

# Graduate School and You

A GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS



# **Graduate School and You**

A Guide  
for Prospective  
Graduate Students



## **Graduate School and You: A guide for prospective graduate students**

By

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# FOREWORD

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**A**s you contemplate your future, I encourage you to consider graduate school. Individuals pursue a graduate education for many reasons. They are driven by intellectual curiosity, by the love of knowledge, and by a desire to improve themselves. Most are also looking to expand their opportunities for a rewarding career. There are many options to consider as you seek out the best graduate program for you. There are certificates as well as master's and doctoral degrees offered in hundreds of fields, and there are a wide variety of institutions with quality graduate programs. Whatever the subject, graduate degrees and certificates open doors.

The path to a successful graduate experience requires careful planning and preparation. To take advantage of the exciting opportunities that a graduate degree or certificate presents, you will need to know more about what graduate school is, how to apply to a graduate program, what funding options are available to you, and where to find further information. The information provided here, along with additional material available on the CGS website <[www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org)>, will help you as you explore the possibilities of graduate education.

I wish you success and good luck as you weigh your options and continue your education.

Debra W. Stewart  
President  
Council of Graduate Schools

# WHY GRADUATE SCHOOL?

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If you enjoy reading, problem-solving, discovering new facts, and exploring new ideas, you should consider going to graduate school. Your ideas become your major asset. You can decide what you want to do and make it happen. Graduate education gives you a chance to learn more about the things that interest you most and to develop your interests and skills into a full-time career. In that sense, graduate school can give you the opportunity to take control of your life.

A graduate degree can influence how fast and how far you can advance in your career. An advanced degree can increase your earning power and job satisfaction, the amount of responsibility you assume, and the freedom you have to make your own decisions. A graduate degree can also give you greater flexibility to change careers. By earning an advanced degree, you demonstrate your ability to master complex topics and carry out projects on your own initiative. These qualities are attractive to employers, and may make it possible for you to find jobs in fields other than those you have studied.

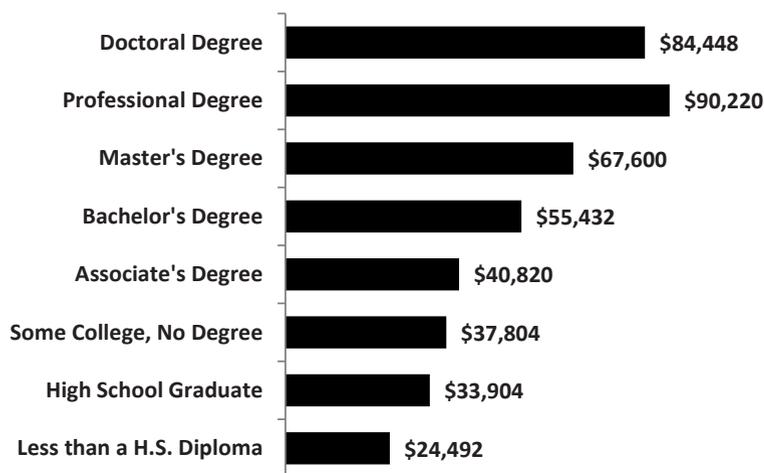
In many fields, especially technology, teaching, and business, the baccalaureate degree is an entry-level degree. As more people go to college, a bachelor's degree has become the type of entry-level credential that the high school diploma used to be. Researchers tell us that 60 percent of college freshmen plan to get an advanced degree. Higher-level positions and decision-making power often go to people who have gone beyond undergraduate education.

If financing a graduate degree is a problem, consider that many graduate students cover part of their costs with grants or fellowships, or earn money through part-time teaching or research. It is important to research the earnings potential for the degree you are considering pursuing to make sure you will be able to pay back any loans. But borrowing money,

if necessary, can become an investment in your future income level. As you move up the educational ladder, the salary you can command usually moves up as well. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that annual median salaries for those with a master's degree are more than \$12,000 per year higher than for those with a bachelor's degree, and those with doctoral and advanced professional degrees earn approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000 per year more than those with a bachelor's degree. The figure below shows how income is affected by level of education.

Figure 1.

### Median Annual Earnings in 2012

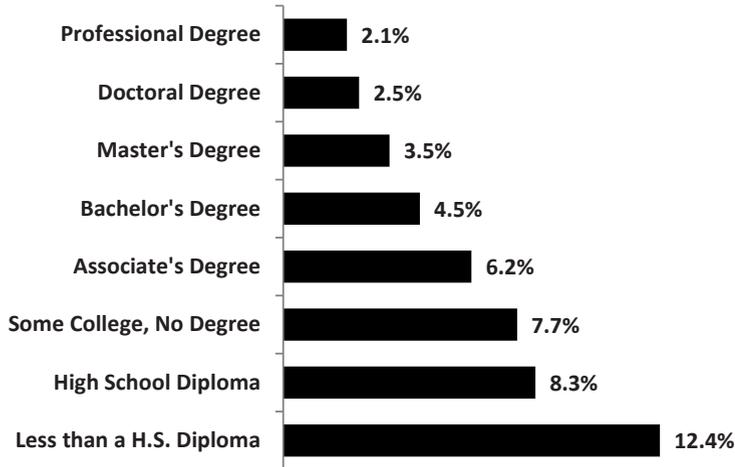


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey* (2012 data)

Those who hold graduate degrees are also less likely to be unemployed than those who do not. U.S. Census Bureau data show that the unemployment rate for holders of master's degree is 3.5% compared with 4.5% for those with only bachelor's degrees, while unemployment rates among those with doctorates (2.5%) and advanced professional degrees (2.1%) are approximately half that of those with only a bachelor's degree.

Figure 2.

### Unemployment by Educational Attainment in 2012



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey* (2012 data), < [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_001.htm) >

Of course, aside from the financial benefits such as higher salaries and higher rates of employment, a graduate education is its own reward. Many choose to pursue advanced study because they love to learn.

# WHAT IS GRADUATE EDUCATION?

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**G**raduate programs provide you with specialized knowledge through concentrated study in one area. In this respect graduate education differs from undergraduate study, which introduces you to a wide range of subjects, even though you major in one. In your undergraduate programs, you gained certain general intellectual skills—reading critically, writing clearly, and arguing persuasively.

A graduate program is more focused on a specific area of interest and on acquiring specialized skills for a profession or to do advanced research. However, it does not merely entail an additional number of courses. It also requires active participation in research and practice. Frequently internships and/or field experiences that offer opportunities to practice professional skills are also a part of the curriculum.

There are two levels of degrees, master's and doctoral, and each level has different types of degrees, professional or research. There are also graduate certificate programs which are short-term and highly specific or specialized in nature.

