

GRADUATE SCHOOL INFORMATION

Why Go To Graduate School?

If you have clearly defined interests in a particular field, graduate study could be a wise choice for you. Your enthusiasm for a particular discipline might lead you to great personal satisfaction from the opportunity to broaden your expertise, to perform research, or to specialize. Certain occupational goals in some fields - such as law, medicine, social work, and education - require advanced degrees.

How Do I Select A Program?

A necessary first step is to clearly define your interests and goals. Self-assessment of your strengths and weaknesses is an important part of this process. Be able to express your skills, abilities and potential in relation to the programs you consider. To find out which schools and programs will best suit these interests and goals, take advantage of informative resources:

- Clarkson faculty members, advisors, and alumni in your field of interest
- Graduate students and professionals in the field
- Faculty and students at the institutions of interest
- Catalogs, directories and published guides (see accompanying list for resources in the Career Library collection)
- Professional journals/professional associations in your field
- www.careersearch.net/v2/client (Client Referral = ClarksonU)

Use these resources to collect and evaluate information about schools and programs. Does the program meet your needs?

Factors to consider:

- Departmental offerings
- Philosophical and professional attitudes
- Specific specialties
- Current research
- Prominence of program
- Prestige of faculty
- Flexibility of curriculum
- Placement outlook
- Required background and credentials for students
- Types of students currently enrolled
- Length of program
- Application requirements
- Costs and financial aid opportunities
- Personal factors such as geographic location, housing options, community environment

Deadlines

Be prepared to meet deadlines. Know when you are required to register for test, to file for financial aid, and to provide admissions applications and other related material. The earlier schools receive your information, the better.

Tests

Plan to take tests approximately one year before the date you plan to enter school. If you're thinking of waiting to go to grad school, take the exams during your senior year while you're still in the "study mode".

For more information on graduate exams through the Graduate Management Admission Council:

- GMAT - Master's in Business Administration- <http://www.mba.com>
- GRE - Graduate Record Examination- <http://www.gre.org>
- LSAT- Law School Admission Test- <http://www.lsac.org>
- MCAT- Medical College Admission Test- <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/>
- **Admissions**

Note the deadlines for applications and related material: reference letters, transcripts, fees, and essays.

Financial Aid

The deadlines for financial awards and aid often precede general Applications admissions deadlines.

The Application Process

Application

- Follow instructions carefully and neatly; accurately complete all responses on the school's most current application form. It's best to type your answers.
- Tailor your communication for the individual program and school.
- Include all requested documents and materials such as an autobiography, resume or statement of intent, and fees.
- Make copies, for your own files, of all applications that you send.

Letters of Recommendation:

- Select recommenders who can address the issues appropriate to the specific school and ensure that these individuals can write you a strong recommendation. If possible, ask for the recommendation in person.
- Give your recommender ample time to write.
- Provide recommenders with addressed, stamped envelopes and background materials to help them write a meaningful letter on your behalf.
- Use institutional forms when they are provided.



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Transcripts

- Allow mailing time and, if possible, hold mailing until any current important or relevant course work is complete. Attach an addendum if you would like to explain exceptionally high or low grades.

Essay

- Use this opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills, personal motivation, commitment, enthusiasm, creativity, maturity, energy level, statement positive attitude, and depth of thought. Compliment the strength of the program or school.
- Note the emphasis of the question and the program. Build your response around the question, "What does the reader want to know?"
- Be clear, strong, and succinct.
- Invite critiques. Career Center staff will be glad to review your efforts.
- Produce your essays on high quality paper and with letter quality printing.

Other

- Be sure to make provisions for interviews, test score forwarding, and Credentials other requested credentials.

Interviews

- Arrange a personal interview if possible. Research the program or school carefully before your interview. If possible, get to know the contact person and then express knowledge and appreciation of the individual or program's strengths.

Follow-up

- Follow-up with the school initially to be sure that all materials were received and then inquire concerning your status at regular intervals. Be careful not to put pressure on them to reach a decision; only inquire.

Financial Aid Opportunities

Various types of financial aid are available to graduate students. Attempt to explore *all* avenues of financial support. These can include:

- Fellowships/Grants/Scholarships
- Teaching and Research Assistantships
- Loans
- Resident Assistantships
- Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Services (GAPFAS)

The checklist in this handout can help you keep track of the steps in process.

Incomplete applications can result in delayed processing and rejection!!!!