

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

OCDE GRAD SCHOOL PREP GUIDE



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Before You Apply

WHY GRAD SCHOOL?

Applying to graduate school requires careful planning and consideration to make a sound financial and academic decision. The considerations below can help you get started:

Ask Yourself:

- Is an advanced degree required to enter or advance in your profession of interest?
- Do you have the financial resources or know of options to cover the cost of graduate school?
- Are you burnt-out academically, and do you need to take time off?
- Do you want to go to school full-time or part-time?

Compare reasons to attend graduate school

Some **good reasons** to enroll in graduate school include:

- Your career goal requires an advanced degree, such as being a professor, lawyer, or doctor.
- You want to specialize in a subject that is important to you.
- You want to advance in your career or change career directions.

Some **bad reasons** to enroll in graduate school include:

- You do not know what you want to do.
- You do not want to get a job, or you do not think you can get a job (but you have not tried yet).
- You want to postpone paying student loans.

Pro Tip: Review possible career outcomes with your Major. Is a graduate degree needed? If so, what schools have the best programs? Be sure to ask faculty and alumni in your field as well.

Before You Apply

WHY GRAD SCHOOL?

Research and select schools

What are your top priorities when comparing graduate schools? *Circle all that apply.*

Geographic location

Application requirements

Courses

Accreditation

Cost of program

Program deadlines

Faculty

Practical
experiences/internships

Cost of living

Job placement/career support

Diversity and inclusion

Reputation or ranking

Duration of program

Availability of assistantships

Research opportunities

Emphasis and certificates

Before You Apply

WHY GRAD SCHOOL?

Tips from the OCDE

Gap Year Options

Consider your options for spending a year or more to gain experience before attending graduate school. Alternatives to immediately pursuing a graduate degree include:

- Intermediate education and skill development (e.g., certificate, credential, licensing, etc.)
- Employment that offers relevant experience
- Internships or volunteer positions in your field

Some organizations within certain industries may provide rewards or incentives related to graduate study after working for them for a set amount of time (e.g. non-profits or educational institutions). Consider sites like idealist.org or higheredjobs.com to broaden your search.

Pro Tip: Check Handshake for upcoming events and workshops on applying to graduate school, personal statements, and gap year panel discussions.

Applying to Grad School

HOW TO PROPERLY APPLY

Step 1: Research and select schools

Make note of application requirements, such as if you need to apply to only the graduate school or both the school and specific program. When applying to a professional school, note the specific documents required for the national application system and each school to which you are applying.

Step 2: Take your standardized tests

Find out which exams are required for admission. Some schools or programs require the GRE, GMAT, GRE Subject Tests, LSAT, MCAT, etc. Be sure to do your research on which test each school accepts and if they need test scores.

Step 3: Refine your resume

To demonstrate your qualifications, you will need to provide a record of your activities (research, clinical, professional, etc.). Use our [resume template](#) to get started.

Step 4: Write your Personal Statement

Summarize your goals and intent for applying to graduate school while articulating your professional focus and vision. [Here are some tips and examples.](#)

Step 5: Request letters of recommendation

Choose the right individuals to write your letters, such as professors, supervisors, and colleagues. Provide these individuals with a copy of your resume and personal statement to aid them in writing a strong letter. Be mindful of deadlines, and ask for letters in a reasonable timeframe. *Try to ask at least one month in advance.*

Applying to Grad School

HOW TO PROPERLY APPLY

Step 6: Complete application forms

Most likely, you will apply online, but if mailing your application, send it by certified mail and request a return receipt. Remember to send the appropriate application fee.

Step 7: Request transcripts from the Registrar's Office

You may have to send official transcripts from the Registrar's Office directly to the school, or you may have to include an official, sealed transcript in your application materials.

Step 8: Financial aid and assistantships

Check for financial aid deadlines. Indicate on your application (if space is available) that you are interested in an assistantship. Most programs will provide information about applying for these opportunities on their website.

Step 9: Follow-up

Contact the admissions office to inquire about your application status. Be persistent, but allow six weeks for processing.

Pro Tip: If you notice the same accrediting organization mentioned by a few different schools, search for more information on that organization. Some accrediting organizations provide a directory of accredited schools, giving you a vetted list for additional program comparison.

Questions?

Contact the Office of Career Development and Engagement with any questions!



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