

URI Career Services ♦ 228 Roosevelt Hall ♦ Kingston, RI 02881 ♦ (401) 874-2311 ♦ <http://career.uri.edu>

Is Graduate School in Your Plans?

Before making this important decision, carefully weigh the time commitment, financial considerations, personal adjustments and sacrifices, as well as your readiness to pursue graduate level work. Assess the value of a graduate degree in terms of entry into a profession, earning potential, and long-term career satisfaction. Graduate school is not the answer to a weak economy or poor job market. Rather, it is an avenue which enables you to become a master in a particular subject area. At the graduate level, you are expected to have clearly defined interests leading to an area of specialization.

Choosing and Evaluating Programs

Some graduate degrees are academic and others are professional in orientation. Academic degrees focus on original research while professional degrees stress the practical application of knowledge and skills required for practicing the profession, e.g., law, medicine, and education. To gain information about graduate programs that may interest you, be sure to conduct research by using the following resources:

- Consult faculty and professionals in your field
- Meet with a career advisor; use a variety of print resources located in the Career Resource Center and on the Career Services website: <http://career.uri.edu>
- Find information on each university's website. Contact graduate departments for more in-depth information about the programs that interest you.
- Visit schools and meet with representatives at graduate school fairs

As you evaluate each program, take into account such factors as the admissions requirements, quality of the program and faculty, special concentrations and courses related to your interests, the facilities, overall cost, location and size, employment of graduates and other personal considerations.

Applying to Graduate School

Application requirements differ among institutions and programs so read each school's materials carefully and note specific deadlines for the actual graduate school application as well as the financial aid or assistantship application. Consult the graduate school's website or Peterson's guides for details about which **admissions test** is required and find out when and where it will be administered. These tests vary by type of graduate study and include:

- GRE (Graduate Record Examination)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test)
- MCAT (Medical College Admission Test)
- MAT (Miller Analogy Test)
- PRAXIS (Professional Assessment for Beginning Teachers)

To register for the GRE and PRAXIS in Rhode Island, contact Prometric Testing in Warwick, RI, (401) 738-9172, www.prometric.com. To identify testing locations in other states and get testing administration information for individuals with disabilities, consult the ETS website at www.ets.org. Web site information for the GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT is listed below.

Official transcripts of your undergraduate work and typically **three letters of recommendation** are also required for admission. Request recommendations from faculty, administrators and employers who can clearly address your abilities, skills, character and accomplishments. Allow recommendation writers at least four to six weeks to write and send letters.

A **personal statement** that reflects your carefully examined objectives for attending graduate school is generally part of the application process. This essay is used to assess your enthusiasm and motivation for the field of study, what is interesting about you, your maturity, and your writing ability. Consult with faculty, a career advisor and publications in the Career Resource Center to identify guidelines and strategies for writing an effective essay.

Schools frequently require an **interview** as part of the application process. Prepare to discuss your goals and qualifications as you would for any interview. Because this is an opportunity for you to learn as much as the admissions committee, be sure to prepare questions that reflect your research about the program as well as what's important to you in terms of graduate study. Even if an interview is not required, you may want to visit campuses and ask to meet with a faculty member in the department to get a more in-depth sense of each program to which you've applied.

Financing Graduate School

Since financial aid is an important factor in choosing a program, it is crucial to explore options early. Most funding is administered directly by graduate departments and universities. Make sure you complete the school's financial aid application and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) early. Special fellowships, grants, and scholarships can be researched through various financial aid directories and data bases. Be sure you understand the definition of each institution's aid. Assistantships (both teaching and research), fellowships, and internships will vary in definition and provide different financial benefits. In addition, both student loans and loans available through banks, credit unions, etc. may be options you wish you explore.

General Print and Web Resources (print materials are located in the Career Resource Center, 223 Roosevelt Hall)

Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs (Vol. 1-7)

The Vault MBA Career Bible

The Vault Business School Buzz Book

The Vault Law School Buzz Book

How to Write a Winning Personal Statement

Graduate Admissions Essays

www.Petersons.com

www.GradSchools.com

www.princetonreview.com

Tests and Test Prep Web Sites

www.kaplantest.com

www.princetonreview.com

www.ets.org

GMAT: www.mba.com

LSAT: www.lsac.org

MCAT: www.aamc.org

MAT: www.millieranalogies.com