

APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL



Overview of Topics & Concerns

- **Pre-Application**
 - Understanding graduate education
 - Preparing for the application process
 - Researching graduate programs
 - Factors to consider

- **Application**
 - Components of an application
 - Contacting faculty, students and staff
 - Graduate admissions process
 - Admissions Timeline

- **Post-Application**
 - Funding, housing and special programs

Pre-Application



Understanding Graduate Education

- What is graduate school?
- Why should I go to graduate school?
- How is graduate school different from college?
- How is graduate education structured?
- Should I complete a master's degree first?
- Should I work first?
- What can I do to prepare for graduate school?

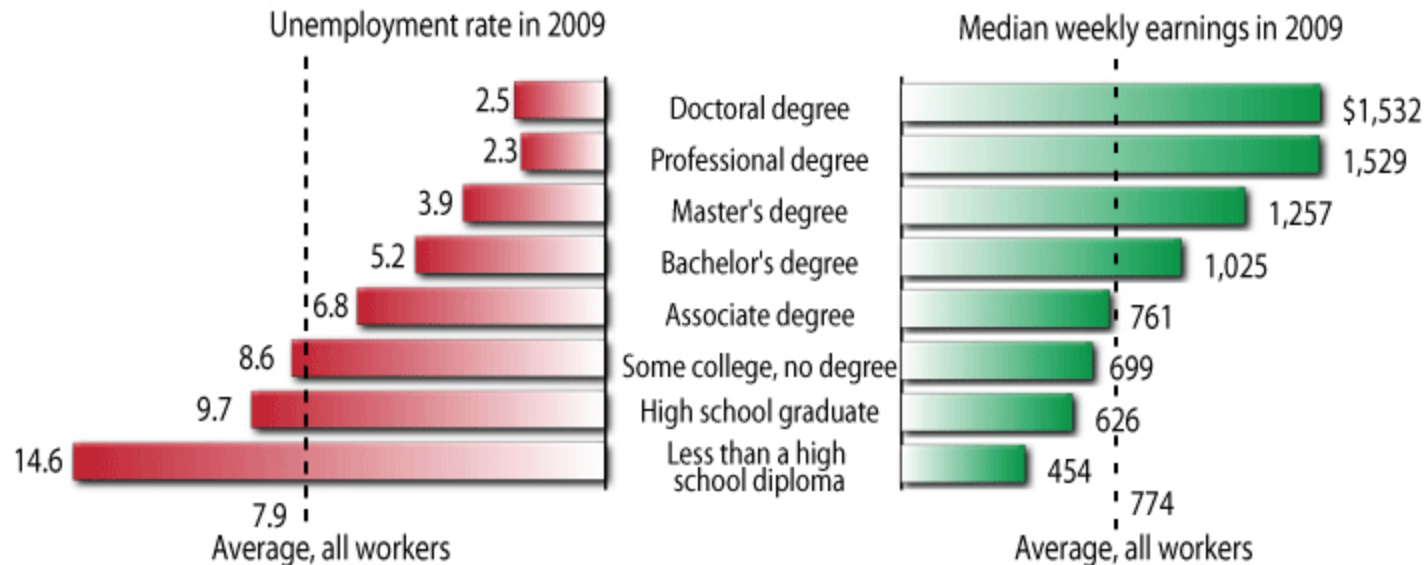
Why Graduate School?

- To move beyond passive acquisition of knowledge
 - You are creating new insights
- A graduate degree demonstrates your ability to identify and solve important problems
 - Pathway to academia – best job in the world
 - Pathway to the knowledge economy
- Money!



Why Graduate School?

Education pays



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Lifetime earnings with a doctoral degree exceed those of bachelor's degree holders by approximately 50% (US Census Bureau)

What Can I do Now to Prepare for a Graduate Education?

- Clarify your career plans and goals
- Research the requirements of your career
- Research the requirements of your career path
- Maintain a competitive undergraduate GPA
- Participate in undergraduate research programs
- Talk with graduate students in your prospective field of study
- Develop positive relationships with faculty

What Should I Say or Ask When Speaking with Faculty?

- Let faculty know what you are interested in studying
- Ask faculty if they can recommend any schools or particular programs of study that fit your interests
- Ask faculty how you can best prepare yourself academically for graduate school
- Ask faculty what their experience in graduate school was like

Choosing a Program

- Review the literature from your classes.
 - Collect authors of your favorite articles, books, studies and citations and then see where those authors are working
- Visit Graduate Division & academic department websites
- Search for professional academic organizations in your field (MLA, AAAS, APA, ASA, etc.)
- Attend the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education
<https://www.caldiversityforum.org/>
- Try a Google search using terms such as “choosing a graduate school”
 - <http://gradschool.about.com/cs/choosingaprogram/a/select.htm>
 - <http://www.phds.org>
 - <http://www.gradschools.com>

The Right Graduate program



- Fits your interests
 - Has faculty with whom you can see yourself working with
- Offers flexibility
 - Interdisciplinary training is of particular benefit
- Has a record of placing students in your desired career path
- Offers co-curricular training
- Satisfies geographic considerations

Other considerations



- Reputation of department and faculty
- Faculty publishing record
- Social environment
- Demographics
- Focus on graduate vs. undergraduate students
- Infrastructure and resources
 - Amount and character of support offered
- Practical aspects
 - Housing, transportation
 - Location (geography relative to family/significant other, city characteristics, available extracurricular activities)

The Application



What are the Components of the Application?