*Graduate Certificate Programs.* Certificate programs are often designed to meet specific employment or career needs and generally require two to three semesters to complete. Some are designed to be taken after completing a bachelor's degree; others are taken concurrently with a graduate program or even after completing a graduate degree.

*Master's Degree Programs.* Master's degrees may focus on research, professional practice, or both. At the master's level, a professional degree gives you a specific set of skills needed to practice a particular profession. The professional master's degree often involves an internship, fieldwork, or a final project, while the research master's degree provides experience in research and scholarship and often requires a written thesis, and may be either the final degree or a step toward entry into a doctoral program.

## WHAT IS GRADUATE EDUCATION?

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The professional master's degree may be in science, education, business, engineering, the fine arts, nursing, social work, or some other area of professional activity. It will prepare you for a career in a particular area or will allow you to enhance your skills in your existing career.

The master's degree in a research area can do the same, depending on your career aspirations and the area of the degree. You may have to write a thesis or take a comprehensive exam or do both. The degree involves less commitment of time and money than does a doctorate, but it can lead to a doctorate or to a career with greater responsibility and better pay than you might be able to have with a baccalaureate degree alone.

The Professional Science Master's (PSM) is designed to combine the scientific training necessary to advance and excel in science with courses in management, policy or law. PSM programs emphasize the written and verbal communication, leadership, and team-building skills required in professional settings.

A professional master's degree usually takes one or two years of full-time study; a research master's degree typically takes at least two years and sometimes longer. Some students opt to study on a part-time basis because of work or family obligations. Depending on the number of credit hours taken and university policies on time limits to complete the degree, it may take two to five years to complete the degree.

*Doctoral Degree Programs.* At the doctoral level there are also professional degrees and research degrees. The most common professional degrees are the M.D. for medical practice and the J.D. for law. These degrees are highly specialized, and more detailed information can be obtained from the Association of American Medical Colleges <<http://www.aamc.org>> and the Association of American Law Schools <<http://www.aals.org>>. There are also some professionally-oriented graduate degrees, in fields such as physical therapy, audiology and nursing practice, which focus on field experiences in place of research.

A research doctoral degree typically involves both coursework and a major research project. Usually four to seven years of full-time study is needed to complete a Ph.D. or other research doctorate, depending on the field of study. The first two or three years usually involve classes, seminars, and directed reading to give you comprehensive knowledge of an academic field. In the sciences you may also begin independent research projects as part of a laboratory group. This period of study is followed by

## WHAT IS GRADUATE EDUCATION?

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written and/or oral examinations that test your knowledge and prepare you for your dissertation.

Successful completion of the exams (sometimes called “comprehensives” or “comps”) and formulation of a research project lead you to the stage of candidacy. As a candidate for a doctoral degree, you and your institution agree that you will work on a project that involves original research and report on the research through a dissertation. Depending on the field, this project often takes one to four years of work to complete. In some fields, faculty members may guide students through the process of devising the research project and analyzing and evaluating the results. In other fields, students may be expected to define their own topics and conduct the necessary research with less direct supervision from faculty advisors. Because work on a dissertation is intended to give you the necessary training and skills for a career in research, independence is often encouraged at this stage of your studies.

# PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

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**A** baccalaureate degree with solid grades usually serves as a prerequisite to entry into a graduate research or professional degree program. A degree in the same or a related field may or may not be required for admission to a graduate program. Some programs require a strong undergraduate foundation in mathematics and science or other coursework related to the field you chose to study. For some professional degree programs, it may be wise to spend some time in a job after you earn your undergraduate degree before applying to graduate school. Good work experience, positive recommendations from employers, supportive evaluations from faculty, and strong academics are all indicators that you would do well in graduate or professional school. Your score on a standardized test such as the GRE (Graduate Record Examination), LSAT (Law School Admissions Test), MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test), or GMAT (Graduate Management Aptitude Test) may also be an important indicator of a successful graduate career, although good scores alone are not a complete measure.

For programs where you would build on an undergraduate major in a field that is changing rapidly (such as computer science or biological science), you should seriously consider going directly to graduate school to keep up with the most current advances in the field. In many cases, this will mean applying directly to a doctoral program. Successful completion of a master's degree can also be a way to demonstrate you are prepared for doctoral study. A master's program may also make sense if you want to make a significant change in academic field from your undergraduate program.

# CAREER OPTIONS WITH A GRADUATE DEGREE

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**T**he decision to go to graduate school is often a crucial point in a career path. Sometimes the acquisition of a graduate degree is required to continue in a field. On other occasions, the advanced degree provides you with additional credentials to leverage advancement in your field. Or it could allow you to switch occupations and even careers.

- ◆ A master's degree in a specific field usually gives you access to advanced career opportunities in that field, although many graduate degree-holders parlay their new credentials into positions in related fields or even some that are quite different than the degree itself. Some employers are inflexible when it comes to the kind of advanced degree-holders they hire; in some sectors, retraining cross-over workers, even those with master's degrees, is not as efficient as hiring those who are educated specifically for the profession. In other professions, there may be state or federal regulations requiring that hiring be done only "in field." In still others, there may be such a high number of people vying for positions, that only the most stellar of those with an unrelated degree escape the first "cut."

There are industries, however, that are more and more interested in diversification of their workforce's education, and so different educational backgrounds are appealing. All of these things are considerations for you as you decide if a graduate degree is what you need to advance or change your career.

- ◆ Certainly a professional degree is more specifically targeted toward advancement along a particular career track. The J.D. is almost always a prerequisite to sitting for a bar examination

and practicing law in most states. The education and experience that lead to M.D. and D.D.S. degrees are necessary for careers as medical doctors or dentists. Depending on the state in which you live, a graduate degree may be required for licensure to practice for some professional occupations such as teaching, social work, or professional accounting.

- ◆ The Ph.D. and Ed.D. are teaching and research degrees, and they provide a wide range of options both in college and university teaching and in corporations, government service, and administration. The doctorate gives a person skills for independent thinking and problem solving—a high level of ability to address problems and develop solutions. It requires a high degree of initiative, independence, and self-discipline. For people who are interested in ideas, creative thinking, and problem solving, the doctorate offers great challenges and great rewards.
- ◆ Many recipients of the Ph.D. pursue careers in research and teaching in a college or university setting. But in several fields, particularly in science and engineering, people with doctoral degrees find employment with corporations where research and development of new products or services are important or with government agencies where the skill to analyze large amounts of complex data is essential. Statisticians may work for the Census Bureau and a wide variety of federal agencies and financial institutions. Psychologists may work for advertising firms, historians for museums. Chemists, engineers, and physicists may work in science-based industries or government-funded research laboratories. And Humanists may work in consultancy firms, museums, and non-profit organizations. The doctoral degree opens a wide variety of career options.

