

# Finding, Researching and Paying for Graduate Programs -

From Crown College Career Services

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## Finding universities that offer programs in your field:

- Internet: **www.gradschools.com** is great, but others are listed on the Career Services Web site, on the Career Planning page: **www.crown.edu/career**
- Visit Web sites of colleges and universities
- Speak with faculty or professionals in your field
- Contact professional organizations in your field
- Attend Graduate and Professional School fairs

## Researching graduate programs:

- Know why you want to go to graduate school. This will help you focus.
- **Be aware of deadlines** for applying, required testing and financial aid.
- Determine what criteria are important to you and then make your decisions accordingly. Use your most important selection criteria to decide which schools to investigate further.
- Talk with admissions representatives, faculty and students.
- Request graduate program information and application materials from schools.
- Visit campuses, attend open houses, and sit in on classes.

## Possible criteria for selecting a graduate program:

- **Admissions Requirements:** GPA, required tests and test scores, work experience, course prerequisites.
- **Graduation Requirements:** Thesis? Comps? 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?
- **Length of Program / Number of Credits**

- **Reputation of Program in Field:** Accredited? Well-established or new? What are graduates doing now?
- **Multicultural Opportunities**
- **Campus:** Convenient? Library? Technology? Appealing?
- **Cost:** Tuition and fees? Financial aid? Possibility for assistantship or scholarship? In-state tuition/reciprocity? Cost of living?
- **Geographic Location:** Do I want to live here for x years? Large/small town? Recreational/cultural facilities? Available housing?
- **Size of School and Program:** Large - better facilities. Small - more personal attention.
- **Career Assistance:** What do they provide?
- **Students in Program:** Demographics? Diverse? Areas of interest?

### **Paying for graduate programs:**

- **Fellowships and Grants:** 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)
- **Assistantships:** Teaching - teach undergraduate introductory courses. Research - work with a particular professor. Staff - work in a university office or residence hall. Work from 10-20 hours a week in exchange for a living stipend and/or tuition reduction or waiver.
- **Loans:** Obtained through the financial aid process and based on need. They include major programs such as Stafford Student Loans, Perkins Loans, and Plus Loans, as well as private lenders.
- Each institute 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.