

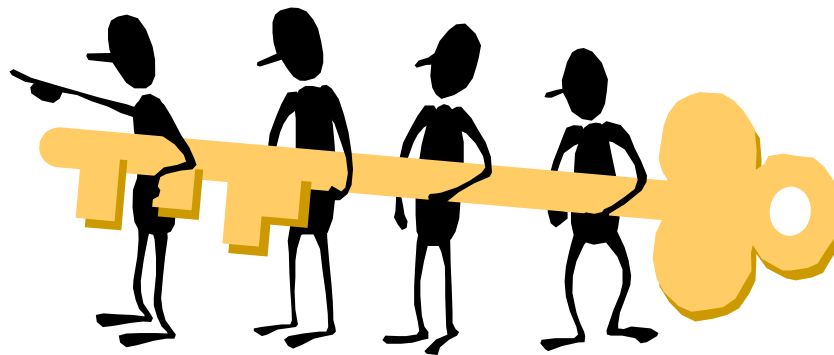
Understanding & Applying to Graduate School





Part I:

Understanding...





Know Yourself

Do I love to learn new things?

What is the difference between a job and career?

What do I want to be doing in 10 years?

What are the right reasons?

Will my parents understand?



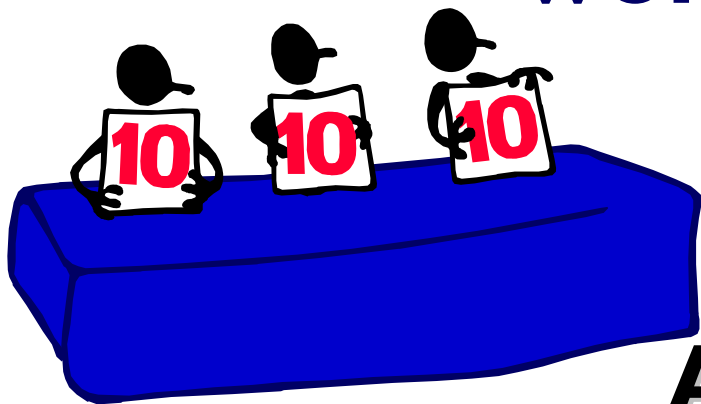


Understanding Graduate Education

- Do I love the field enough to obtain an advanced degree?
- Is an advanced degree required to enter a particular profession or obtain a certain level within the field?
- Can I obtain the financial resources to cover the cost of graduate school?
- Is graduate school worth pursuing?
- Should I complete a Master's degree first?
- Should I work first?
- What can I do to prepare for graduate school?



Is graduate school worth pursuing?



Absolutely!

- As long as you go for the right reasons and are realistically prepared.

A photograph of the UCLA building, featuring a prominent tower with a clock face, set against a clear blue sky with some green trees in the foreground.

What is graduate school?

- “The study of life processes has given me a deep appreciation for the marvel of the living cell. The beauty, the design, and the controls honed by years of evolution, and the ability humans have to gain more and more understanding of life, the earth and the universe, are wonderful to contemplate. I firmly believe that our present and future knowledge of all that we are and what surrounds us depends on the tools and approaches of science.”



Professor Paul Boyer, UCLA, Chemistry, Nobel Prize, 1997



Why should I go to graduate school?

- Learn more about what interests you most
 - reading, problem solving, discovering new knowledge
- Advance your career
 - increase earnings, job satisfaction, responsibility and freedom
- Achieve greater flexibility in your career
 - open doors to jobs you may not have considered
- Remain competitive in the job market
 - undergraduate degrees are not always enough in today's job market

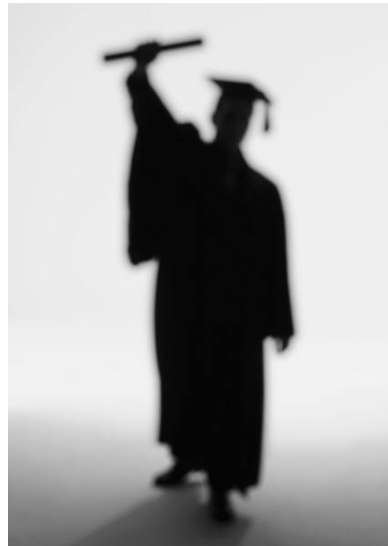


How is graduate school different from my undergraduate education?