# MAKING THE DECISION

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**T**he first step is to make an honest evaluation of your own strengths, both intellectually and in terms of personality. What do you enjoy doing and why? Are you intellectually curious? Do you enjoy arguing about ideas? Do you succeed through hard work and attention to detail?

Although there is no ideal profile for a graduate student, intelligence, initiative, and self-discipline are crucial qualities for success. Strong motivation and persistence are very important. The ability to establish good working relationships with other people is also important, since your career in graduate school depends heavily on following the guidance of your faculty mentors and benefiting from the support of other students in your program.

The next step is an evaluation of your career objectives. A master's degree requires a relatively short-term investment of time and money that leads generally to increased salary, greater mobility, more responsibility, and greater job security. A certificate program requires a much shorter period of time, but is limited in its scope and generally directed toward specific employment requirements. If one pursues an academic career, the doctorate is a serious commitment to a lifetime of research or professional practice. The doctorate involves a significant commitment of time and money, but it ultimately offers the greatest degree of freedom and flexibility to pursue your own interests and shape your own career.

A career in college or university research, which usually requires a doctorate, also offers the opportunity to explore new ideas and to work with students. Like research, teaching keeps you constantly involved in learning and growing intellectually. Teaching is a very people-intensive activity. It involves the exchange of ideas, and the satisfaction of seeing students come to understand things they didn't understand before. If you have had the experience of the light bulb going on over your head when you have just learned something, you can appreciate the satisfaction of the

person who showed you how to turn on the light.

Getting a graduate degree equips you for intellectual entrepreneurship. The term “entrepreneur” is widely used in the world of business and describes someone with the ability to turn an idea into a useful service or product that has a wide market. In the academic world, you as an entrepreneur can receive financial support for ideas and to produce new knowledge. If you teach at a research university that offers Ph.D. degrees, you can guide graduate students in their own research. You can seek grants from your own institution, foundations, or government agencies to help support your own research and that of your students. In the world of business and government, you will have the skills to develop new products or evaluate and change existing policies to get things done in a better way. You can deal with complex problems and come up with solutions. Your work may lead to patents on new inventions, or it may lead to changes in policies and established practices. Whatever career you may want to pursue, an advanced degree may make you more effective and marketable.

# FINANCING A GRADUATE EDUCATION

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**H**ow to pay for graduate school is the major question for most people. There are three basic ways to finance your graduate education, depending upon the kind of program in which you are interested: fellowships and traineeships, teaching and research assistantships, and personal resources (such as savings and loans). The university you are considering is the best place for information on financial support through the graduate school, the graduate program or the financial aid office.

Even if you are able to finance their graduate education “out of your own pockets” or with the help of family resources, you should understand the other options. In the case of traineeships and teaching assistantships, these often involve the acquisition of skills and knowledge critical to a successful graduate school career.

- ◆ Fellowships or traineeships for graduate study are generally awarded on the basis of academic merit. They are intended to attract the most highly qualified students to graduate programs. They can be either portable (offered by an organization or agency for study at an institution of the student’s choice) or institutional (offered by a university or department for study at the specific institution or department).

Fellowships and traineeships generally provide payment of tuition and a stipend for living expenses. Institutional fellowships are awarded either by departments or by a central fellowship office in an institution. Most are based on academic merit, although there may be some institutional awards intended for certain people, such as children of veterans or people in a

certain field of study. Even restricted fellowships generally involve some academic merit. Institutions actively recruiting students from populations underrepresented in their student body may have special fellowship programs to attract them.

Some of the major portable fellowship programs are listed at the end of *Graduate School and You*. Since these awards attract applicants across the country, they are highly competitive.

- ◆ Teaching assistantships may involve leading a discussion section, supervising a laboratory, grading papers, or meeting with students. The typical appointment involves responsibilities of 15-20 hours a week. A teaching assistant helps teach undergraduate students in return for a stipend (and sometimes fee or tuition waiver or reduction) that helps support his/her own graduate studies.
- ◆ Research assistantships are available especially in science and engineering fields. Research assistants are engaged in laboratories to assist faculty in research projects. Research assistants also receive a stipend and may receive a reduction or waiver in fees or tuition. Advanced students working on their theses or dissertations are often being supported by stipends to do their own individual projects.

Some institutions guarantee a certain number of years of financial support for the most promising graduate students. Others will not guarantee support but may give reasonable assurance that teaching or research appointments will be available throughout the student's time in graduate school.

Although fellowships, traineeships, and teaching and research assistantships may be available for master's degree students, they are more limited at that level of study, and are more likely to be reserved for doctoral students. These types of funding opportunities offer more than financial support; they are valuable

ways to build skills and develop experience in your field, which will improve your knowledge and enhance your stature.

While not directly related to an academic program, there are other positions on campus, such as residence hall counselor or student advisor, which provide reduced tuition or room and board and sometimes offer a stipend. These positions provide valuable transferable skills, and they may help you fund your advanced degree. The department or the graduate school office that admits you may have information about this kind of employment.

- ◆ Grants and loans are an important source of support for graduate students. This aid may come from the institution, the state, the federal government, or sometimes your employer.

The federal government has a substantial interest in and commitment to federal student aid programs. Each year members of Congress and the administration labor to fund the various programs adequately. Since there is a limited amount of money appropriated for each program, many are need-based.

Need-based aid requires that applicants be certified by their academic institutions as having income and asset levels that fall within certain limitations. Current federal regulations make virtually all graduate students independent of parental support unless they are claimed as dependents on their parents' federal income tax return. For graduate students who are not claimed as dependents, parental income is not considered in determining need and eligibility for federal financial aid programs. For people who have been working, their salary in the year before they enter graduate school is the basis for determining need. A percentage of that salary has to be considered as an asset available to the student to pay for graduate school expenses.

The Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education provides descriptions of the types of programs that

are offered for graduate and professional students through its website at <[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)>. Or you may call the Federal Student Aid Information Center toll free at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) to obtain copies of information that you need.

A basic resource about financial aid is the Department of Education publication, *Funding Education Beyond High School*. This booklet, available at <<http://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/funding-your-education.pdf>>, offers general information on student eligibility, financial need, dependency status, and how to apply. In addition, all of the following aid programs are described:

- Federal Pell Grants (available for limited post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs)
- Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) and Direct Loans
  - Stafford Loans
  - FFEL Program
- Campus-Based Programs
  - Federal Work-Study
  - Federal Perkins Loans

Although federal loans may carry lower interest rates than conventional bank loans, they are still debt and are not subsidized by the federal government. If you borrow responsibly, however, the debt you accrue in acquiring a graduate degree can be considered an investment in your future earning power.

