

GRADUATE SCHOOL

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON CAREER CENTER | CAREERCENTER@COFC.EDU

When choosing the right graduate school for you, there are many aspects to take into consideration. The first step is investigating schools that offer the program of interest. A helpful tool in researching schools and programs is <https://www.princetonreview.com/grad-school>. Programs will vary greatly depending on the school, so it's important to look into the requirements and dynamics of both the program and the school that offers it.

IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER

First, consider why you are going on to graduate school. If the root cause is that you want to postpone making a career decision, delay entering the job market, or to avoid leaving the school environment, it may not be the best time to pursue graduate school. However, if further education is necessary in order to attain your career goal, an advanced degree will enhance your career opportunities, or the additional education would provide you with personal satisfaction, then it may be wise to consider graduate school.

- Investigate the school's website to learn more about what they offer
 - Determine if the classes are in person, online, or hybrid
 - Would the program allow you to work while you attend graduate school?
 - Consider financial aid. Do they offer assistantships or fellowships?
- Professors have a large influence on the focus of their graduate program. Research the professors in the program to learn what their area of research is within the field and what their focus is for this program.
- Try to get an on-campus or virtual campus visit to better gauge fit. During this visit, set up a time to talk with a professor about the program and the future of most of their graduates.
- Plan to pay application fees as well as fees for any tests that are required for admission.
- Reach out to the department contact throughout the application process. It can be helpful for them to become familiar with your name. This may stand out to them as they sort through applications.

TIMELINE

Application deadlines vary by both the school and the program, so be sure to research the deadline for both. Be mindful that these application deadlines may affect your start date, so be mindful of researching the deadline for each school of interest based on your intended start date. Common deadlines fall in October and March.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Although application requirements will vary depending on the program, it is common for the following to be required. Check with your program to learn more about what is specifically required for you.

- Transcripts
 - GPA will be displayed through your transcripts. Do your best to achieve a high GPA in all your courses. However, the last 2 years of your education will receive more attention since you will likely have more major specific courses during this time.
- Test scores
 - The most commonly used test is the GRE, although some fields have their own test (LSAT, PRAXIS, MCAT, DAT, etc.)
- CV
- Personal Statement
- Letter of Recommendation
 - Usually require 2 faculty recommendations and 1 other
 - Strategically choose individuals you know will write a strong recommendation for you. If you reach out to a faculty member you did not engage with, your recommendation will likely be vague rather than strong.
 - Reach out to these individuals ahead of time to ask if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for you.

See additional handouts for tips on creating a CV and a personal statement.