

Graduate School Options

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TYPES OF GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

“Academic” Type Programs

Master of Arts (M.A.) or Master of Science (M.S.) in a specific discipline or subject you’ve studied as an undergraduate, typically takes two years to complete. A Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.) extends two to four years beyond the Master’s level requiring an original research project called the dissertation. This option is required to be a professor with future options for consulting and research.

“Professional” Type Programs

Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) More than 22 different specializations. Some two year programs are more quantitative than others.

Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)

Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.)

Master of Public Health (M.P.H.)

Medical Doctor (M.D.)

Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.)

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE DETERMINING YOUR READINESS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Here are some suggested questions to consider as you evaluate your readiness to pursue additional graduate or professional school options:

1. Do you have clearly defined career goals that require an advanced degree for entry into the profession?
2. Can you articulate your academic and professional reasons for going to graduate school?
3. Does your undergraduate record reflect your ability to do graduate level work?
4. Are you willing to incur the debt and delay the earnings that continuing education will involve?
5. Are you emotionally ready for one to three more years of academic work at a much more rigorous level than your undergraduate experience?

EVALUATING THE “BEST” PROGRAMS FOR YOU

U.S. Ranking of Programs

Be sure to notice the criteria used. For more information go to: <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/grad>
<http://graduate-school.phds.org/>

Questions to Consider Include the Following:

How does the program rate? What criteria matter most to you: Prestige, employability, number of publications, faculty-student ratio, great research facilities? Focus on the reputation of the departmental area you seek versus the overall university ranking.

Does the program emphasize areas in your field that fit your career interests and goals? Is the program more research-oriented or more application orientated?

Does the faculty have special strength and academic reputation given the quality of their research projects and/or published works? Is there a particular faculty member you want to work with directly?

Does the program offer interesting internships or fieldwork opportunities? If so, what are the qualifications?

Who will be your supervisor? Will the experience count towards professional licensing requirements?

Are the libraries, laboratories, and other research facilities adequate for your needs?

Are you academically prepared for the kind of program being offered?

Is financial assistance available?

Are their program requirements consistent with professional licensing requirements?

Are there alternative programs in other departments that will train you for the same or similar career options?

Where have recent graduates gotten jobs? What are typical placements? It is advisable to know the basic facts about the school prior to arriving there for the day of interviews. This would include such things as size, relationship to college campus, etc.

What are the demographics of its entering graduate class: Percentage of women and minorities; typical age range of students; overall class size.

RESEARCHING GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Approximately 40% of UCSB students go on to do graduate work. Use these resources to consider graduate school options.

Online Resources

CollegeSource Online

<http://www.collegesource.org/>

More than 10,700 College Catalogues in complete cover-to-cover original page format including 2-year, 4-year, graduate and professional schools. We are amazed by this resource. It only works if you are using a computer on the UCSB campus.

GradSchools.com

www.gradschools.com

Search by subject area and by metro area.

Peterson's On-line Graduate Services

<http://www.petersons.com/GradChannell/code/search.asp?path=gr.fas.grad>

An online program that enables you to search for graduate schools by Institution Name, Location, Academic Area, or Professional Degree.

University Directory 101

<http://U101.com>

College listings by state.

Printed Resources:

(Available in the Career Resource Room)

Continue the Journey

This is a free booklet published by the Office of the President of the University of California. It contains information about admissions requirements, opportunities for financial support, summer research programs, and graduate degree programs at each UC Campus.

While this booklet targets women and underrepresented minorities in particular, it would be useful to all students considering graduate study at the UC.