Some employers offer a tuition assistance plan. Often this may be a reimbursement of tuition, and sometimes books, based on successful completion of a course. If you are working, you should contact your Human Resources office to inquire about educational benefits.

The major investments that you make in a graduate degree are time and the income you may forego by being in school full time, if that is the course you choose. The ultimate reward is the satisfaction of doing what you like to do, having a great deal of freedom, and getting paid for it.

### **Financial Aid Support Statistics**

During academic year 2011–2012

- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of all master’s-level students and 86% of doctoral students received some type of financial support.
- About 45% of master’s-level students and nearly one-third (32%) of doctoral students, received loans.
- One-quarter of master’s level students and 13% of all doctoral students received financial support from their employers.
- Thirty-one percent of doctorate recipients in 2011 were primarily supported by a research assistantship or traineeship, 28% by a fellowship or grant, and 20% by a teaching assistantship.

Source: [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2012menu\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2012menu_tables.asp)  
National Science Foundation, *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2011*, [http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/data\\_table.cfm](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/data_table.cfm)

# CHOOSING A GRADUATE SCHOOL

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**Y**ou need to do your research carefully in order to choose the school that will best suit your needs and talents. There are over 1,800 institutions in the United States that offer graduate degrees; the variety is enormous. Some are highly specialized and offer only one kind of degree. Some may offer one or two professional master's degrees, often in education or business administration. Some institutions offer master's degrees only, while others offer doctorates in selected fields. Major research universities offer master's degrees and doctorates in a wide range of fields.

There are general guides to graduate programs available online and in book form and a few are listed at the end of *Graduate School and You*. Most college and university libraries and career centers and many public libraries will have some of these publications. College libraries, counseling or career centers, and admissions offices generally maintain collections of college and university catalogs. Websites are also easily accessible for most institutions and can be an excellent source of information.

You will probably have certain personal preferences regarding the kind of institution you attend. Size and location are two factors that often influence a person's decision about where to go to school. There are advantages to both large and small institutions. Location is important if you believe you cannot make a major move because of personal or family concerns.

The most important factor should be how well the graduate program of an institution fits your particular interests, academic background, and goals. Although a university may offer a doctorate in your field, it may not have a program in the branch of that field that interests you. For example, some psychology departments specialize in clinical psychology and offer only a few courses in behavioral psychology; in others behavioral

psychology courses predominate. General guides like those listed at the end of *Graduate School and You* will tell you where programs are, while university catalogs will tell you about the emphasis of specific departments.

One way to do research on graduate programs is to talk to faculty members at your own undergraduate institution about where they completed their graduate work and what they know about graduate programs in their fields. Most faculty members enjoy the chance to talk with their students about their plans for graduate study. It is highly likely that they can recommend faculty at other institutions with whom you should study as well as recommend programs that might suit you. Getting to know your faculty members in this way not only provides you with valuable information about graduate schools, but it also helps the faculty members know you better. This will give them context as they write letters of recommendation for you.

As you narrow your interests in a graduate program, it is important to determine the prerequisites for various programs. For a professional degree, work experience or overall academic preparation are often as important as specific coursework. For a research degree, however, there almost always are areas of subject matter and certain skills that you must have mastered at the undergraduate level. The prerequisites may be very specific, particularly in the sciences.

Another important factor to determine is the selectivity of the program to which you want to apply. How many people apply to a given department or program, and how many are accepted? As the number of applicants grows in comparison with the number of “seats” open in the entering class, the selection rigor increases. It is often the case that the more selective the programs, the more likely it is that only the applications of the most highly qualified will be accepted.

Your background is, of course, a function of the kind of institution from which you received your baccalaureate degree and your own academic success there. If your institution did not offer the range of courses as prerequisites for a very demanding graduate program, your preparation for graduate school may not be up to the level of other applicants. Assess your preparation and your intellectual potential candidly to determine not only how well you can compete in a rigorous application process, but also how well you might perform after you enter a highly competitive graduate

program. In the long run, your comfort with your graduate program will have a great effect on your satisfaction and performance.

Finally, keep in mind that, unlike applying for admission for an undergraduate degree, you are applying for admission to a department or specific program. At most institutions, your application is evaluated and you will be recommended for admission by the department or program and its faculty members, rather than by a central admissions office. You should be more than casually familiar with the department to which you are applying. Spend time learning about the reputation of the department and its faculty. Evaluate their credentials. Determine how often courses listed in the course bulletin are taught and by whom. If you can learn about it, be critical about issues like faculty turnover, accreditation, degree completion rates, and the reputation of the department and its faculty. Many graduate schools now provide information about individual programs on their website, including data on admissions, faculty characteristics, average time to complete the program, and job placement.

If at all possible, you should visit campuses where you are interested in studying. Call the appropriate department or program in advance to see if you can make appointments to visit with faculty members whose work you know, or who have been recommended to you by faculty at your undergraduate institution. Ask questions of students currently in the program. Institutions may invite prospective students to visit the program and may cover travel costs. If you need to cover the costs of these visits yourself, though your budget may constrain you from visiting every school in which you are interested, the cost of visiting your top schools may be a wise investment.

Graduate schools are interested in recruiting qualified applicants for their programs. To assist in the process and to help students locate programs that meet their needs, the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board has developed the GRE Search Service, which is offered at no charge to prospective graduate students and does not require registration for GRE tests. One benefit of registering for a search service is that you may hear from institutions you may not have otherwise considered, thus giving you more information about options for your graduate education.

For more information about the GRE Search Service, visit the GRE website < <http://www.ets.org/gre> > or consult the GRE *Information and*

## CHOOSING A GRADUATE SCHOOL

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*Registration Bulletin*, which is available online at <[http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre\\_info\\_reg\\_bulletin.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_info_reg_bulletin.pdf)> or in college counseling centers or by writing to the Educational Testing Service, P. O. Box 6000, Princeton, NJ 08541-6000.

# APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Once you have made the decision to go to graduate school, the next step, of course, is to apply. For graduate school, you apply to a specific program or department, even though you may send your materials to a central office. Your application may be evaluated both at the program or department level and at the institutional level. Graduate school applications may be electronic (online) or may be in a paper format. Some graduate schools will offer both options.

Some students choose to apply to at least two or three institutions that have programs that fit their interests. Don't be afraid to set your goals high if you believe you have the ability to succeed in a demanding program. It bears repeating: be honest with yourself as you evaluate your plans for graduate study.

