

Graduate School & Funding Opportunities: Are you ready to Sink or Swim?



IBP Webinar: Funding Your Graduate Education
June 17, 2015

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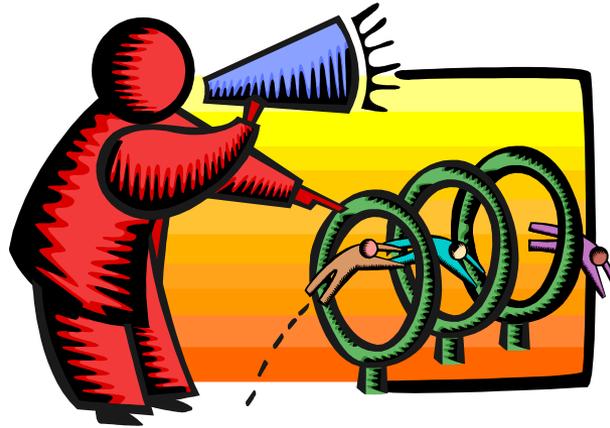
Acknowledgements:

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Is Graduate School Going Through Hoops?



- For people who:
 - want to make a difference in the world.
 - are not in a hurry to get a job or be rich.
 - desire satisfaction in their accomplishments.
 - want more earning power, higher self-esteem, leadership, and career longevity.

Graduate School?

1 Would you like to increase your income over your professional career?

2 Would you like to go to school for free?

3 Do you like making friends with people who are smart and capable of providing support throughout your career?

4 Would you enjoy making scientific contributions that impact society?

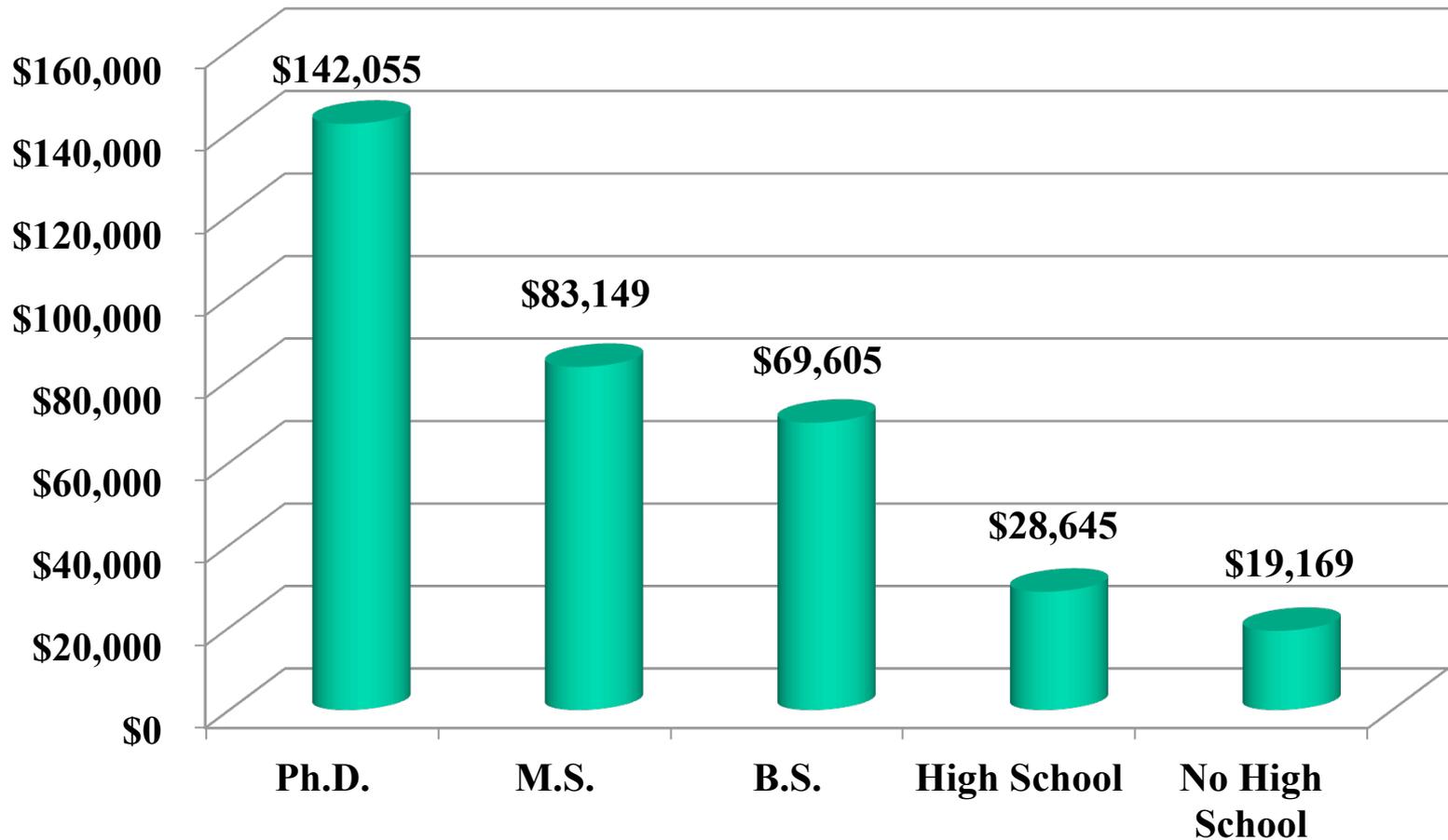
#5 Do you want to be a leader someone who helps to make decisions?