Professional Focused Graduate Directories:

Baron's Guide to Medical and Dental Schools

Allied Health Education Directory

Graduate Study in Psychology and Associated Fields

MBA Programs: U.S., Canada & International

The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools

Graduate School Fair

Every fall quarter, Career Services coordinates an annual Graduate & Professional School Day. Representatives from a wide variety of graduate programs come to campus to answer questions and provide information on applying to their graduate programs. Look on our Google Calendar and for GauchoLink announcements for the exact date and location each year.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are three basic categories of money available for a graduate student's education:

1. Grants, fellowships, and scholarships. This is "free" money provided by governmental programs, educational institutions, foundations, corporations, and other private sources. (The difference between a grant and a fellowship is that a grant is awarded based on financial need and a fellowship is awarded based on academic merit.)
2. Education-related salaries, such as those paid for teaching assistantships, research assistantships, or administrative assistantships.
3. Loans from governmental, institutions or private sources. The majority of funding is administered directly from the graduate department or university.

Complete the school's financial support application and requirements early in the application process. Deadlines for financial support are frequently a month or so earlier than regular admission deadlines. Outside sources of financial support are also available for graduate study.

Private fellowships, grants, and scholarships can be identified through several reference books located in UCSB Library or Career Resource Room.

On-Line resources for scholarships & fellowships include:

www.gradschools.com

www.fastweb.com

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/scholarshipsearch/>

<http://www.evergreen.edu/research/generalinterestfellowships.htm>

APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Most graduate schools will evaluate your application for admissions on the following four criteria:

1. **Undergraduate GPA (Transcripts)** Request your undergraduate transcripts directly from all post-secondary institutions you have attended. This is usually done through the Registrar's Office. When you request your transcripts, you will need to provide the names and addresses of the graduate schools where you would like your transcripts sent. There is usually a fee for each transcript. Be sure to allow several weeks for the processing of your request.
2. **Graduate Admissions Tests Scores.** Graduate Schools generally require a graduate admission test that varies according to the type of program you seek. Plan on taking the one you need at least three to four months before you need to submit your applications. Scores are typically good for up to five years.
3. **Letters of Recommendation.** All graduate schools will require anywhere from two to five letters of recommendation.



Applicants pursuing graduate school immediately after the undergraduate work will want the majority of their letters to be from professors, while those entering graduate school after several years of work will rely on their professional work references.

- 4. Statement of Purpose.** The final piece to the application is your Statement of Purpose. This is your opportunity to convince the admissions committee that you are qualified to pursue graduate study. Be prepared to write an essay or statement on your background and interests as they pertain to your study in the field. This is your opportunity to present yourself beyond the “numbers” represented in your transcripts and graduate admission exams. It also gives the committee a sample of your ability to write, so be meticulous about spelling, grammar, and writing style. The essay will also be used to assess your enthusiasm for the field of study, motivation, creativity, maturity, and personal uniqueness. Have several people, including your letter writers, review your Statement of Purpose for clarity and composition.

TEST PREPARATION RESOURCES

On-Line Resources & Local Contacts

The following are for-profit companies. We provide these links for your convenience, not to imply endorsement of either service. Take a practice test first before investing in in-class programs. Discuss your options with local area representatives to determine what makes sense given the schools targeted.

The following websites provide excellent information on a variety of other related topics to graduate or professional school education.

Kaplan

<http://www.kaptest.com/index.jhtml>

Princeton Review

www.review.com

GRAD PREPARATION SERVICES & RESOURCES

Campus Learning Assistance Services (C.L.A.S.) offer a number of services to help students with their graduate school applications. They offer workshops and handouts on how to write a statement of purpose. They also offer mock administrations of graduate entrance exams. Check out the website: www.clas.ucsb.edu

Career Services provides FREE test booklets in the CRR for the GRE, GMAT, MCAT, CBEST, as well as test prep books on reserve. We also administer the Miller Analogy Test (MAT), sometimes required by certain graduate school programs. To make an appointment to take the MAT, call 805-893-4412.

UCSB Bookstore also has the latest test preparation guides.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

What is a Statement of Purpose?

It is typically a two to three page essay demonstrating how your undergraduate studies have prepared you for graduate level work, and how your personal, volunteer, and/or work experiences give you a mature realistic view of how your future goals fit into this particular program.

What is the structure of a Statement of Purpose?