One strategy is to apply to several programs in comparable universities that appeal to you. Another approach is to apply to different types of institutions. For example you might wish to apply to at least one highly prestigious and highly competitive research university as well as to a major university with fairly large graduate programs where you feel you have a reasonable chance of being accepted. Whatever your approach, as insurance, you should probably also apply to an institution where you feel that your application will be received favorably. If you are offered admission at several institutions, you will have a choice of which offer to accept.

Applying to graduate school can be time-consuming, but if you do it carefully and thoughtfully, you improve the chances that your application will be accepted by a program of your choosing. Since application fees range from \$25 to \$100 and up, a thoughtful approach to the process may help you get the most out of the money that you have allotted.

### **Fee Waivers for Applicants from Underrepresented and Low-income Populations**

Many institutions offer application fee waivers to students from low-income populations and others who have overcome adversity or whom they are actively recruiting to diversify their student body. If you are a member of a group that has been traditionally underrepresented in graduate programs, you should inquire about application fee waivers. Graduate school bulletins, catalogs, and websites generally contain this information. Many institutions provide application fee waivers to applicants who have participated in pre-graduate programs targeted specifically to first-generation, underrepresented, or low-income students (e.g., McNair Scholars).

### **Parts to an Application**

Each part of an application is important. Whether the application is online or in paper form, it often has five parts:

1. The application itself which asks for personal data;
2. A statement of purpose and/or a personal statement—why you want to be admitted to the program to which you are applying;
3. Letters of recommendation or recommendation forms. Depending on the university to which you are applying, these may be paper-based or may be written via access to a secure web site. Some institutions use a “common application” shared with other institutions to streamline students’ applications to multiple institutions. Common applications are used by some professions (such as law) to make it easier for recommenders who are asked by a student to provide letters to more than one institution;
4. Official transcripts of college-level academic work sent by each institution where the credit was earned. If the university asks for

full academic disclosure, you will need to submit all transcripts for all college credit ever earned;

5. A report of any standardized test scores (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, Miller Analogies, etc.) required by the program to which you are applying.

### **The Application Form**

Whether online or on paper, there is always a form that asks for the essential information that the institution will use to file and keep track of your application. As soon as you have identified the schools to which you will apply, you should check each institution's website; you probably can download the application or submit one electronically. It should be filled out clearly. Be consistent in spelling out your full, legal name on all forms.

Each school's application is different, so you really must pay attention to the form and its instructions. The reviewers of applications at a particular school are accustomed to following the pattern of their school's form. They compare and contrast applications using the information supplied on the forms. If you fail to follow instructions or if you fail to include a piece of information altogether, you will put your application at a disadvantage. Go over the instructions carefully; if you have questions, contact the university admissions office.

### **The Statement of Purpose and Personal Statement**

The statement of purpose and the personal statement are extremely important parts of the application because they give the faculty assessing your application their most significant impression of you as an individual. Faculty members are interested in your motivation, intellectual skills, and suitability for study in their program. What are your intentions for graduate study? Do you write clearly? Do your interests really fit those of the department or school? Can you communicate your ideas effectively? Are there special things about you that set you apart from other applicants and make you particularly desirable as a student?

You may want to consider writing a general statement of purpose as

the first step in considering graduate school. Setting your ideas and goals down on paper should help you clarify your thinking. If you can get things down in no more than three double-spaced pages, you probably have a good idea of what you really want to do. The statement should reflect your own intellectual development. Once you have a general statement, you can tailor it to fit programs to which you are applying by talking about the reasons you chose the program—how it fits your academic and research background and interests. The application materials may give you a specific format for the statement of purpose or ask you to respond to specific questions. Be sure to follow directions and design your statement to fit the constraints of the application's instructions.

The academic statement of purpose is also a good vehicle to use to approach faculty members for recommendations. Make an appointment with a faculty member to discuss your statement and ask for comments before you put it into final form. Also ask for a letter of recommendation after you have had the discussion. You will have valuable feedback on your statement, and you will be demonstrating how seriously you are interested in graduate school.

A personal statement may be required in addition to an academic statement of purpose. Here, one strategy is to discuss the points in your life when you made decisions and what influenced them—the decision on a college major, the decision on a career goal, the family members and role models who inspired you. Your personal statement might also describe how cultural, financial, educational or other life experiences and challenges have influenced your decision to pursue a graduate degree in your chosen field.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

While some programs may permit you to submit letters from community leaders, employers, or others who have known you for a period of time or in a professional capacity, most want to hear more from faculty. Letters from faculty members are very important because your teachers are in the best position to assess your ability to do advanced academic work. Obviously you will want to approach faculty members in whose classes you have done well. You want people who know you personally, hence

the importance of talking with your teachers, as you take their classes and when you seek advice on possible graduate programs. Since initiative and independent thinking are the hallmarks of a good graduate student, you need to display these characteristics at the undergraduate level, and you can do that by asking intelligent questions in class, discussing your exams with faculty members during office hours, and seeking advice about your future career.

A good way to get to know faculty members is by doing research with them. Many institutions have programs that recruit undergraduate students to serve as research assistants. There are two distinct advantages to these types of opportunities. They promote good working relationships between students and faculty members, and students have the chance to gain valuable experience doing the kind of research that characterizes graduate work.

If you haven't compiled a reference file as an undergraduate or if you have been out of school for a while, you should contact faculty members by phone, e-mail, letter, or, if possible, in person to remind them of who you are and to discuss your plans. This will be a useful "warm up" before you ask for a letter of recommendation. Be prepared for these discussions. Have a copy of your resume ready to share with your recommender.

Make the application process as easy as you can for the recommender. For instance, on virtually all recommendation forms, there is a portion that asks for the applicant's name and other vital information. Before you leave this kind of form with the recommender, first be sure that you complete the "your" portion of the form. Make a decision about the access you wish to have to the letter of recommendation; you will see this reflected in the waiver statement (see the next section). Provide the recommender with a copy of your resume. If you can, supply an appropriately-addressed, stamped envelope to use to mail the form when it's completed. If the recommendation is submitted on line, let the recommender know what they need to do to submit it.

### **Waiver of Right to Review Recommendations**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides graduate school applicants with certain safeguards concerning access to

their admissions information. In applying this legislation, therefore, an institution may give you the option to indicate whether or not you wish to have access to letters of recommendation should you matriculate. This option is usually displayed on the form that the recommender fills out on your behalf. For a particular institution, you may waive your right to view your recommendations or you may choose not to waive your right to read your recommendations. Whichever option you choose, it should have no effect on your admission chances.

Most students, however, waive their right to review recommendations since they know their recommenders well and have discussed with them what their letters of recommendation will contain.