5 Do you want a career where you work hard, but have fun!!!!

Why Graduate School?



Fortune



U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment--People 18 Years Old and Over, by Total Money Earnings in 2008, Work Experience in 2008 Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex

Fame

- **Space Flight & Aviation**
- **Internet**
- **Nuclear Technology**
- **Lasers and Fiber Optics**
- **Health care Technologies**
- **Interstate Highway System**
- **Electronics**
- **Clean and Safe Drinking Water**
- **Computers**
- **Agricultural Mechanization**

What is Grad School Like?

- Graduate school is not “more of the same”
 - You specialize in your courses and assignments with research (thesis, dissertation) as the main activity

Graduate school is

- Exciting
- Relaxed at times
- Intense at others
- Independent



- Being part of something a community

Exciting, Fun, Rewarding!!!!



Professional Travel



Preparation to Become a Leader



Your Grad School Time Line: 2015-2016



August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

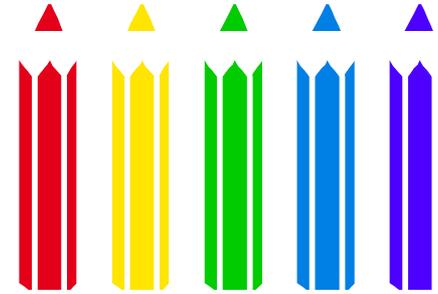
April

May

June/July

August

August 2015



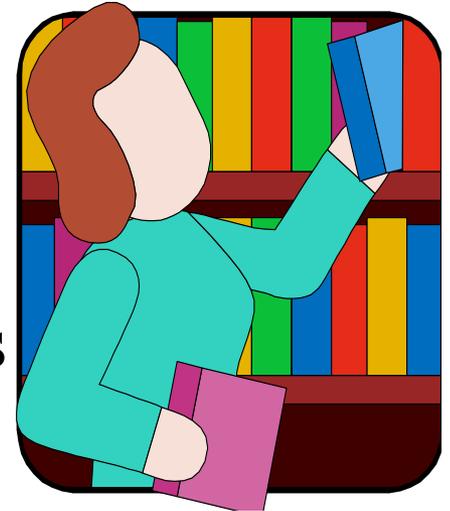
1. Explore graduate programs and their web sites, check for financial incentives. Review graduate program's catalogs, brochures. Talk to your professors and advisers.
2. Seek out faculty who are doing research in areas that you are interested in. Read their websites and publications.
3. Begin to select programs, choose a few you are confident to be admitted to graduate study; consider both masters and PhD programs.