Be sure to read the application section carefully for an outline of what needs to be addressed in your essay. Typically, the structure will consist of the following categories:

Introduction (Statement of your immediate and long term goals)

Examples of Coursework (Illustrate your general skills and knowledge of subject matter, including any research or honors projects you've had)

Examples of Volunteer, Internship or Work Experiences (Explain how your responsibilities relate to your ability to teach, research, arrange, prioritize and your commitment to service and excellence)

Conclusion (Details about the program that link to your background and goals)

How do I get started?

Review books in the Career Resource Room, such as *Graduate Admission Essays - What Works, What Doesn't, and Why*.

Request to see an example of your TA's statement of purpose if you decide to choose a program in your particular discipline. If writing for a professional school, conduct several information meetings with those you admire who have completed this educational training to get their examples and advice.

What should I avoid in writing my statement of purpose?

Little White Lies: “This program is my first choice...”

Flattery: “This program is the finest in the country...”

Oversgeneralization: “Life in the universe is ever changing...”

“I have always wanted to be a doctor...”

“I believe my undergraduate education has prepared me for...”

Autobiographical: “...when I was twelve my family moved to...”

Hard Luck Stories: “I am the first in my family to receive a college degree.”

What are examples?

Too General: “My work as a teacher's aide was challenging.”

Better: “My work as a teacher's aide in bilingual third grade classroom included planning and implementing lessons in English and Spanish, organizing recess activities, and working individually with students who needed extra help with reading and writing skills.”



Too General: “I think I can contribute a great deal to the program.”

Better: “I also plan to use the analytic skills developed in my undergraduate studies in Philosophy and the critical reading and writing skills developed in my studies of Literature to contribute to the law school’s journal, and to teach legal writing in the undergraduate pre-law program.”

How do I revise my first draft?

Check the following before seeking further feedback:

Content: Evidence for detail accuracy

Structure: Paragraph order, breaks, and transitions

Style & Presentation: Clarity, conciseness, grammar, spelling

Where do I get feedback on my revised draft?

Start with CLAS for basic grammar, structure, and style suggestions. Next, consider making an appointment with a Career Services Counselor by calling 893-4412 to discuss content.

REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Whether you apply to graduate or professional schools immediately, or at some later date after obtaining additional experience and focus, you will need letters of recommendation. Here are some tips:

When to Ask:

At least 2–3 months prior to any application deadline.

Whom to Ask:

Professors

Teachers Assistants with a professor’s approval and signature

Employers / Internship supervisors

How to Ask:

Email or call first to see if the potential recommender would be willing to serve as a reference. If so, set up a meeting during their office hours. In this meeting, you may discuss your interest in graduate study and ask your recommender what information they require to write a strong letter for you.

What to provide your recommender:

Go to *Interfolio.com* and fill out the New Recommendation Request Form. To ensure confidentiality at every step along the way, make sure to check the confidentiality box of the form.

You will be able to include a CV and other supporting documents. You can also let your writer know if this is a general recommendation or needs to be tailored to a specific opportunity.

Once you submit your request you should receive a confirmation message on your screen.

Follow-up:

If you have not received a notification and your deadline is near, you will need to contact your recommender to remind them to send the letter out.

Write brief ‘Thank you’ notes to your recommenders.

Interfolio.com

Email: help@interfolio.com

Phone: 877-997-8807 M–F; 9am–6pm (Eastern Time)

GRADUATE SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

The majority of schools use what is described as a structured interview. That is, they have identified important areas around which they will attempt to gather information about you. Use the following as a reference guide to think about those areas in relation to yourself. Try to assess ways in which questions may be posed to you to cover these areas.

