



Other Online Resources

Peterson's Guide (www.petersons.com) – This is the number one site for all higher education info!

Association for Support of Graduate Students (www.asgs.org) - Sample hundreds of sites for some info.

Council of Graduate Schools (www.cgsnet.org) – It's a good place to start with straightforward and practical information on choosing and financing grad school, grad student organizations, and more.

Gradschools.com (www.gradschools.com) - The most thorough online source of grad school information with more than 50,000 program listings.

Princeton Review (www.princetonreview.com) – The site provides information on test preparation and research grad school programs.

All About Grad School (www.allaboutgradschool.com) - A geographic directory of Business, Engineering, Law, and Medical grad schools in the US.

Findthebest.com (www.findthebest.com) - This site allows you to search for and compare law, business, and medical school programs to see which is right for you.

Graduate School Guide (graduateguide.com) - Search by school, state, or major. Questions to ask when applying.

Accepted.com (www.accepted.com/help/index.htm) – In-depth advice on the writing tasks associated with applying to grad and professional schools and info on the admission process. Sample essays are available.

Euro Graduate Guide (www.eurograduate.com) – This site provides graduate opportunities across Europe. Search by research programs or taught courses.

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Graduate School Guide

Where will your graduate education take you?



 **Cats to Careers:**
Pursue **YOUR** Path!



Is grad school right for me?

Deciding whether or not to go to graduate school can be a tough decision. Graduate school is not for everyone and you have to decide if it is right for you. It is an extra 2-8 years depending on the program. It can be an extremely rewarding experience but it will take a lot of work and dedication to a field that you are passionate about. Before deciding whether or not grad school is the right decision for you, consider these questions:



- Why am I interested in grad school? Am I interested in grad school for the right reasons? Why do I want to do this now?
- Will grad school help me obtain my future long-term goals?
- Is grad school affordable at this point in my life? Does it make sense to do it now? Can I do it later?
- Is there a specific subject that I am interested in specializing in and what form of degree am I seeking? What are my alternatives?

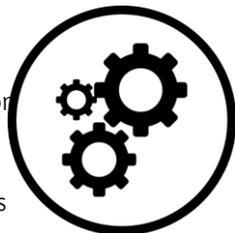
Career Development staff is available to discuss this decision with you. Stop by the Career Hub or e-mail career@linfield.edu to set up an appointment.



What are grad schools looking for?

The admissions process works differently from school to school, but in general, graduate school programs want **talented students who are motivated, hard-working, and eager to learn**. The “ideal” graduate students has the following characteristics:

- Works well both independently and in a group
- Has leadership skills and ability
- Strong character and integrity
- Can grow from constructive criticism, take direction
- Responsible and easy to work with
- Fits well in the program
- Has research, writing, speaking, and computer skills
- Creative, problem solver
- Intelligent and can think analytically
- Finishes on time and excels in the professional world



No one is perfect so almost no one will have all these traits. On your application, show the ones that you do have and how they will help you be successful at graduate school.

Timeline of Applying to Grad School

If you're going to grad school in the Fall 2017

Summer/September 2016

- Take the necessary standardized tests for admissions (page 5).
- Research graduate programs and narrow your choices.
- Consider faculty members to ask for letters of recommendation.

September/October 2016

- Research sources of financial aid.
- Examine each of the program applications. Note any questions or essay topics that will require your attention.
- Draft of your graduate admissions essay and resume or CV.
- Ask faculty members or career/grad admissions counselors to read your essays and provide feedback. Take their advice!
- Ask faculty for letters of recommendation. Provide faculty with a copy of your transcript, each program's recommendation form, and your admissions essay. Ask him or her if there's anything else that you can provide to help them.

November/December 2016

- Arrange for your official transcript to be sent to each program you're applying to. Visit the Registrar to request your transcript.
- Finalize your admissions essay and resume/CV. Remember to seek outside input!
- Apply for fellowships and other financial aid, if applicable.
- Check and record the due date for each application.

December/January 2016-2017

- Complete the application forms for each program. Reread your essays and statement of purpose. Spell check!
- Most schools send an email or postcard upon receipt of each application. Keep track of these. If you don't receive a postcard or email, contact the admissions office by email or phone to ensure that your application has been received before the deadline.

February 2017

- Depending on your field, start planning for the admissions interviews. What questions will you ask? Prepare answers to common questions.
- Fill out the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. You'll need your tax forms to do this.

March/April 2017

- Visit schools to which you've been accepted.
- Discuss acceptances and rejections with a faculty member or the career/graduate admissions counselor.
- Notify the program you're accepting and those you're declining.



Average Cost of Grad School

Each graduate program is different depending on the desired area of study, the degree level, and the program length. These numbers are a rough estimate of the average cost of graduate schools across the US in 2007-2008. The cost of the graduate programs you apply for may cost more.

Public Institutions

Total estimated cost / year (tuition, room & board, & misc. expenses):

- Master's: \$29,000
- Doctoral: \$33,700
- Professional: \$37,300

Private Institutions

Total estimated cost:

- Master's: \$39,600
- Doctoral: \$47,100
- Professional: \$53,700



To lower the cost of graduate school, most students received some type of financial aid.