### **Standardized Test Scores**

When you look at the requirements for admission to a graduate program, you should determine whether you need to take a test such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or a test appropriate to your professional area, such as the LSAT, MCAT, or GMAT. Not all programs require standardized test scores, but many do. For the GRE it is important to note whether a specific Subject Test is required in addition to the General Test.

For some students the idea of a nationally administered standardized test is daunting. But step back and consider the whole picture. First, test scores are only one of several factors that admission committees consider in reviewing your application. The test is not a “make or break” situation. Second, it is possible to prepare for the test—not to learn the content of the test, but to practice test-taking skills and develop familiarity with the kinds of questions that might be asked. Working through a number of test examples shows you how the instructions and problems are set up and allows you to develop strategies for approaching each section of the test.

Perhaps the most intimidating aspect of standardized tests is that they are timed. You have only a certain amount of time to complete each section. Therefore, as you work your way through examples, set an alarm clock and work against it. Get used to working under pressure. If you are familiar with the format of the test and the instructions for each section, you will be able to move along quickly to the actual question sets.

The GRE General Test is offered as a computer-based test in the

U.S., Canada, and many other countries. Paper-based General Test administrations are offered in areas of the world where computer-based testing is not available. For information about GRE tests and test registration, visit the GRE website < <http://www.ets.org/gre> > or obtain the GRE Information and Registration Bulletin.

ETS makes test preparation material available free of charge to those who register for a GRE test < [http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare?WT.ac=grehome\\_testprep\\_a\\_121008](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare?WT.ac=grehome_testprep_a_121008) >. In addition, the GRE program offers additional test preparation services and there are for-profit businesses that offer test-taking workshops and materials. Your college or university may also offer test-taking workshops, so check with your career center or testing center.

For entry into a doctoral program, early in the fall of the preceding year is usually a good time to take tests, receive scores, and assemble application materials. Many master's degree programs offer staggered or rolling admissions deadlines throughout the year, so you may have greater flexibility in terms of when to complete a standardized test requirement. It could take up to about two weeks to report test scores. Don't wait until the last minute.

## **Transcripts and Grades**

Graduate programs require official transcripts of all college work that you have undertaken. Even one or two courses taken at another institution should be reported via a transcript. Order transcripts from all of your postsecondary institutions early in the fall.

Institutions usually set a minimum undergraduate grade point average for admission to graduate school, generally a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Some graduate programs may admit students whose grades fall below that average on an exceptional basis. (This is known as a conditional admission). Your undergraduate grade point average is a strong indicator of your ability to do graduate coursework, and admissions committees consider it carefully. They may look not only at your grade point average, but also at the rigor and quality of your undergraduate institution. They will look closely at the grades you earned in your major, particularly at upper division courses in that subject. Patterns of improvement could be

significant if you did not start out strongly.

If your grade point average is not outstanding, do not despair. If it is somewhat below a B average, there is still hope. If it is below a B-, be concerned. You may be able to explain unusual circumstances that affected your grades when you write your statement of purpose. You can stress that your grades improved dramatically (if they did). Again, be realistic in assessing what your grades actually show about your academic ability and your own self-discipline and motivation.

### **Applying for Financial Assistance**

An application for financial aid will be available from campus financial aid offices. You may have to apply separately for fellowships and for loans. Some institutions have their own forms that you submit directly to them, and some have forms that go to some central processing agency.

Read financial aid materials carefully to make sure you meet deadlines and provide all relevant information.

File documents on time. When aid money is limited, institutions tend to use deadlines as a way of limiting the pool of applicants. Make copies of everything that you send in, and you might go so far as to get post office receipts for your mailings if the deadline is a postmark date. Many grant and scholarship applications must be completed in the fall. Planning ahead is key.

The major forms of financial support have already been described. You should find out as much as you can from the department to which you are applying about their graduate students are funded. Professional degree programs generally are more oriented toward loans, with the argument being that you will increase your earning power in a relatively short time and be in a good position to pay back the money. For Ph.D. programs, there is a much stronger commitment to fund students through institutional resources. You should apply for all departmental and institutional resources that are available to you.

### **The Outcome**

As you complete the application process, keep track of the status of your

applications, financial aid materials, and recommendations. Successful applicants maintain detailed records of the progress of each application. They regularly compare their progress with the timeline that they have constructed.

If you have chosen your programs carefully, if your academic record indicates that you have intellectual potential, if your faculty recommenders speak well to your intellectual capability, motivation, and self-discipline to do advanced work, then letters of admission will likely be forthcoming. When you have made your final decision to enroll, you are ready to embark on the path to a new career and greater freedom to make your own choices and pursue your own interests. Good luck!

# ACCEPTING OFFERS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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**T**he outcome of your application process may involve offers of financial support by an institution or perhaps more than one institution. If you have more than one offer, your decision-making could be difficult. There are many factors to weigh. To ensure that applicants have the time to make their decisions, the Council of Graduate Schools advocates establishment of clear-cut guidelines for the timing of responses to offers of financial assistance. To that end, members of CGS have signed a resolution regarding the offer and acceptance of financial support for graduate school (see box).

Some 360 member schools of CGS have signed this resolution. For an up-to-date listing, please visit the CGS website at <[www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org)> or email the Council of Graduate Schools at [general\\_inquiries@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:general_inquiries@cgs.nche.edu).

**Council of Graduate Schools Resolution  
Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows,  
Trainees, and Assistants**

Acceptance of an offer of financial support\* (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to this Resolution, that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

\*This resolution applies to offers of financial support only, not offers of admission.

See: <http://www.cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution>

# TIMETABLE FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

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If your program has a winter application deadline, you should begin the application process no later than the summer before your senior year of college, or at least a year before you plan to start graduate school. Many students who have had graduate school in mind for most of their undergraduate careers start much earlier.

This timetable is approximate, but it offers an idea of the steps you must think about and, roughly, when you must complete each step. Most application deadlines fall between December and early February for programs that begin in the following fall. No generalized chart provides the specifics that you will need to meet your personal timeline. You are advised to adjust this sample schedule to the application timelines of the institutions to which you are applying.

As you refine your own timeline, then, carefully examine each application for deadlines. They may vary significantly. Keep your timeline updated and follow it.

## **Summer (or six to eight months prior to application deadline)**

- Write a draft statement of purpose/personal statement.
- Start browsing through guides to graduate programs, websites, and college catalogs.

## **August-September (or four to five months prior to application deadline)**

- Meet with faculty members that you know to discuss your personal statement and learn about possible programs.
- Ask for letters of recommendation.

## TIMETABLE FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

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- Begin to develop your personal timeline for the application process.
- Sign up for required standardized tests.