1. *Support Persons:* Who does the candidate turn to in times of need to obtain help or advice. A student who is unable to seek help may be more at risk for not completing the graduate school program.
1. *Work Exposure:* What does the candidate know about his/her chosen career? Is the student’s knowledge base coming from family, friends, personal experience or reading? How realistic is the understanding? What is the level of awareness of the changes in graduate work today? What other professions have been ruled out in coming to this choice?
2. *Motivation:* How has the student tested out his/her interest in graduate work? What level of responsibility has the student assumed for others? Can a student describe the values that he or she possesses that will sustain motivation in difficult times? Who are the role models that have been most significant in influencing career choice of graduate work? Is there anything that would cause a student to lose interest in graduate work if it changed dramatically?
3. *Personal Qualities:* Appearance, poise, confidence, ability to communicate, sense of humor and proper use of the English language will all be assessed by the interviewer. Interviewers will pay particular attention to the emotional stability including making an attempt to discern unresolved personal problems. They will seek to gain a better understanding of family dynamics for each student and what relationships are like with parents and siblings. Interviewers will want to know if the student is emancipated from his/her family, level of maturity achieved, and the degree of development of empathy skills. They will seek to understand the students operating style, and whether tolerance for diversity has been manifested through life experiences, and where the student is sufficiently flexible to manage the substantial changes that lie ahead.
4. *Social Awareness:* How informed is the candidate about local and national issues? Has the student taken a stance on any area of social concern? What is the level of awareness of some of the important ethical issues facing



us today? Has the student ever acted upon his or her political or social conscience?

5. *Caring, Compassion and Conscientiousness*: If you wanted to convince someone that you are conscientious, how would you go about it? Caring and compassion should be daily events that are exhibited toward others. Are you willing to take a risk that might benefit a colleague or friend? What are your feelings about your abilities to be compassionate, yet remain sufficiently objective, thus not incapacitating yourself by becoming overly involved?

Questions will most often be presented in an open-ended, abstract manner; that is, few that can be answered by a yes/no response. When the question is asked, if you don't understand it, seek clarification. Interviewers will be assessing whether your thinking style is more abstract or concrete in nature. Other areas that interviewers will assess include:

1. Your ability to understand the question being posed.
2. Your depth of knowledge in providing the response.
3. Whether you can synthesize from one experience to the next.
4. What you learned about yourself from various experiences.
5. What kind of reality testing has been done, and evidences of maturity and professional judgement.
6. What areas of your personality are you working on, i.e. what you consider weaknesses to be.

Internal consistency is important in your responses. If there are negative comments made about yourself, they will likely follow up with questions of why you feel the way you do, and attempt to determine whether any of these disparaging comments might interfere with your success.

Adapted from Whitworth College.

DECIDING AMONG OFFERS

Re-examine the criteria you originally established when you were first applying to your chosen schools, and reflect on the following questions:

- Which offer most closely matches your academic and career goals?
- Which offer provides the best financial support?
- Are you willing to live in the community where the school is located for the length of time required? Will your social and lifestyle preferences be met?
- Does the program fit your learning style and particular strengths?
- What does your "gut" tell you? (Both logic and emotion play differing roles for applicants. Your decision should be based on what is right for you.)

Next, notify all other programs you've applied to that you've accepted somewhere else.

Follow instructions about deposits that you are obligated to make before you enroll in a program (if there are any). This

increases your credibility and commitment to their program. Utilize campus housing services for room rental possibilities. Explore additional employment options within the graduate division, college and/or campus as needed. Consider local area opportunities as well by seeking advice through the appropriate career resource services center or local area Chamber of Commerce.

Making the Transition to Grad School

<http://gradschool.about.com/cs/survival/>

YEARLY CHECK LIST

Junior Year

Fall Quarter

- Attend "Applying to Graduate School" workshops.
- Attend Graduate & Professional School Day.
- Decide when you want to attend graduate school. *(Most students take a year or two off to gain additional experience and focus before applying. Be sure your career plans require additional graduate or professional school education. Many students find certificate programs more than adequate to meet their needs for professional development)*

Winter Quarter

- Investigate test preparation services for the exam required.
- Prepare to apply to summer internships.

Spring Quarter

- Finalize your decision on start date for graduate study.
- Begin research on graduate or professional school programs.
- Email for application and financial aid information materials.
- Follow-up on summer internship applications.

