

# Graduate School Application Planning

Please make sure you print Graduate School Application Planning Web PowerPoint Guide found on the [Career Development Services Website](#).

It is crucial you complete the workshop guide to supplement the self-guided process. The content and structure of this self-guided workshop might be different than similar documents from an in-person workshop. Please contact Career Development Services if you have any questions regarding the information presented in the guide or workshop.

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[www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment](http://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment)



# Learning Objectives

**Identify** the key factors in pursuing an advanced degree

**List** two graduate school resources provided by Career Development Services

**Reflect** on the timeline process of preparing for graduate school testing.

# Agenda



Key Factors To Consider: Slides

When To Attend

Testing

Application Timeline

Graduate School Resources

# Why Graduate School?



- Going to graduate school is a major commitment of time and money; this decision should not be taken lightly.
- It is generally not advised to attend graduate school because you “thought you were supposed to” or don’t know what else to do.
- You will face several years of intense work, research and a more demanding course load than in your undergraduate program.
- It is extremely important to be sure and committed before deciding if graduate school is your next step

# Why Graduate School?



**The following is a list of reasons why graduate school might be ideal or potentially beneficial:**

- Career Goal
- Compensation
- Staying Marketable

## **What is your reason for attending graduate school?**

It is important to complete your answer in the guide before moving to the next slides



# Career Goal

- Earning a graduate degree that is part of your plan to reach a specific and carefully thought out career goal is a very legitimate reason for attending graduate school.
- There are several professions that require a graduate degree or credential program. Attorneys, K-12 teachers, doctors, psychiatrists or Marriage & Family Therapists are just a few professions that require a graduate or professional degree.



# Career Goal

- If you are unsure or have doubts about your professional goals, going to graduate school is not going to help you find your career.
- Questions or concerns regarding graduate school, should be addressed with faculty in professions you are considering or working with a Career Counselor to help you figure out your career interests and goals.
- Attending graduate school without a clear specific career goal, can potentially lead to lower motivation and program drop-out.





# Career Goal

- There are many careers that offer job opportunities that don't require an advanced degree.
- In some situations, having an advanced degree can actually hurt you in a job search if you have little or no job experience related to your graduate or professional degree.
- You don't want to be classified as overeducated and under experienced.
- Employers prefer education but require direct and related skills and experience for their competitive position.



# Compensation



- Most studies show that people with advanced degrees earn more on average than those with only a bachelor degree.
- A college master's degree can be worth \$1.3 million more in lifetime earnings than a high school diploma Recently reported from the U.S. Census Bureau.
- However, increase in compensation depends on the position and or industry.

# Compensation



- The Masters in Business Administration can really mask national salary averages. For example, a person with a MBA with 3-5 years of experience might be making 65-150,000. While a person with a Masters of Social Work with 3-5 years of experience is making 35,000-80,000.
- It is best to know in advance what kind of extra compensation you could get with an advanced degree. Researching the average income for those who have advanced degrees compared to those who do not within the same profession and
- Learn more about Salary Comparisons at [NACE](#)



# ***Staying Marketable***

- For some professions without an advanced degree continued advancement is limited.
- You may need to earn an advanced degree to keep your training and skills current to make you more marketable for career advancement. In the corporate world, you may hear people talking about “hitting a ceiling.”
- Getting a graduate degree is not required for many "entry-level" jobs.



# ***Staying Marketable***

- Have an employer pay for your advanced degree. Example: An engineer at Qualcomm in San Diego could not get a management position until he had a Master's in Engineering. His executive team offered to pay for his advanced degree and guaranteed him a management position when he completed his degree.
- Is an advanced degree a tool in advancing your career?



# ***When should you attend graduate school?***

- One of the questions most often debated is when is the best time to consider a graduate degree. Is it better to attend graduate school right after you complete your bachelor's degree?
- Or is it better to wait a few years and gain some work/life experience first?
- As mentioned above, certainly do not consider going immediately to graduate school as a default move -- or to avoid getting a job.

# *Immediately*

## **Pros**

- Accustomed to being a student and have momentum
- Study Skills are sharp
- Few or less obligations
- Occupations that require advanced degrees for “entry-level” positions

## **Cons**

- Could choose the wrong program = spending money and time on wrong profession
- Not a competitive candidate to admissions committee without work experience
- Unlikely to fund entire tuition and expenses



# ***After Work Experience***

## **Pros**

- Confirmed your career goals through hands-practical experience
- Completed the needed work experience to apply for graduate programs
- Bring actual work experience to the theory you will learn in class
- Some employers may pay for partial or all of your tuition
- Financial stability
- Improve chances for acceptance to graduate programs

## **Cons**

- Struggle with study skills
- Work, life & school balance
- Attending class and working with students significantly younger
- Leave a paid position to complete an internship opportunity.



