How to Prepare for Graduate School: *The Graduate School Application Process*

Presented by:
Academic Advising Center

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify two reasons to attend graduate school.
- Summarize how to select and prepare for graduate school entrance exams.
- Estimate how far in advance a letter of recommendation should be requested.
- List the important things to consider when writing a statement of purpose.

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Graduate School preparation

- Graduate School Resources

Questions to assist you in thinking about Graduate School

1) *Why do you want to attend graduate school?*

2) *How will this degree align with your career?*

What is Graduate School?

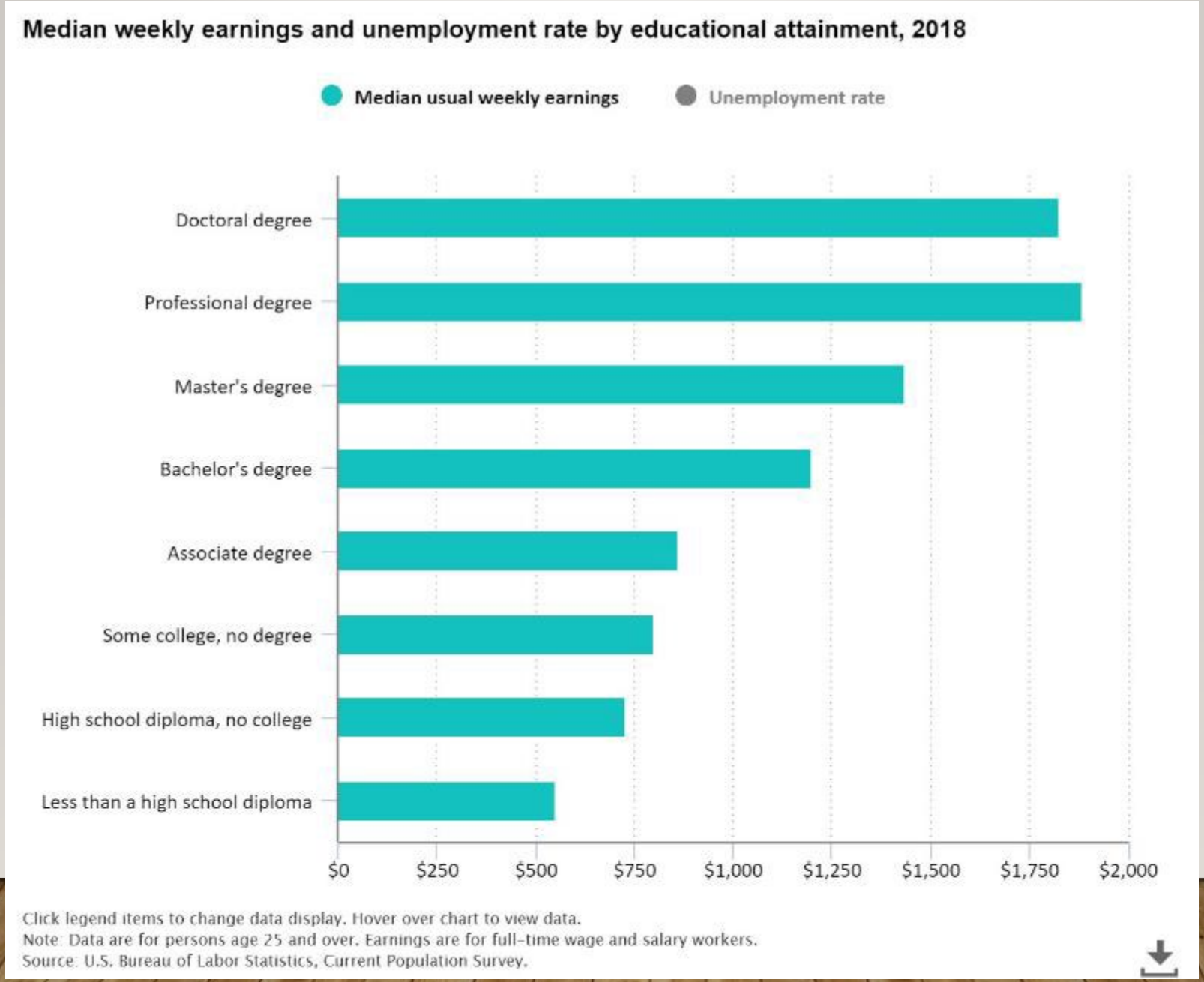
A **graduate school** (sometimes shortened as **grad school**) is a **school** that awards advanced academic degrees (i.e. master's and doctoral degrees) with the general requirement that students must have earned a previous undergraduate (bachelor's) degree with a strong grade point average (usually a 3.0 or higher)

HOW YOU CAN PREPARE:

- Talk with professors to learn about options and opportunities
- Research careers and job descriptions
  - Career Center
- Job shadow / informational interview with professionals in your field of interest
- Visit websites of professional associations
- Intern and work in areas of interest

WHY GRADUATE SCHOOL?