### **October (or three months prior to application deadline)**

- Take standardized tests.
- Determine the schools to which you plan to apply, and request application materials.
- Finish your timeline based on each institution's deadline and financial aid deadlines.
- Complete your personal statement, adjusting it to meet each application's specific needs.
- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions (If fall term grades are expected, then check with staff in the registrar's office to see if a transcript including fall term grades can be sent in time to meet the deadlines of programs to which you are applying).

### **November**

- Complete application forms (First, download the form from the university website and do a draft).
- Give your recommenders all the information that they will need to write recommendations for you for each of the schools to which you are applying.

### **December/January**

- Submit applications. Even if deadlines are later, it is good to get the applications in early.
- Request information on scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships from the institutions to which you applied.

### **January/February**

- Contact programs about the possibility of visiting. Visit programs if possible.

**April**

- If you are applying for need-based financial aid programs, you may have to file a copy of your federal income tax return.
- Consider admissions offers. If your institution is a signatory to the CGS “April 15 Resolution,” you have until April 15 to respond to offers of financial support. Offers of financial support accepted by April 15 should be honored (unless you obtain written permission from the institution).
- Send thank you notes to recommenders. Inform them of your decision.

# CARING FOR YOURSELF WHILE IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

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**G**raduate school can be filled with very intensive coursework and study. Even if graduate school is your sole preoccupation, you will face many pressures; and there are even more demands on time and thought for those graduate students with families and jobs. Classes, research, writing, and expectations of faculty and peers are just a few of the forces that weigh on a graduate student's shoulders—none of these keeps the pressures of everyday living at bay. So while you are in graduate school, it is essential for you to care for your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This will help you manage the stress you might encounter along the way.

Graduate school faculty and administrators would recommend that you keep balance in your life while you are engaged in graduate study. Keep your perspective by managing your time wisely, getting the proper rest and exercise, and eating in a healthy way. All colleges and universities also offer health and counseling services for students at little or no cost. Be aware of these services, which can give you the necessary—and private—outlet to discuss things if you are feeling overwhelmed. All counseling is confidential.

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## Sources of Information on Graduate Programs and Financial Support

There are a variety of sources of information about graduate school. The information you gather can be at once confusing and enlightening. It's your decision, so gather information in a systematic way that suits your goals for learning about which graduate program to select. Operate on fact, not fiction. Make your choice based on your informed opinion and not the opinion of someone else, no matter how close to you or how convincing that person may be.

### Where to find information about graduate school

- Word-of-mouth
- Family opinions
- Suggestions from your professors
- Graduates of a program
- Books (printed, online, or CD-ROM)
- Rankings by the National Research Council
- Professional organizations in your field of study
- Career office at your undergraduate school
- Your own research based on information from schools themselves

Here is a list of just a few references related to graduate school and graduate study. By no means comprehensive, this list nevertheless gives you a start if you are assessing programs, institutions, and possibilities. Relying on one resource is unwise, as you may be obtaining the viewpoint of only one author or editor; after you review more than one source you may discover contrasting opinions and information that, while true, may reflect a set of evaluation criteria that is different than your own. Publications based on research gathered in a systematic way should provide you with a solid foundation on which to base your opinion.

### **Print Resources about Graduate School**

*Directory of Financial Aid, 2012–2014* series (separate volumes for Women, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and the Disabled)

Schlachter, Gail Ann

Reference Service Press, 2009

“Financing Graduate Education” (informational flyer)

Council of Graduate Schools, 2013.

Written for prospective graduate students, this flyer describes common sources of financial support, includes general statistics on the types of financial support used by graduate students, and provides sources of financial aid information. This two-sided flyer, printed in full-color on glossy, heavyweight paper, is designed to be used by institutions in recruitment efforts.

*Graduate and Professional Programs* (a series of 5 volumes: Engineering and Applied Sciences; Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences; Biological/Biomedical Sciences and Health-Related/Medical Professions; Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Agricultural Sciences, the Environment & Natural Resources; and Business, Education, Information Studies, Law & Social Work).

Peterson’s Guides, 2014.

“Open Doors with a Doctorate” (informational flyer)

Council of Graduate Schools, 2013.

Higher education in the United States is arguably the best in the world, with doctoral education the “jewel in the crown,” attracting the best and the brightest domestic and international students. Doctorate recipients become the world’s leading researchers, educators, experts, and innovators; enrich the arts and literature; discover new vaccines and cures; document history; strengthen the global economy; and develop new

technologies. This flyer highlights these and other reasons why students might consider pursuing a doctorate.

“Why Should I Get a Master’s Degree” (informational flyer)  
Council of Graduate Schools, 2013.

Individuals who earn a master’s degree gain an edge in today’s increasingly competitive global marketplace, they typically earn more money over the course of their careers than individuals with bachelor’s degrees, and they can play a substantial leadership role in the evolving knowledge economy of the 21st century. This two-sided flyer highlights these and other reasons for pursuing graduate education.

To order any CGS publications, please visit: <[www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org)>.

### **Online Resources about Graduate School**

A number of websites offer books and information about graduate study and graduate programs:

Council of Graduate Schools: <http://www.cgsnet.org>

Graduate School Guide: [www.graduateguide.com](http://www.graduateguide.com)

GradSchools.com: <http://www.gradschools.com>

Hobson’s <http://www.gradview.com>

Peterson’s: <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx>

ProQuest: [www.gradshare.com](http://www.gradshare.com)

National Academies Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs:  
<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/Resdoc/>

### **Major Sources of Fellowships**

This list of graduate fellowship opportunities for individuals entering graduate programs is by no means comprehensive, but it is provided to give you some basic information about some of the fellowships that might be available for graduate study. You should also visit the CGS website

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for current information on fellowships. Except where noted, these are portable awards, which may be used at any institution to which you may be admitted.

There are many other sources of fellowships. Some are regional. Others are local. Community organizations like Rotary, Altrusa, Kiwanis, and the Optimist Club may also have very organized graduate scholarships for students from their communities. Graduate fellowships are frequently offered by college honor societies, fraternities, and sororities. Contact the national offices of organizations to which you belong to find out if you are eligible. Or discuss possibilities with a student affairs professional on your campus (dean of students, student activities director, or their staff members).

Deadlines for fellowships are as different as the number of fellowships. Usually, however, they occur early each calendar year, so the application process often is in full swing by late summer or early fall. The competition for fellowship money is brisk, making for hard, fast deadlines. You will need to contact funders directly to create your own calendar of deadlines.

