



Choosing a Graduate School Quick Start Guide

So you decided to go to graduate school...now what? This is your 'How To' guide for beginning your search for the best school and program that fits your needs. Follow the suggestions below to map out your graduate school path. And remember that the Career Connections Center is always here for you if you need guidance! Schedule your [appointment](#) today!

Step 1: Set up

When there seems like endless options for choosing a school and a program to apply to, all that information can get overwhelming very quickly! It is best to get organized first and the best way to do this is to make a spreadsheet. There is a sample template with tips on the Career Connections Center website!

Graduate School Research					
School Name	Website Link	Location	Program Name	Accredited?	Admission Requirements
Texas Woman's University	https://twu.edu/psychology-philosophy/graduate-programs/counseling-psychology/doctoral-program/	Denton, Tx	Counseling Psychology PhD	Yes, APA	18 semester hours in psychology, Including: Introduction to Psychology/General Psychology, Developmental Psychology (Life Span), Statistics, Experimental Psychology/Research, Design/Research Methods, Cognitive Psychology/Psychology of Learning, Psychology Elective. GPA of 3.5 on all courses in psychology and a 3.0 overall average for the last 60 hours of undergraduate. If graduate master's work has been completed, a 3.5 is desirable. Preferred minimum GRE scores of 153(500) Verbal, 144(500) Quantitative, and 4.0 Analytical Writing. The subject (Psychology) GRE is not required.

Step 2: Research

Start early! Many programs require you to send all your application materials several months before they will choose candidates to interview. The research process can take significant time so begin as soon as possible! Using the universities website and graduate program webpages, try to find answers to as many of the following questions as you can:

- Is the program accredited? Does my profession require it to be?
- What are the admission requirements?
 - Application Deadlines - check (each semester) for changes in application requirements
 - Application costs
 - Required GPA
 - Course Prerequisites
 - Centralized Application Service – PTCAS, AMCAS, OTCAS, etc.
 - Transcripts
 - Exam Scores – GRE, MCAT, DAT, etc.
 - TOEFL and TSE/Test A tests
 - Resume
 - Letters of Recommendations
 - Essays
 - Volunteer and Shadowing Hours
- How long is the program?
 - Average time for students to graduate?
- What financial assistance is available?
- What are the resources and facilities offered by the university?
 - What is the geographic location/cost of living?

- How are the courses structured? (Lecture, Online, Hybrid).
- What are the program completion requirements?
 - Do they meet my career goals?
 - Will they adequately prepare me for my professional work?
- What is the interpersonal environment like? Will you be comfortable, and be able to thrive in the environment?
 - Research current students and professors in the program.
 - What are the faculty's credentials?
 - What degrees do they hold?
 - What are their research specialties?
 - Connect if possible and ask questions! You can do this through email or LinkedIn!
 - What are the values of the program (i.e. Feminist values, focus on research, experiential learning)?
 - What might a current student wish they had known before beginning the program?

Step 3: Review your research

Once you have gathered all your information, it is time to begin narrowing your choices to the programs and universities you believe will be the best fit for your needs. Focus on the topics that are most important to you and what programs will provide the most benefits for your future career. Use the tips on the sample spreadsheet (mentioned in Step 1) to help you highlight the most important aspects of each college and to rank them in order of these preferences to help you narrow your list.

Step 3: Apply

There is much debate on how many schools you should apply to. Some individuals apply to only one school where they passionately want to study the most, while others may apply to 20! Keep in mind that application costs can definitely stack up quickly. On average, we suggest applying in the range of 1 to 3 schools which you believe would be the best fit, and 2 to 3 back up schools you believe you could thrive at as well.

Remember that the number of schools you apply to, are accepted to, or rejected from does not define your value or worth!

This is a tough and stressful process for many and you are not alone! Come see us at the [Career Connections Center](#) for assistance or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services Center](#) for some support!

Additional Resources

[Grad Schools Directory](#)

[US News and World Graduate School Rankings](#)

[Peterson's College and University Information Database](#)