Choosing your Graduate School

- Location (NEWS: North, East, West and South)
- Personal/family reasons, available housing
- Financial assistance, Costs, Fellowships, In-state tuition.
- Size-small, medium, large; unique features
- Program offerings-specialties, curriculum, length, hours
- Fit between you, your goals, and the program
- Program prerequisites (knowledge/skills/experience)
- Selectivity, competition, minority recruitment
- Reputation, remember you are applying to a program/dept.
- Specific faculty members you want to work with.
- Success of students completing program/obtaining jobs

September 2015

- Apply to take the GRE
- Request graduate programs' catalogs and Fellowship information
- Attend grad school fairs, forums, etc.
- Review catalogs, fellowship information
- Verify that you are enrolled for, and have taken all necessary courses for graduation
- Request transcript of all institutions attended and check for errors



October 2015



- Complete early fellowship applications
- Take the GRE Write personal statement
- Select 5 to 10 universities/programs you will apply to
- Visit your financial aid office, check for assistance outside institutional help
- Begin to ask faculty for letters of recommendation (faculty, REU advisors, honors college, etc.)

Writing Your Personal Statement

The personal statement gives you the opportunity to express your goals and reasons for seeking admission to a graduate program. Tell the program about you and why you are such a good candidate.

Take time to think about your reasons for seeking admission, take time to write 3 drafts, and have someone else edit your statement.

Statements must be tailored to program/discipline.

- Be Specific
- Align with Faculty Interests
- Be honest and upbeat
- Avoid “preaching”
- Do not make excuses



“Prime the Pump” . Ask yourself these tough questions :

1. What led you to choose this program?
2. Why do you want to enter THIS field rather than another?
3. What are your career goals?
4. What things about you that make you different from anyone else you know
5. I'm the graduate program director of the program to which you are applying. Why should I admit you, with full funding?
6. What skills do you possess that will be useful to a graduate program?
7. What obstacles have you overcome? How did you do it, and what have you learned through the struggle? – **Avoid Preaching or making excuses**

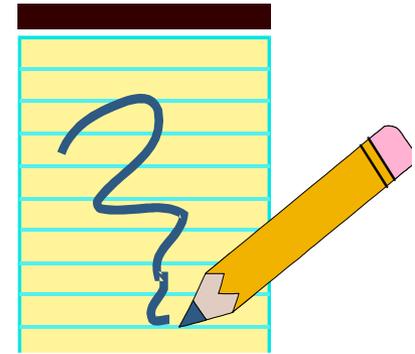
Personal Statement

Worksheet

- Brief opening statement _____
- Career goal(s) (motivation, desire, persistence, passion) _____
- (This is a good place to show rather than tell, use life experience from opening statement as a lead)
- Reason for selecting program/institution (faculty, curriculum, research areas, etc.) _____
(each school should get its own personalized statement with the program mentioned by name) _____
- Reason why program/ institution should select you (Research Interests and alignment with specific faculty in the Department, Research Experiences (REUs) National Presentations, Publications, Internships,) _____
- Leadership, Service, Community, Personal information _____
- Other important considerations (obstacles overcome, triumphs, etc.)

- Closing statement (restate motivation, end with positive note) _____

November 2015



- Continue to fill out fellowship applications
- Secure letters of recommendation
- Request transcripts to be sent to programs
- Begin to complete applications to graduate programs, follow instructions!