- **Specialized Knowledge**
 - Study is concentrated in one area unlike the general exposure offered in undergraduate education
- **Specialized Skill**
 - Requires active participation for successful skill development (critical reading, writing clearly, arguing persuasively, advance research skills, teaching)
- **Independent Experience**
 - Unlike the undergraduate degree track, students must direct their own learning (content, process, timeline, teaching... etc.)



How is graduate education structured?



**Master's Degree
&
Ph.D. / Professional Doctorate**



Master's Degree

- Research-specific and often preparatory for Ph.D.
- A Master's degree usually involves 1 – 3 years of study
- Coursework, thesis or comprehensive exam
- A professional Master's degree offers a specific set of skills needed to practice a particular profession and is usually a “terminal degree.” An internship or fieldwork may be involved.
- A research Master's degree provides research and scholarship experience and may be a final degree or a step toward a doctorate. A thesis or comprehensive exam is required.



Doctorate

Ph.D. / Professional

- Teach and conduct research at the University and College level
- Training in research, discovery of new knowledge, and is the primary credential needed for university-level teaching
- 4-6 years
- Coursework, foreign language, methodological training, written/oral exams, original research project, dissertation

Along with a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) there are two types of Professional Doctorates:

- The M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. degrees involve professional training and licensing in medicine, dentistry, and law. These degrees are considered professional rather than graduate degrees.
- Graduate professional doctorates includes degrees such as the Ed.D., Dr.P.H., and D.M.A.. These degrees are considered graduate professional doctorates and often involve practical training, internships, and final projects, similar to but at a level above that of the professional Master's degree. A dissertation (called a final project at some universities) is required.



Should I complete a Master's degree before pursuing a Ph.D.?

Misinformation:
**Completion of Master's is required
before entering Ph.D. program**

Advantages of MS or MA

- Explore a new area of interest
- Gain research experience and skills
- Familiarize yourself with a department
- Shorter time to completion
- Trying out a graduate experience before committing to a Ph.D. program
- If your UG GPA is low, this is an opportunity to build up your grades and demonstrate your abilities.



Disadvantages of MS or MA

- Longer degree completion time
- Greater financial burden
- Transferring course credit is problematic
- Little financial support offered at Master's level (heavy on student loans)
- If your final goal is a Ph.D. and you are qualified, then apply directly to a Ph.D. program



Should I work before going to graduate school?




If “yes”, choose a job related to your academic career interests

Advantages of Work

- Recharge batteries
- Learn skills college did not teach you
- Develop confidence
- Explore career interest
- Develop motivation
- Financial preparation
- Explore different areas
- Engineering ♥ work experience

Disadvantages of Work

- Lose touch with faculty
- Weak letters of rec.
- Outdated knowledge
- Lower GRE scores
- Lose motivation
- Less competitive?
- If you work, do not stay out for too long: 1-2 years



What can I do to prepare for a graduate education?

- Clarify your career plans and goals
- Research the requirements of your career path
- Maintain a competitive undergraduate GPA
- Study for entrance exams: GRE
- Develop positive relationships with faculty
- Gain invaluable experience by participating in undergraduate research programs
**** available at your campus ****
- Participate in Undergraduate Summer Research
www.gdnet.ucla.edu/asis/srp/srpintro.htm
Begin talking with graduate students in your prospective field of study
- Sign up for National Research Organizations: **SACNAS, ABRCMS, NSBE, SHPE, AISES**



Part II: **Applying to Graduate School**

University of California Graduate Outreach &
Admissions



Applying to Graduate School

- How do I research graduate programs?
- How do I get an application and materials?
- How is the grad application process different?
- When should I apply?
- What are the components of the application?
- How is my application processed?
- How can I politely check my status?
- What if I am denied?
- Pay attention to deadlines!