# ***During Entry-Level Career***

## **Pros**

- Locate employers willing to pay for your education while you work
- Financially stable while concurrently working on improving your skills
- Minimal student loans
- Know you already have a job after graduation

## **Cons**

- Balancing work and education simultaneously.



# ***Types of Tests***

## **Which tests should you take?**

Depends on the university/college and each program has different requirements. Check program requirements found on the application website. Don't assume, Find out!

Typical tests include:

- GRE General Tests
- GRE Subject Tests
- LSAT – Law School
- MCAT- Medical School
- GMAT – Business Schools



# ***Test Preparation***

## Self- Study Options:

- ETS website – offers practice test and registration information.
- Test books- fairly comprehensive & offers a variety of practice tests.

## Preparation Classes (community college courses):

- Los Angeles Pierce College's Extension offers a 2-part prep-test, 1 for verbal and analytical and the other on quantitative (math) course at \$109 per course. If, you discover that you only need the verbal and analytical scores you may only need to take 1 course.



# ***Test Preparation***

## Private test-prep schools:

- Kaplan offers up several options including premium services that provides a money-back guarantee. However, their services can cost anywhere from \$300 to several thousand dollars. If you are interested in obtaining high score results, Kaplan is ideal. But, the price for achieving a particular score with Kaplan is fairly expensive.
- For more information please visit their [website](#).



# ***Test Preparation Costs***

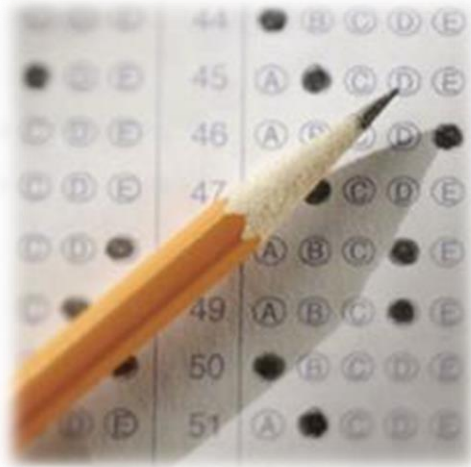
- ETS Website – free
- Test books (\$10-\$30)
- Test-Prep classes (\$109-\$218)
- Private test-prep (\$500-several thousands)

# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***



## **Research**

- Select programs and schools of interests
  - Recommend 3-5 schools
  - Average acceptance is 15%
- Find out about pre-requisites & special requirements
- Application requirements & deadlines
- Visit school's website & contact admissions counselors.
- Every school and program is different
- Should start research 10 months prior to application deadline (February-July of the previous year for Fall)



# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***

## **Testing**

- Study for exam (May-August = Jan 15 deadline)
  - 6-8 months prior to application deadline
- Pay & Schedule ETS (3weeks-2months prior to exam day)
- Take the Exam 2-3 months prior to application deadline
- Anticipate the possibility of retesting
  - Pro: Improve better scores
  - Con: cost
- Meet with admissions counselor for specific program questions & attend a campus visit.





# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***

## **Letters of Recommendation**

- Start around the same time you are taking the GRE or waiting for the results
- Contact Professors and Supervisors
  - Who really know you & speak on your behalf
  - Can highlight the best qualities, & fill in any gaps, questions, or concerns

For example if you are applying for a MBA graduate program and you excel in the business courses but, your English courses are average. An admissions counselor is going to be concerned that the student might not do well in writing papers for their master's thesis. However, if you get a letter of recommendation from your English professors explaining how well you have excelled in your last couple English courses, it alleviates their concerns regarding your writing ability.

# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***

## **Letters of Recommendation**

- Avoid getting a letter from someone who doesn't know you well, or someone who can not speak about your ability to excel in your education
- Personal friends, relatives and mentors who are ill-informed about your academics or hasn't supervised you, have very little impact on the admissions committee.





# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***

## **Letters of Recommendation**

- Provide Summary & Transcripts to the writer
  - Detailed information about yourself
  - Reason you are applying, goals, and interests
  - Don't assume that your letter writer knows everything about you and only has only good things to say, they may have concerns. For most circumstances you can address any issues and communicate what information is relevant to focus on in the letter of recommendation.
  - It is common for faculty to write letters that indicate they know little about the student, without the above information.
- Request letters 6-8 weeks in advance



# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***

## **Statement of Purpose/Personal Statement**

- Research school information to draft essay. Include:
  - Faculty and program information
  - Mission of the department and institution
- Speak with an admissions counselor, visiting the campus and meeting the faculty and staff has a significant advantage to those who don't.
- Write Rough Draft (summer)
  - Ideal time to write is 6 months in advance
- Review & Edited by Faculty and Graduate Writing Studio
  - Roughly 3-4 months before the application deadline

# ***Graduate School Application Timeline***



## **Attend Graduate & Professional School Fairs**

- Meet with Enrollment Advisors and learn about graduate school programs
- Get tips and additional help for the application
- Check GRE test results with Enrollment Advisors
- Participate 1 year before you plan to attend graduate school
- CDS hosts this event only during the Fall Semester.



# Graduate School Application Timeline

## Submit your Application

- Majority of graduate program deadlines occur December 1-January 15
  - Double check each program, deadlines may vary
- Need to apply to both the university and department
  - May have separate deadlines & requirements
- Send 1-2 weeks early
  - Double check materials before you send application out
  - Have another person double check your materials
- Interviews occur 2-4 months after application deadline (typically March-May)
  - Stay in contact with the admissions advisors for updates

# Graduate School Resources

## How to get help...



### Career Development Services

- Advise on Application process
- Graduate & Professional School Fairs
- Provide external resources and referrals
- Conduct Mock-interview & preparation information



### Faculty

- Expert knowledge in career specific industry
- Share personal career-path
- Research information/opportunity\*
- Student selection process\*
- Review Essays\*





# ***Graduate School Resources***

## **Career Development Services Offers:**

- Graduate School Bound Program
- Graduate School Application Advising
- Graduate School Handbook
- Eureka Career Cruising Resources
- Weekly Resume Clinics and Drop-in Counseling



# ***Graduate School Resources***

## **Graduate School Bound Program**

- Incorporates 6 detailed modules covering the topics of testing, application process, financial aid, and writing a personal statement or statement of purpose.
- The Graduate School Program is a hands on approach, that is not replaceable with a workshop or single counseling session. Please visit our [website](#) for more information.



# Graduate School Resources

## Graduate School Application Advising

- Visit us during [Drop-in Career Counseling](#).
- One-on-one **appointments** are available to all of our current students unable to attend Drop-In Career Counseling.
  - Please keep in mind that appointment slots are limited. Scheduling well in advance with the Career Center is highly recommended.
  - It is important that you come to the appointment with questions and a list of schools or programs you are interested in exploring.



# ***Graduate School Resources***

## **Graduate School Handbook**

- The handbook provides a basic overview of the graduate school application process as well as graduate school resources.

## **Eureka & Career Cruising Resources**

- An excellent online resource that can help you locate and research graduate school programs.
- Also provides admission counselor's contact information for you to get your specific questions answered.



# ***Graduate School Resources***

## **Weekly Resume Clinics and Drop-in Counseling**

- Designed to help you create a polished resume or CV for graduate school application.
- Opportunity to ask questions, and finalize your application process



# ***CDS Programs & Events***

## **Employer Interviews**

- An opportunity to help you prepare for graduate school or job interviews with a local employer, staff or faculty.

## **Graduate School Panel**

- Provides advice and insight on the application process and tips to successfully navigate graduate school from admission counselors, current graduate students, & other key staff and faculty members



# ***CDS Programs & Events***

## **Graduate & Professional School Fair**

- 50+ graduate programs/schools attend this annual event to provide students answers and insights.

## **Graduate & Professional School Week**

- Programs and services that includes the fair, panel, workshop, and Drop-In Career Counseling/Resume Clinic to help you prepare for the Fair.



# Resources to help you ...

*Career Development Services can support you in career exploration, planning and preparation!*



Career Development Services [Website](#) Facebook: [go.csuci.edu/cdsFB](https://go.csuci.edu/cdsFB)  
Twitter: [go.csuci.edu/cdstweet](https://go.csuci.edu/cdstweet) LinkedIn: [go.csuci.edu/linkedingroup](https://go.csuci.edu/linkedingroup)

# Questions?


**Visit us during Drop-in Career Counseling**

**Schedule & Availability can be found on our [CDS Website](#)**

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