

Finding, Researching and Paying for Graduate Programs

From Crown College Career Services

Finding universities that offer programs in your field:

- Visit websites of the colleges and universities that have the degree / program that you are seeking
- Speak with faculty or professionals in your field for recommendations
- Attend Graduate and Professional School fairs
- Contact professional organizations in your field

Researching graduate program

- Determine the criteria that are important to you and then make your decisions accordingly. Use your most important selection criteria to decide which schools to investigate further.
- Be aware of deadlines for applying, required testing and financial aid.
- Visit campuses, attend open houses, and sit in on classes.
- Talk with admissions representatives, faculty, and students.

Possible criteria for selecting a graduate program

- **Admissions Requirements:** GPA, required tests and test scores, work experience, course prerequisites.
- **Graduation Requirements:** Thesis? Comprehensive exams? Internships?
- **Programs and Specializations:** Theory or Practice based? Real work experiences? Concentrate on a particular theory base or specific population? Emphasis?
- **Faculty:** Faculty/Student ratio? Research interests? Research or teaching oriented? Amount of contact with faculty? Reputation? Involvement in professional organizations?
- **Reputation of Program in Field:** Accredited? Well-established or new? What are graduates doing now?
- **Multicultural opportunities**
- **Campus Location:** Do I want to live here for x years? Large/small town? Recreational/cultural facilities? Available housing?
- **Cost:** Tuition and fees? Financial aid? Possibility for graduate assistantship or scholarship? In-state tuition/reciprocity? Cost of living?
- **Career Assistance:** What do they provide?

Paying for graduate programs:

- Complete the FAFSA to determine eligibility for aid.
- **Grants and Scholarships:** They are usually achievement-based and do not have to be paid back. They can be institutional (offered by the university or department) or portable (offered by outside agency and used for school of choice)
- **Graduate Assistantships:** There are multiple options for these. **Teaching** - teach undergraduate introductory courses. **Research** - work with a particular professor. **Staff** - work in a university office or residence hall. Work a set number of hours each week in exchange for financial compensation that may include tuition and housing.
- **Loans:** Obtained through the financial aid process and based on need.
- Each college or university handles its grants, assistantships and loans differently. Inquire at each institution about what options are available and how to apply. Be aware! Deadlines for financial aid might be earlier than application to the program.
- For grants not offered by the institution, check published listings of scholarships as well as professional associations in your field.
- **Employer-Financed Schooling:** Some companies will provide reimbursement for tuition if relevant to current job.
- **Part-time Employment:** Many students continue to work part-time while in school.