How do I research graduate programs?

- Read institution and department websites
- Personally visit departments and campuses
- Ask your faculty for recommendations, provide them with your profile (statement of purpose, transcripts, c.v.)
- Schedule brief phone interviews with faculty and grad students
- Utilize bibliographies on research publications
- Consult professional organizations
- Ask questions!
- Be professional!
- Be polite!



How do I get an application and materials?



Apply Online

Visit Departmental Websites

Most schools now have applications online.

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How is the grad application process different?

~different yet similar~

- Decentralized among UC campuses
 - You apply to each campus separately
- Decentralized among departments
 - Your application must specify an academic department
- Role of the Department vs. Graduate Division
 - Departments make “decisions” and Graduate Divisions handle administrative details
- Comprehensive process



When should I apply?

- **Spring of Junior Year (Information Gathering)**
 - Begin researching graduate programs
 - Specific Faculty, Research Centers, Graduate Students' areas of study
 - Visit websites, order catalogs and publications
 - Research examination test dates, fees and fee waivers
- **Summer after Junior Year (Materials Preparation)**
 - Identify specific department deadlines and requirements
 - Get research experience
 - Begin preparing application materials (letters of rec., statements, etc.)
 - Register and take the required examinations (GRE, etc.)
- **Fall of Senior Year (Application Submission)**
 - Decide where to apply—to more than one university
 - Complete application materials and submit by required deadline(s)

What are the components of the application?

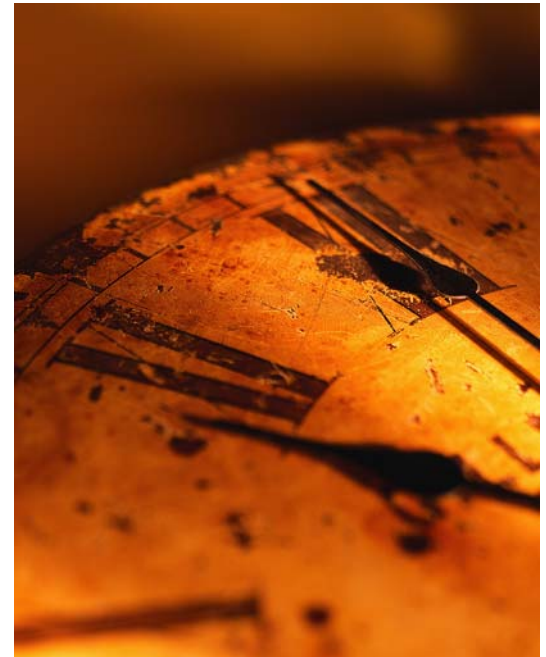
- ✓ **Application Form**
- ✓ **Statement of Purpose**
- ✓ **Letters of Recommendation**
- ✓ **Exam Scores**
- ✓ **Transcripts**
- ✓ **Application Fee**
- ✓ **(Supplemental Materials)**



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Application Advice

- Be Informed – Plan ahead!
- Be On Time
- Be Accurate
- Be Complete – All forms!
- Be Assertive – Ask questions!
- Be Collaborative – Get a mentor!
- Be Persistent – Apply again!
- Be Patient – Be forgiving to yourself!





Helpful Websites

Continuing the Journey

<http://www.ucop.edu/journey>

UC Berkeley's Career Center

<http://career.berkeley.edu>

UC Davis's Career Center

<http://icc.ucdavis.edu/>

General Grad School Information (lists areas of study)

www.gradschools.com

Interactive Grad School Information

<http://www.phds.org>

Project 1000 (assists w/ application & GRE waivers)

<http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/p1000/>

UC Irvine's Summer Research (go to "off-campus")

<http://uop.uci.edu>

CSU San Marcos (detailed article)

http://www.csusm.edu/CATSS/gradschool_info.htm

UCSC Online Personality Assessments

<http://www2.ucsc.edu/careers/student/careerplan.html>





Thank You!
Hope to see you at UCLA



Created by Dr. Barbara K. Ige, May 2006