EDUCATION PAYS



GRAD SCHOOL Application Timeline

by Academical.

the smart way

research programs
decide where you're applying

gain experience
in research & related areas

study for the GRE and TOEFL

write unique **statements of purpose**

take necessary **exams**

Decide on **recommenders** and guide them on writing your letters

perfect your CV and application materials

submit your applications **before the deadline**

wait for your **acceptance letter**

Academical.
howtogetintograduateschool.com

Research

CSU degrees http://degrees.Calstate.Edu

UC degrees http://graduate.Universityofcalifornia.Edu/admissions/degree-search

Petersons guide https://www.Petersons.Com

U.S. News-beyond college http://www.Usnews.Com/education

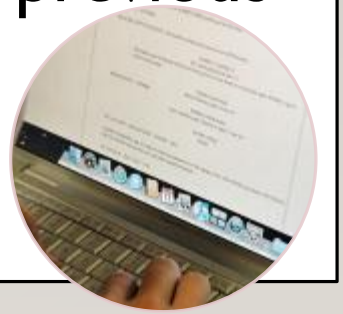
Graduate school guide http://www.Graduateguide.Com

Gradschools.Com http://www.Gradschools.Com

Gradsource.Com http://www.Gradsource.Com

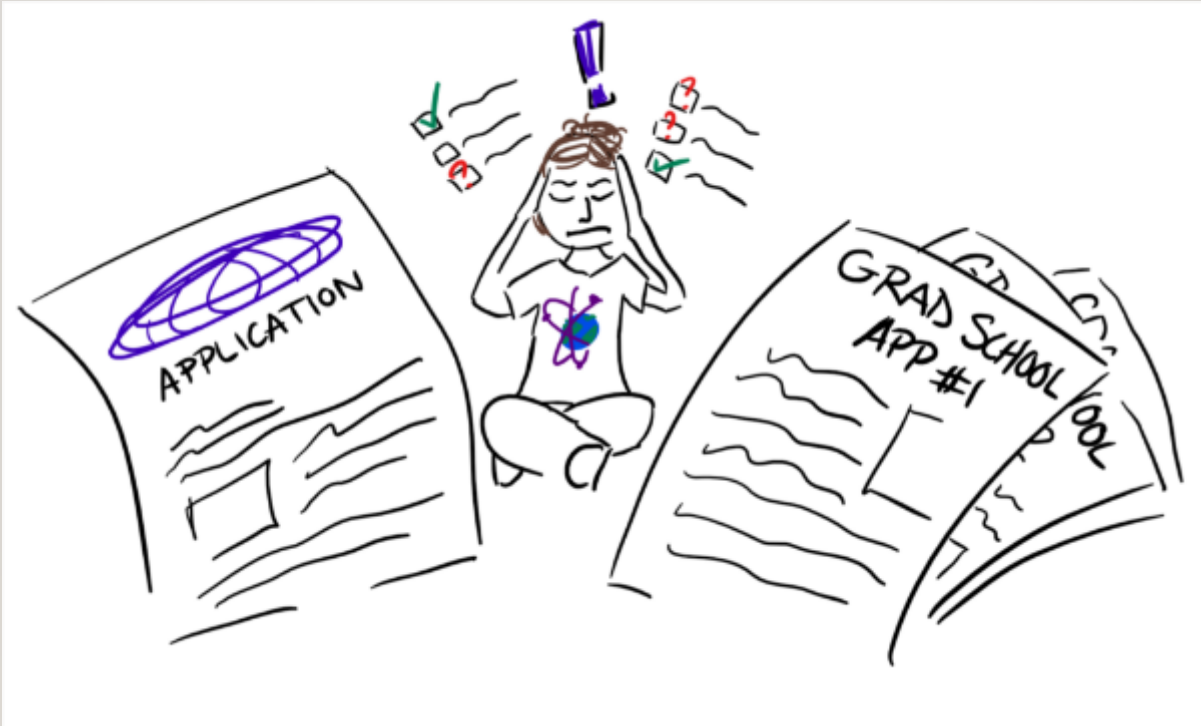
Research Programs

- Select programs and schools of interests
- Find out about pre-requisites
- Application requirements
- Should start around February-July of the previous year you plan on starting your program
  (Research Spring to be admitted for Fall)



