

Is Graduate School the Best Option?

Graduate school sounds like a great option for.... what exactly? A chance to learn more, get a better job or are you looking to borrow a little more time before you hit the world of work? Whatever your reason, there's a lot to reflect on before deciding if graduate school is really the right step towards your future.

Consider these questions:

1. Do you have a clear idea of the career you want to pursue? Is a graduate degree a requirement for your career, will it make employment easier, or could it make your job search difficult because you'll be seen as overqualified for your field?
2. Who wants you to go to graduate school? Is it your interest and motivation pushing for the advanced degree or are you responding to advice from your parents or friends?
3. What can you do with your B.S. or B.A.? If you're afraid there's nothing you can do with your degree explore your career options with a member of our staff.
4. Will the time and money you spend on graduate school repay you for money and experience you will earn if you take a job beginning immediately after your undergraduate education?
5. Can you handle the financial strain of graduate study?
6. Is there another avenue for continued learning? For example, you could gain the marketable skills and knowledge you want through professional seminars and workshops or community college classes.
7. If you put off graduate school for a few years are there things you will gain?

Don't choose graduate school because you think you won't find a job. Some people say, "If I don't get a job, I'll go to graduate school." It shouldn't be your default option. Don't choose graduate school because you don't want to find a job or you are unsure of what your career interests really are. You'll be expected to have clearly defined goals to get into graduate school.

So, you've decided that graduate school is a good fit for your future plans. Congratulations! Many students question whether to attend graduate school right after receiving their undergraduate degree or after they work for a few years. There are good reasons to proceed either way. It depends on your own personal circumstances and your goals.

Reasons to start right after completing an undergraduate degree:

- You already have the momentum and discipline school requires
- You may have fewer obligations now than you will later
- Your desired career requires an advanced degree, even for entry-level positions

Reasons to wait a few years for graduate school:

- Confirm career goals by working in the field
- The graduate program that interests you requires work experience
- Obtain secure finances
- Bring a broader worldview to your studies
- Many employers pay for graduate school
- Improve your chances of getting into graduate school