

CHOOSING YOUR GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

Once you've decided that graduate school is right for you, the next task is to select a school and program that will meet your needs.

Some questions to consider when choosing a school or program

- + Which programs are offered? Do they specialize in your area of interest?
- + Where is the school located? (Is location important to you?)
- + What are the admission requirements? Do they require any standardized test scores?
- + Who are the faculty? (What are their areas of expertise? Are they distinguished? Are they soon to retire? Do they publish with students? Can you see yourself working with any of them, preferably with more than one?)
- + What other opportunities are available at the university, such as potential travel, research and personal growth?
- + Is graduate funding available? If so, how much funding?
- + What will tuition and living expenses cost?
- + What opportunities are available for gaining practical experience? Are there opportunities for internships, co-op placements or teaching assistant positions?
- + What is the quality of the resources available, such as laboratories, equipment and research materials?

How to find information

Start by visiting the website of the university you're considering and see what information you can find online. If you're having difficulty, the graduate admissions office should be able to provide general information about programs and faculty research interests.

Networking with your professors is another good place to start. Let them know which programs and schools you're considering and your research interests. They may have helpful insights.

Connect with your faculty adviser

Once you've narrowed down your list of potential programs, you can connect with the graduate adviser for each program you're interested in. The graduate adviser is a faculty member in your department of interest who liaises with prospective graduate students. They should be able to tell you more about the university, program and faculty.

Identify a potential supervisor

Depending on how the program is structured, you will also want to identify a potential supervisor at this time. A great supervisor is critical to your overall graduate experience because they will mentor you and oversee your academic work. They should be passionate about your subject area and invested in your success. It's a good idea to talk to other graduate students who have had the same supervisor to hear what their experiences were like.

Visit the campus

Consider visiting the campus if possible—this will give you an in-person “feel” for the institution and department. If possible, you can also meet with your potential supervisor, get a sense of other graduate students attending and see the research facilities and other resources. You can also explore the community around the campus—after all, you are possibly going to be living there for a few years!