- Application Form
- Statement of Purpose
- Letters of Recommendation
- Exam Scores (GRE, GRE-Subject, CBEST, etc.)
- Transcripts
- Application Fee (Waiver?)
- (Supplemental Materials--writing sample, lab hours)

What to do next?

- You should apply to 6-10 schools
- Find online application materials and email the department staff with any logistical questions about deadlines, application materials, appropriateness of visiting/contacting faculty, etc.
- Contact faculty (where appropriate) that you are interested in working with
 - Inquire about the compatibility of your interests and the research they are currently conducting
 - Tell them you are interested in applying to their program
- Contact students in the program
 - Have them share their own experiences/satisfaction

How is the Graduate Admissions Application Process Different?

- Decentralized among campuses
 - You apply to each campus separately
- Decentralized among departments
 - Your application must specify an academic department
- Role of the Department vs. Graduate Division
 - Departments make “decisions” and Graduate Divisions handle administrative details and finalize financial packages

General Admissions Processing Timeline: Review

August	Online application opens at www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/eapp
December 1-15	Many department deadlines close: each department has its own deadline, ranging from Dec. 1 to May 1.
January	Departmental nominations for central fellowships begin
January - February	Admissions notification begins for some departments
March	Admissions processing and notification continues
April 15	Student response & SIR deadline for financial support offers
May 1	Final application deadline for some departments
May 15	Registrar sends a reminder email to all students who have submitted an SIR confirming 1) Perm No, 2) PIN, 3) online registration instructions: "Welcome New Students" www.registrar.ucsb.edu/welcome/welcome-newdirect.htm
June 1	Graduate Division asks for final admissions decisions and any outstanding SIRs & SLRs

The GRE

- Uses a computer-based system
- Test is taken on appointment-bases
 - Offered throughout the year- no set date
- Scores:
 - Verbal: max 170
 - Math: max 170
 - Writing: 6 points (on a .5 scale)
- Subject Tests:
 - Biochemistry
 - Cell and Molecular Biology
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Computer Science
 - Literature in English
 - Mathematics
 - Physics
 - Psychology

Other Discipline-Specific Exams

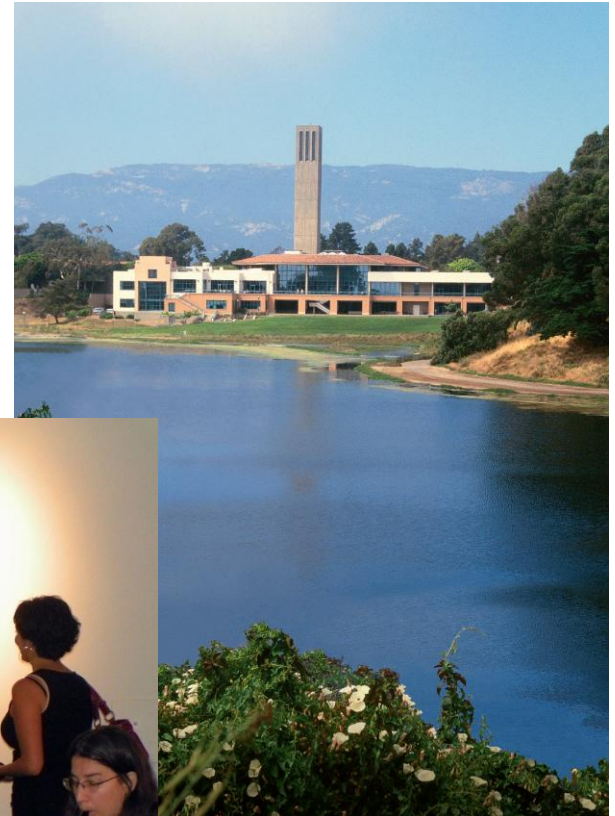
- Law School- LSAT
- Business School- GMAT
- Medical School- MCAT
- Teaching Credential- CBEST
- Teaching Credential- CSET

Tips on Submitting Writing Samples

- Writing samples are often required for admission to PhD programs in the humanities and social sciences. (Students in the sciences may be required to take the GRE subject tests and/or submit lab hours instead.)
- Each of the programs you are applying to will have different requirements regarding the length and subject of your writing sample. Some programs will want long writing samples; others will ask you to send a sample that does not exceed a certain page limit. Some programs will require writing samples that illustrate your ability to do independent research; others are less restrictive about what you can send. *Be sure to make careful notes of the writing sample requirements for each of the schools you are applying to.*
- Carefully proofread your writing sample for spelling, grammatical, and sentence-level errors.
- After proofreading, ask at least one faculty member to review your writing sample. Be sure you make any changes according to their comments before you submit it.



Post-Application



Not to Forget...

- Extramural funding opportunities
 - Housing Application
- Special Programs (AGEP, DIGSSS, etc.)
 - Summer Research Programs

McNair Scholars Program

Two-year undergraduate research program for juniors who want to pursue a Ph.D.

For more information:

Building 477, Office 124

805.893.3615

mcnair@mcnair.ucsb.edu

|

