



Researching Graduate School Programs

REASONS TO ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL

- What are my career goals?
- Master's and/or doctorate?
- Am I interested enough in the subject to stay with it for two or three or six years?
- Do I have the energy and commitment to work hard for as long as it takes?
- Can I take the pressure?
- Can I find the money to pay tuition, living expenses, and books?
- Can I go without working full time and give up the income in order to remain a student?
- What do I want my life to be like a few years after completing the degree?

Selecting an Advisor

Determining the major professor you want to work with is one of the most important decisions you can make. Ask yourself:

- Are you going to enjoy working this professor and his/her colleagues? Are they encouraging and supportive of your best efforts?
- What are the course offerings and how are they scheduled (i.e., day or night classes)?
- How many graduate students has your potential advising professor had?
- What is the average length of time it has taken for one of this professor's students to graduate?
- What have been the professor's current students' experiences and how long have they worked with this professor? How long do they anticipate their degree completion to take?
(Talk to the students directly.)
- What are the expectations and management style of your potential advising professor? When does s/he expect you in the office? Will s/he be available when you have questions?

QUESTIONS TO ASK / ISSUES TO RAISE

- Start early – your junior year
- Criteria to consider:
 - reputation of the faculty,
 - breadth and depth of class offerings,
 - required examinations,
 - average time to degree,
 - employment success of graduates,
 - selectivity of the program,
 - resources: library, computer and other facilities,
 - journals in your field published by the university.
- Questions to ask yourself:
 - What degrees are given in the field?
 - How high does the program rate?
 - Is the faculty good?
 - Are they doing what I am interested in?
 - How specialized is the department?
 - What are the course and thesis requirements to get my degree?
 - How long will it take?
 - Can I afford it?
 - What are the possibilities for financial aid?
 - Do I have the prerequisites for the program?
 - What are my chances of being accepted?
 - What are my chances of getting a job I want after I finish there?
 - What is the tuition?
 - Are there fees in addition to tuition?
 - How much will it cost me to live there?
 - Does the university have graduate student housing?
 - Will professional licensing requirements tie me to that part of the country?
 - What about the expenses of moving there?

The grad school visit and interview are a two-way process. Not only is your school of interest trying to determine if you would make a good graduate student, but you should try to determine if your school of interest is going to be a good fit for you!

Where can I go for more information?

Although your best resources of information about potential graduate schools and programs are often your professors, advisors, professionals in your career field, and alumni peers pursuing graduate study, there are several online resources where you can search for schools and programs that may fit your interests and needs. These include:

- All About Grad School
- Council of Graduate Schools' "Resources for Students"
- GradSchools.com
- Gradview
- PhDs.org
- Peterson's Education Center
- Princeton Review
- U.S. News & World Report (Publishers of America's Best Graduate Schools)

Polar Careers, Student Success Center | Division of Academic Affairs

OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

PHONE: 419-772-2145 | EMAIL: career@onu.edu | WEB: <https://my.onu.edu/polar-careers>