Financial Aid in Graduate School

- **Fellowship/Traineeship**, a grant comparable to a scholarship, no work is required. Outside fellowships awarded from outside the university (foundation, federal agency,)
- **Assistantship**, is comparable to work study, you are paid for work performed
- **Stipend**, is a grant of money that can be used for tuition or living expenses
- **Waiver**, usually for tuition, especially important if you are an out of state student
- **Student Health Insurance**

Assistantships

- **Research Assistantship (RA)**

Assist a professor on a research project. Student will normally derive thesis or dissertation from RA

- **Teaching Assistantship (TA)**

Teach sections or classes undergraduate courses or labs, or help grade papers/examinations

- **Graduate Assistantship (GA)**

Assist with a university, state government, or federal project supported by a grant: usually an administrative position

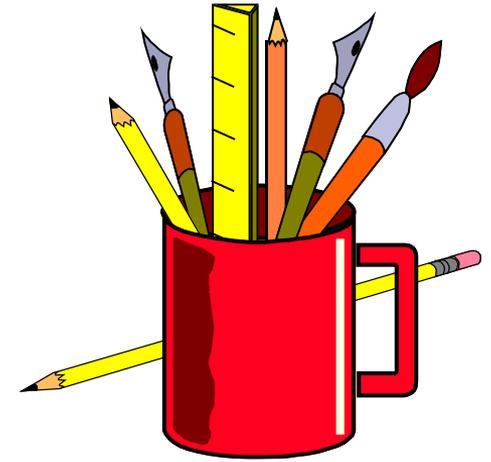
Fellowships or Traineeship

- Comparable to college scholarship
- Generally no work is required
- Can cover part or all of tuition
- May include a stipend for supporting the student
- May be awarded by the University or outside agency
- External (federal or private) fellowships are typically “portable”
- May require concurrent application/admissions to university, specific graduate program(s), and participation in program activities

National Fellowships

- [National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship](#)
- [National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship](#)
- [Science, Mathematics And Research for Transformation \(SMART\) Scholarship for Service Program](#)
- [NASA Fellowships](#)
- [Sloan University Centers of Exemplary Mentoring \(UCEMs\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)
- [Gates Millennium Scholars](#)

December 2015



- Complete and mail applications
- Submit fellowship / aid applications
- Take GRE again if needed
- Check that all materials have been sent, especially letters of recommendation
- Rest during recess and get ready for spring semester

January 2016



- Continue any steps from previous months if not completed
- **Verify** that all materials were received, especially letters of recommendation (same for summer research applications)
- Follow-up on any outstanding paperwork
- Remember that most application deadlines begin this month of January

Application Checklist

For each program you are applying complete this checklist:

Program: _____

Completed: _____ Follow up needed? _____

- _____ Personal Statement
- _____ Three Letters of Recommendation
- _____ Official Transcripts Requested
- _____ Standardized Test Scores
- _____ Application for Admission
- _____ Application for Financial Aid
- _____ Application for Fellowships
- _____ Copy of Income Tax Return
- _____ Other Information Requested
- _____ Fee Waiver Request



February/March 2016



- Check that applications were received
- Submit health forms if needed
- Follow up on any outstanding paperwork
- Set up visits to meet with faculty and graduate students and tour facilities

April 2016



- Plan your graduation activities
- Check for schools' response to your application by mid-April (April 15th)
- Accept best offer, write letter or acceptance and go forward with plans. Write letters of decline to other programs.
- Follow-up on financial needs and awards
- Begin to look for summer employment
- Consider starting RA early if possible.

May 2016



- Enjoy graduation!
- If your program applications are rejected, see about filing and appeal for reconsideration if your situation has changed or consider taking some grad courses as a non-degree seeking student
- Follow-up on employment and assistantship opportunities

June/July 2016



- Work during summer months to save \$\$\$
- Make housing arrangements
- Plan your travel to new school
- Have “seed money” for first few months until financial assistance is available

August 2016



- Arrive 2 weeks early and get settled
- Familiarize yourself with new surroundings
- If a job is needed start your search before others arrive
- Create a **budget** for your expenses, be prepared to have advanced money before fellowships are disbursed

Congratulations!

You are on your way to earning
a graduate degree!

M.S.



Ph.D.

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