Grants:

- 40% of master's and professional degree students received grants
- 60% of doctoral students received grants

Graduate Assistantships (Teaching, Research, Administrative):

- 15% of professional degree students received assistantships
- 22% of master's degree students received assistantships
- 57% of doctoral degree students received assistantships



Developing a Plan B

You always want to have a back-up plan in case something happens and you don't get into your desired schools or don't receive the financial aid you need. Here are a couple suggestions:

- Strengthen your application and reapply next year.
- Consider another degree or going to a different school.
- Reevaluate your goals and look into other possibilities: an internship, full-time employment, Peace Corps, teaching English abroad, travel / gap year, etc.

The counselors at Career Development are always ready to help! Drop by the Career Hub to set up an appointment.



Application Process

What do I have to do to apply to graduate school? Depending on the program you want to go into the requirements vary. Generally, each graduate school application requires a student's **resume/CV**, **transcript**, **standardized test scores**, one or more **letters of recommendation**, and a **personal statement/essay**.

Depending on the program, they will ask for a **resume** or **CV** which provide further insight about your past experience including internships, jobs, volunteer work, and class projects. Programs are interested in you as a whole person and your resume or CV is where you can highlight your accomplishments! Visit the Career Hub for help!

The admissions offices ask for **transcripts** to show the classes the student has taken and their **GPA**. If you have a low GPA and it is relatively early in your college career (sophomore year or beginning of your junior year) you have time to boost your GPA. If it's too late, still try your best to raise it as much as you can. You can also take high-level courses because admissions offices look at the course level that composes your GPA; a lower grade in a more difficult class means more than an "easy A." The reason GPAs are so important is because they tell a lot about who you are as a student. GPAs reflect your motivation and drive to do well. It is the best long-term indicator of how well you perform as a student.

Since the grading scale varies from school to school GPAs are not always good comparisons; instead, admissions offices use the **GRE**, **GMAT**, **LSAT**, **MCAT**, and **DAT** scores to compare applicants at varying universities. While test scores are important, they can be supplemented by other extracurricular activities. Graduate schools are looking for *well rounded*, driven, and hard-working students. Volunteering, internships, and research are all thought about when admissions offices are making their decisions.



Application Process (continued)

Letters of recommendation are an important piece of the application. They have the potential to make up for weak parts of the graduate school application. The letters inform the application committee about how others speak of your work ethic, intelligence, experience, and personality. To get a good recommendation, make sure that you have a relationship with the professor before asking for a letter. Recommendations should come from professors, employers, etc. who can vouch for you academically and have known you for 6 months or more. If possible, ask people who have reputations, or someone who the committee might know. When asking for a letter of recommendation, don't assume they know everything about you – help them out by giving them a resume and any other information.

The **personal statement** is the part of the application that humanizes the applicant. It is your first chance to prove to the admissions committee that you are an interesting and unique applicant who deserves a closer look. Depending on the graduate program, admissions committees will look for different information in the personal essay. Research the program you are applying to and tailor your personal statement to fit the wants of the application committee. If the program you are applying for doesn't hold interviews, it is your only chance to demonstrate your ability and interest in the desired subject. If the program does have interviews, the personal statement helps the admissions committee formulate questions to ask during the interview.

During and after writing your essay(s), remember to get multiple people to check your writing for any grammatical or spelling errors! It's always good to have many pairs of eyes look over your writing, as we sometimes don't catch our own errors.



Standardized Tests

The standardized test students are required to take depends on their desired graduate program. The GRE General Test is most commonly used when applying to graduate school. **Costs are subject to change in the future.

GRE (General Record Exam) www.ets.org

The GRE General Test is usually required for the sciences, social sciences and humanities majors. There are 3 parts to the GRE: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing. Administered on a computer, the test will take at least 3 hrs. 45 min excluding breaks. The scoring for verbal and quantitative reasoning is based on a scale from 130-170, 340 being the total; the national average is 302.2. The analytical writing is on a scale from 1-6, 3.7 being the average.

Fee: \$195

GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) www.mba.com

There are 3 parts to the GMAT, including verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and analytical writing. The test is administered on a computer and will take at least 3 hrs. 30 min excluding breaks. The median score is 560.

Fee: \$250

LSAT (Law School Admission Test) www.lsac.org

The LSAT has 5 parts but only 4 go towards the students' scores. Reading comprehension, analytical writing, logical reasoning, and a pretest used to test new questions. The test will take 2 hrs. 55 min excluding breaks. The test is scored on a scale from 120-180, the average score being about 150.

Fee: \$160

MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) www.aamc.org

The 4 parts to the MCAT include verbal reasoning, physical science, writing, and biological science. The test lasts roughly 4 hours and 20 minutes. The physical sciences (8.4 ave), verbal reasoning (8.1 ave), and biological science (8.8 ave) sections are scored from 1-15, making 45 the highest score. The national average is 25.2.

Fee: \$275-\$415

DAT (Dental Admissions Test) www.ada.org

The DAT has 4 parts: natural sciences, math, reading, and perceptual ability. It will take about 5 hours and is administered on a computer. The scale of the test is 1-30 with the average being 17. The perceptual ability average score varies between 16-18.

Fee: \$385