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(VARY BY SCHOOL/PROGRAM):



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (VARY BY SCHOOL/PROGRAM)

- Application
- GPA Requirements
- Standardized Test
- Prerequisites
- Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation
- Professional Résumé / CV
- Interview

APPLICATION

- *Specifically follow the directions of the application.*
- *Indicate N/A (Not Applicable) for any blank that does not apply to you.*
- *Start applying early*
- *Fees vary by program; there may be fee waivers*
- *Submit application early*
    - *contact schools to be sure your application has been received*

GPA REQUIREMENTS

- The GPA is one of the many indicators of how well you perform your job as a graduate student
- Masters
  - 3.0 or 3.3 GPA is typically required
- Doctoral programs
  - 3.3 or 3.5 is typically required
- GPA calculations will vary by program

PREREQUISITE COURSES

- *Find out which pre-reqs are required*
- *How many have you taken/ need?*
- *Are community college pre-reqs accepted?*
- *Does your program need a # of volunteer hours or full-time experience?*

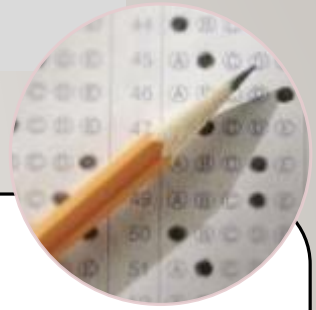
RÉSUMÉ / CV

Make sure to ask if the school needs a CV or a resume

Must reflect work related to your academic pursuits

Visit CI's Career Development Resource Center for assistance

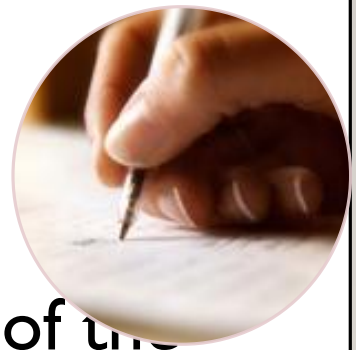
Entrance Exams



- **GRE, GMAT, LSAT, or MCAT**
  - Depends on graduate program admissions requirement
- Study for exam (May-August)
  (80-120 hours of test prep)
- Buy a test prep book and register for a prep course
- Pay and Schedule exam
  (3 weeks – 2 months prior to exam day for best date & location)
- Take a free practice test www.kaplan.com or www.ets.org
- Take the Exam (July-September)
- Update on Exams

Letters of Recommendation

- Check with each school to check how many are required
- Contact professional references (professors, supervisors, and mentors)
- Provide summary, transcripts, and resume
- Request letters at least 6-8 weeks in advance of the deadline. Provide with soft deadline.
- Obtain instructions on how recommendations will be submitted to campus



Statement of Purpose/ Personal Statement

- Research writing prompt & pay attention to details
- Write rough draft (summer)
  (Never too early to start)
- Reviewed & edited by friends, professionals and faculty (fall)
  ** Graduate Writing Studio consultant (FREE)
- Final version

ATTEND ANNUAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS AT CSUCI

- Graduate School Workshops
- Graduate School Night Panel
- Graduate & Professional School Fair
- Pre-Doctoral Information Sessions

Submit Your Application

- October – January (application period)
- Submit application at least 1-2 weeks early
- Interviews (March-May)*

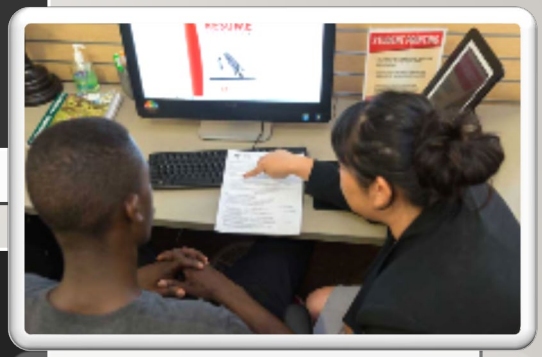
Timeline is based upon fall admission and varies by school and program

Interviews

- Types of Interviews
  - Closed
  - Open
  - 1-1
  - Panel
- Length
- Sample & mock interviews
- Follow up with *Thank You* note

Visit our Graduate School Preparation website to stay up to date with events, workshops, and more!

www.csuci.edu/gsc

GRADUATE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graduate School Counseling
- Career Center
- Test Preparation Books
- Graduate School Handbook