work experience
 - References (these are important!)
 - Provide them with pertinent information to provide an accurate reflection of your abilities.

Statement of Intent/Purpose

- Two Categories of Personal Statements

1) General, comprehensive statements

- Allow the applicant latitude in terms of what he/she writes.

2) Response to a specific question

Tips on Writing Statement of Intent/Purpose

- Determine your purpose in writing the statement.
- Determine the content of your statement:
 - State your purpose in graduate study.
 - Speak to the area of study in which you wish to specialize.
 - Address intended future use of your graduate study: clear career goals
 - Your special preparation and fitness for your study in the field.
 - Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application (e.g. 35 hour/week workload outside of school).
 - Above all, this statement should contain information about you as a person.
 - Address why them?

Tips on Writing Statement of Intent/Purpose

- These are some things that the statement should do:
 - Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you.
 - It should form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself and your field, your future goals, and your future plans.
 - It should get to the point early and catch the attention of the reader.
 - It often should be limited in length, no more than two pages or less.

Tips on Writing Statement of Intent/Purpose

- What not to Include:
- In general, reference to experiences or accomplishments during your high school years or earlier is not a good idea.
- Don't mention subjects that are potentially controversial.
- Any views that might be interpreted as strange or highly unconventional should also be omitted.
- Don't pull something "out of left field" – something that doesn't fit into the story you are telling or the case you're trying to build.

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Letters of Recommendation

- Most graduate programs will require three to four letters of recommendation
- The letters should communicate your ability to study at the graduate level, undergraduate preparation, and commitment level to the proposed field of study
- Your best choices for recommenders are:
 - Undergraduate professors (preferably in your major)
 - Provide a minimum of 2-4 weeks advanced notice
 - Professionals who have supervised you in volunteer or internships related to your graduate field
 - Employers

Letters of Recommendation

- Request letters only from people who know you well enough to write supportive letters.
- Who to ask? Professor in your field of study, previous or current employers, internship supervisors, advisors for student organizations, administrators, doctoral level graduate students.
- Allow letter writers ample time to write you effective letters; do not “rush” your letter writer.
- Give your recommender copies of your resume, statement of purpose, and any other relevant work products



Securing Funding

- Generally two types:
 - Research Assistantship (RA)
 - Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Other sources:
 - Bring your own funding
 - Work
- Issues to be aware of:
 - Tuition waivers
 - In-state tuition
 - Establishing residency



Suggested Graduate School Checklist Timeline:



Six months prior to applying:

- Research areas of interest, institutions and programs
- Register and prepare for appropriate admission tests
- If appropriate, obtain letters of recommendation



Three months prior to applying:

- Take required admissions tests
- Obtain application materials
- Visit institutions of interest, if possible
- Write a draft of your application essay
- Get feedback from 3 academic professionals regarding your application essay
- If needed for medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, register for the national application or data assembly service



Suggested Graduate School Checklist Timeline Cont'd...

Fall Semester:

1 year before starting graduate school:

- Take admission tests
- Send in completed applications

Spring Semester:

1 semester before starting graduate school:

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.

Initiating contact

Dear Dr. X,

I am a junior/senior at St. Lawrence University majoring in X. I am writing to inquire whether you will be taking on any new graduate students next fall. During my tenure at St. Lawrence, I have developed interests in X (something more specific than the name of your major). I am familiar with your research and would be interested to learn more details about your research program. I have had the opportunity to conduct my own independent research as an undergraduate (tell something about what you've been doing) and am excited about the prospect of continuing to do research in graduate school. I'd be happy to send more information about myself, including my current resume and transcripts. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Initiating contact

Dear Dr. X,

Hi. My name is Bob Billiken I am a senior biology major at Saint Louis University. I am currently applying to graduate schools with PhD programs in the biological sciences, specifically those programs encompassing animal ecology research, and I came upon your information in the process. After reading about your research and the work done in your lab, I am very interesting in the possibility of earning my degree with you as my mentor.

If you are accepting new students into your lab this coming school year, I believe that I would be a worthy candidate. For your consideration, I have included below some information about myself and why I believe you should consider my application. I have also attached to this email my resume and a writing sample from my undergraduate thesis proposal.

Please consider me as a potential member of your lab, as I believe I could provide a valuable contribution to your research team. If you have any questions or would like to talk to me further about the possibility of joining your lab if I am admitted to the biology graduate program, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Bob Billiken

Additional Graduate School Resources

- Eureka a Goldmine of Career Information :
www.eureka.org
- Peterson's Graduate and Professional Schools -
www.petersons.com
- Grad Schools - www.gradschools.com
- Grad Guide - www.graduateguide.com
- Graduate and Professional School Profiles -
www.gradprofiles.com
- Council of Graduate Schools - www.cgsnet.org
- Association for Support of Graduate Students -
www.asgs.org
- National Association of Graduate-Professional Students -
www.nagps.org
- U.S. News & World Report Rankings & Guides -
www.usnews.com/usnews/rankguide/rghome.htm

Additional Graduate School Resources

- UCSB Career Services : <https://career.ucsb.edu/>



Questions

- Questions?

Contact

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