### **American Association of University Women Career Development Grants**

Purpose:	Awarded to women in the early stages of graduate studies preparing to reenter the workforce, change careers, or advance their current careers
Website:	<a href="http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/">http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/</a>
Amount of award:	\$2,000-\$12,000
Application Deadline:	mid-December—check with funder for exact deadline
Address:	AAUW Fellowships and Grants C/O ACT, Inc. P.O. Box 4030 Iowa City, IA 52243-4030
Phone:	(319) 337-1716, ext. 60
Email	<a href="mailto:aauw@act.org">aauw@act.org</a>

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### **American Sociological Association Minority Fellowship Program**

Purpose:	To support the development and training of minority sociologists interested in issues of mental health. Funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the MFP seeks to attract talented minority students who are interested in the social dimensions of mental health issues and to facilitate their placement, work, and success in appropriate graduate programs.
Website:	<a href="http://www.asanet.org/funding/index.cfm">http://www.asanet.org/funding/index.cfm</a>
Amount of award:	\$18,000 annually, plus tuition
Application Deadline:	January 31
Address:	American Sociological Association Minority Affairs Program 1430 K Street NW, Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone:	(202) 383-9005
Email	<a href="mailto:minority.affairs@asanet.org">minority.affairs@asanet.org</a>

### **Department of Defense Scholarships, Apprenticeships, and Fellowships**

Purpose:	The DoD has possibilities for graduate students in science and engineering. Check website frequently.
Website:	<a href="http://www.asee.org/fellowship-programs">http://www.asee.org/fellowship-programs</a>
Amount of award:	\$30,500-\$38,000
Address:	NDSEG Fellowship Program c/o American Society for Engineering Education 1818 N Street N.W., Suite 600 Washington, DC, 20036
Phone:	(202) 331-3500
Email	<a href="mailto:ndseg@asee.org">ndseg@asee.org</a>

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### **Department of Energy Office of Science Graduate Fellowships**

Purpose:	The DoE offers fellowships for students which provide partial tuition support, an annual stipend for living expenses, and a research stipend for full-time graduate study and thesis/dissertation research at a U.S. academic institution for three years. Check website frequently.
Website:	<a href="http://scgf.ora.gov/">http://scgf.ora.gov/</a>
Amount of award:	\$10,500 for tuition and fees, \$5,000 annual research allowance, \$35,000 annual living stipend for three years.
Address:	c/o Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education DOE-SCGF Program, MS-36 P.O. Box 117 Oak Ridge, TN 37831-0117
Email	SCGFInfo@science.doe.gov

### **Department of Energy Nuclear Energy University Programs**

Purpose:	Scholarships and fellowships related to nuclear science and engineering--Eligible areas of study include nuclear engineering, nuclear materials science, radiochemistry, applied nuclear physics, and nuclear policy. Students must be attending an institution participating in the program. Check website frequently.
Website:	<a href="https://inlportal.inl.gov/portal/server.pt/community/neup_home/600/fellowships">https://inlportal.inl.gov/portal/server.pt/community/neup_home/600/fellowships</a>
Amount of award:	\$50,000 per year for three years (fellowship); \$5,000 (scholarship).
Address:	NEUP Integration Office Attn: Jenna Payne P.O. Box 1625 MS 3560 Idaho Falls, ID 83415
Phone:	(208) 526-1336
Email	<a href="mailto:jenna.payne@inl.gov">jenna.payne@inl.gov</a>

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### **National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF)**

Purpose:	Three years of “early-stage” support for graduate students seeking research-based master’s or doctoral degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines, including the social sciences.
Website:	<a href="http://www.nsfgrfp.org/">http://www.nsfgrfp.org/</a>
Amount of award:	\$32,000 annually plus \$12,000 for tuition.
Address:	GRF Operations Center 1818 N Street NW, Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036
Phone:	(866) 673-4737
Email	<a href="mailto:info@nsfgrfp.org">info@nsfgrfp.org</a>

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### **Ford Foundation Predoctoral, Dissertation, and Postdoctoral Fellowships for Minorities**

Purpose:	To increase diversity of the nation's college and university faculties. Predoctoral fellowships are awarded in a nationwide competition to individuals who demonstrate superior scholarship and show greatest promise for future achievement as scholars, researchers, and teachers in institutions of higher education.
Website:	<a href="http://www.nationalacademies.org/fellowships">http://www.nationalacademies.org/fellowships</a>
Amount of award:	Annual stipend of \$20,000 to each fellow and annual institutional allowance of \$2,000 to the fellowship institution in lieu of tuition and fees (predoctoral); annual stipend of \$21,000 (dissertation fellowship); \$40,000 (postdoctoral)
Duration:	3 years (predoctoral fellowship); one-year stipend, 9 to 12 months (dissertation fellowship); one-year stipend, 9 to 12 months (postdoctoral)
Application Deadline:	November—check for exact date
Address:	NAS Fellowship Office, Keck 576 National Research Council 500 Fifth Street NW Washington, DC 20001
Phone:	(202) 334-2872
Email	<a href="mailto:infofell@nas.edu">infofell@nas.edu</a>

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### **Jacob K. Javits Fellowships**

Purpose:	To assist students of superior ability to pursue graduate study leading to the doctorate or masters in selected fields in the arts, social sciences, and humanities
Website:	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html">http://www2.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html</a>
Amount of award:	Up to \$30,000, depending on financial need as determined by academic institution, plus tuition.
Duration:	Up to 48 months
Application Deadline:	October—check with Department for exact date
Address:	Jacob Javits Fellowship Program U.S. Department of Education 1990 K Street, NW, Room 6089 Washington, D.C. 20006-8524
Phone:	(202) 502-7542
Email	<a href="mailto:ope_javits_program@ed.gov">ope_javits_program@ed.gov</a>

### **Truman Fellowships**

Purpose:	To award merit-based scholarships to college students who plan to pursue careers in government or elsewhere in public service and wish to attend graduate or professional school to help prepare for their careers
Website:	<a href="http://www.truman.gov">http://www.truman.gov</a>
Eligibility:	Junior-level students at 4-year colleges and universities who have extensive records of public and community service. Scholars may defer award up to 4 years for graduate studies.
Stipend:	\$30,000 for graduate studies.
Application Deadline:	February—check with foundation for date
Address:	The Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation 712 Jackson Place NW Washington, DC 20006
Phone:	(202) 395-4831
Email	<a href="mailto:office@truman.gov">office@truman.gov</a>

### **Online Resources for Fellowships**

A great deal of information about fellowships for master's degree and doctoral study (both portable and institution-specific) can be found on line at these URLs:

<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/Fellowships>

<http://scholarships.kachinatech.com/scholars.html>

<http://www.finaid.org/scholarships>

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