



CONSIDERING GRAD SCHOOL?

If you are considering Grad school and wondering how to navigate the process or what you need to do, the following is a step by step guide. Further supports and resources can be found on our website studentsuccess.ca or schedule an appointment with our career professionals through [OscarPlus-appointments](#).

Step 1: Reflect

- What is your motivation for more education?
- When is the best time for you to pursue graduate or professional school?
- What is your career vision?
 - Will graduate school help you get there?

**** Be honest with yourself and be clear with your motivations*

Step 2: Explore your options

Gather info from internet resources

- Career Cruising – studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
- www.universitystudy.ca
- Professional association websites

Gather info from people

- Professionals working in the career field
- Professors or students in the programs of interest
- Admission Coordinators or Program Coordinators of the programs

****Not sure what you are looking for? Then take a step back and do some career exploration.*

Step 3: Know your options

There are many types of Graduate programs:

- Research intensive Masters or Ph.D
- Applied/project based programs
- Professional focused with internships
- Course based graduate level
- Some require subject knowledge in same field
- Some will accept a wide range of undergrad programs

**** You can also consider graduate level certificates or post-graduate certificates at College or University Continuing Education.*



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Author/Reviewed By: K. Latham – Oct 2017





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Step 4: Thoroughly research your options

The School

- Graduate admissions, financial supports, student supports.

The Program

- Program and courses– sound interesting?
- Research focused, project focused, internships?
- Accredited with regulatory body for profession?

The Professors and Research focus

- “a must” for research based graduate programs.

**** *HINT: After thoroughly reviewing the web info, direct your program questions to the admission coordinators.*

Step 5: Gather the Details

For EACH program, gather the facts

- GPA – how do they calculate it? Min. vs reality?
- Required courses? Recommended?
- Reference Letters –Academic vs Professional?
- Resume/CV - which do they want?
- Personal Statement OR Letter of Intent (they are different!)
- Entrance Exams? Need to research those
- Experiences needed?
- Interviews – what type, when?
- Deadlines?
- Costs of admissions? Cost of program? Extra costs?

**** *HINT: Create a spreadsheet*

Step 6: Take a Pause

- Overwhelmed? Confused? Still have Questions?
- Feeling Uncertain? Intimated by the process? Will I get in?

**** *HINT: Clarify your Priorities and Develop a Plan - see step 7 -9*



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Step 7: Clarify your Goals for Grad School

Academically	Professionally	Personally
What do you want to learn? How do you learn best? What will help you be successful? What would be interesting for? What skills or knowledge do you want to develop?	What do you hope the program will provide career wise? What opportunities do you hope the program will provide to support your career goals? What supports do I hope the program/school has to help me transition after the program?	What do you want to achieve personally? Financial considerations? Location considerations? Relationships to consider? Time commitment and best timing for you?

Step 8: Evaluate your Options

List your Academic, Professional and Personal Goals and then evaluate your programs based on your own criteria to help you with your decision.

Priorities/Goals	Option #1	Option #2	Option #3	Option #4	Option #5
Academic					
Professional					
Personal					

Step 9: Get Organized!

- Create a chart/spreadsheet with all the details, requirements, deadlines.
- As new questions emerge, make a note of them and source out an answer.
- Make a list of requirements for your applications and develop a plan to meet them.
- Create a timeline with deadlines in mind to help you stay on track.

Step 10: Apply!



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