Coastal Carolina University

GRADUATE SCHOOL Preparation

Career Services Center
Indigo House
www.coastal.edu/career
Overview

• Should I go to graduate school?
• How do I research graduate schools?
• What is the application process?
• What are the typical admission requirements?
• How do I write an application essay?
• Where can I find out more information?
Graduate school requires a commitment of *time, energy, and money*—it is important to determine if graduate school is the best fit for your academic and career goals.
Consider the Following Reasons:

• I cannot work in my field of interest without a graduate degree.
• The job market is crowded and a graduate degree will make me more competitive.
• A graduate degree will significantly increase my entry level salary.
• I am actively exploring both graduate school and direct entry into the market place.
• I like school; I am not ready to leave the academic environment.
• I have always known that I would go directly from undergraduate school into graduate study.
Researching Graduate Schools

- US News & World Report Rankings
- Peterson’s Guide
- Graduate School Guide
- GradSchools.com
Types of Graduate Study

Professional Schools
• Includes medical, dental, pharmacy, law, and business schools

Graduate Schools
• Masters
  • Includes Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Education (MEd), Master of Social Work (MSW), etc
• Doctorate
  • May allow direct entry from undergraduate school, or may require Masters
Factors to Consider

• Geographical area
• Finances
• Experiential Learning
• Reputation
• Quality
• Demographics & Culture
• Publications & Research of Faculty
• Graduation Requirements
• Preparation/Placement Record
Application Process – Junior Year

• Determine academic/professional areas of interest
• Determine financial resources – research scholarships
• Research institutions and programs (criteria, deadlines)
• Talk to advisors and professors about programs
• Visit schools of contact program coordinators
• Register for appropriate graduate admission exams
• Obtain necessary application materials
• Create resume and have it critiqued by Career Services
Application Process – Senior Year

**Fall**
- Obtain Letters of Recommendation
- Request copies of your transcript
- Write application essay and have it critiqued by Career Services
- Apply for financial aid and scholarships
- Send completed applications

**Spring**
- Check before deadlines that all materials have been received
- Visit and interview at institutions
- Pay deposit at institution of choice and notify other institutions
Admission Requirements

Graduate schools will typically evaluate candidates based on:

• Academic Achievement
• Leadership & Community Service Experience
• Research Experience
• Professional & Internship Experience
• Entrance Exam Scores
• Application Essays
• Campus Interviews
# Graduate Entrance Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>What it measures</th>
<th>Why take it?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Exam)</td>
<td>Measures verbal and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills; subject tests available in 8 fields of study</td>
<td>Most common graduate entrance exam; used for a diversity of graduate programs in arts and science</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test)</td>
<td>Analyzes verbal, mathematical, and analytical writing skills</td>
<td>Used for admission into graduate business programs</td>
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Graduate Entrance Exams, cont.

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<tbody>
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<td>MAT (Miller Analogies Test)</td>
<td>Analyzes critical thinking and problem solving ability through the use of analogies</td>
<td>Used for a diversity of graduate programs in arts and science</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)</td>
<td>Measures problem solving, critical thinking, writing skills, and knowledge of science concepts</td>
<td>Required for admission into medical school; similar tests for Dental (DAT), Optometry (OAT), and Pharmacy (PCAT) School</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSAT (Law School Admissions Test)</td>
<td>Assesses logical and verbal reasoning, and reading comprehension</td>
<td>Required for admission into most law schools</td>
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Graduate Admission Essays

- Varies in length from a few paragraphs to over 5 pages
- May or may not include prompting questions
- Typically includes:
  - Motivation for pursuing a particular field of study
  - Your greatest achievements and experience within the field of study
  - Strengths & weaknesses
  - Career and academic goals
  - How graduate school fits into your goals
  - Areas of special interest
Essay Tips

• Ensure your writing is clear and concise
• Create an outline first to ensure your essay is well organized
• Make sure you answer all prompt questions
• Focus on the positive
• Use the opening paragraph to grab the reader’s attention
• Demonstrate motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm for the field of study
Essay Tips, cont.

- Highlight why you are pursuing graduate education in that *particular field*, at the *particular institution*
- Highlight what makes you unique and why you stand out from other applicants
- Use creativity to tell a story
- Edit your essay several times and have it reviewed by Career Services
General Grad School Advice

• Start early
  • Admission deadlines can be as early as September a year before you intend to enroll

• Be realistic about the competitiveness of programs
  • Should apply for ~10 school including “dream” schools and “safety” schools

• Have a back up plan
  • Conduct a job search simultaneously
Career Services Resources

- Graduate School Info
  www.coastal.edu/career/graduate.html
- Individual Counseling Appointments
- Resume and Application Essay Critiques
- Mock Interviewing
- Career Center Library

Career Services – Indigo House
Monday – Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
(843)349-2341
Questions?