Summer Quarter

- Consider taking test preparation courses if needed.
- Sign up for taking the required test early fall.
- Finalize your list of selected schools (a suggested guideline is 3-5 top schools; 3-5 middle range; 3-5 bottom ranked schools)

Senior Year

Fall Quarter

- Take the GRE, LSAT, GMAT or MCAT required for admission if applying a year from this quarter.
- Review the application deadlines and requirements for the schools selected.
- Prepare your statement of purpose and an updated résumé.
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty and employers.

Winter Quarter

- Finalize Applications early January



Spring Quarter

- Evaluate offers and respond to everyone with your decision
- Create a backup plan depending upon competitiveness of programs selected

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

UC Extension Programs

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/academics/extension.html>

Every UC campus has an extension program for recent graduates and/or employees seeking to gain additional training and/or certification in specific professional fields. Click on the campus nearest you. Explore the many options. Courses are typically taught by those working in the field and require a more hands-on, project oriented approach to learning. Most courses are offered on weekends and evenings for those who work full time.

Professional Association Certificate Programs

Some professions have their own organizational online or conference based certificate programs for the professional. Use google.com and type in “Associations in...” and see what training is provided for the field you seek.

On-Line Master’s Degree Programs

<http://onlinesapiens.com/master.html>

This option is attractive to those who want to obtain graduate degree without moving or giving up a full time job.

International Graduate School Program

<http://international.gradschools.com>

Some students find it more cost effective to consider the graduate or professional school education at an overseas, accredited institution. This is especially attractive for those wishing to deepen their international perspective while gaining continued proficiency in a language.

Post-BA Internships & Fellowship Programs

<http://career.ucsb.edu/students/internships/postBA.html>

Most deadlines occur winter quarter and are highly competitive.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL OPTIONS

How many graduate schools should I apply to?

Most people apply to between three and eight graduate schools, with five being the average number of applications submitted. Your preliminary research on graduate schools should give you an idea of the number of applications received versus the number of students accepted by each graduate school. This information will help you determine how many applications will give you the highest possibility of acceptance into a graduate program.

Do I have to pick the same discipline in graduate school as my undergraduate major?

No. More often than not, your reasons for pursuing graduate study will be to gain further expertise in your undergraduate discipline, but it is not mandatory that you study the same discipline. In the case of Law, Social Work, Public Health, Medicine, for example there are no corresponding undergraduate disciplines at UCSB. The entering graduate class will contain a wide variety of undergraduate majors and experiences. However, the graduate school may require you to take the core undergraduate course within the discipline before considering your application. This information can be obtained from the university’s application information, or by writing the school directly.

If I am not accepted can I re-apply the following year?

Yes. It is a good idea to contact the graduate admission committee to find out how you can strengthen your application for the following year. Your candidacy for admission will be considered anew, and your application will be reviewed and ranked on the merits of the new applications that are received for that year.

Is it better to:

- A) *Take some time off before entering a graduate program*
- or
- B) *Go directly to graduate school after completing my bachelor’s degree?*

Many students prefer to take a break after their bachelor’s degree for a number of reasons, e.g., to travel, to earn money for graduate school, to gain work experience or to take some time to clarify their career and academic goals before committing to a graduate program. Any one of these reasons is valid. Graduate schools accept students right out of undergraduates schools as well as people who have not seen the inside of a university for fifteen years. It is more important that the “timing” of a graduate school fit your career and personal time clock. However, some graduate schools will not accept students without some previous work experience; this will be clearly stated in their application literature. Some programs will state that the programs “prefer” students who have work experience. It is a good idea to clarify this statement directly with the graduate school prior to completing an application.



CAREER SERVICES RESOURCES

- Career Counseling Appointments (statement of purpose advice, interview help, explore graduate programs)
- Graduate & Professional School Day (Fall Quarter)
- Graduate School Workshops & Admission Panels
- Résumé, Interview, & LinkedIn Workshops
- Résumé Critique (by appointment or during drop-in hours)