IS GRAD SCHOOL FOR ME?

Centre for Student Involvement & Careers (CSIC)

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CAREER EDUCATOR
Types of Graduate Programs

- Research Programs (M.Sc, PhD)
- Professional Programs (Medicine, Pharmacy, etc.)
- Course-Based/Professional Masters (Master of Food Science (MFS), Masters of Food and Resource Economics)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based</th>
<th>Course-based/Hybrid</th>
<th>Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some course work</td>
<td>Clearly defined course / cohort model</td>
<td>Cohort based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research-based thesis</td>
<td>Final project, capstone, or graduating paper</td>
<td>Set program length and courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typically designed to prepare for future research (ie PhD) but can also be applied to various career paths</td>
<td>Typically designed to provide training to enter the workforce, but not a specific accreditation</td>
<td>Aligns with professional designation or accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>May have the opportunity for funding/stipends</td>
<td></td>
<td>Often more expensive than research-based programs</td>
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# TYPE OF DEGREE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate (Masters)</th>
<th>Graduate (PhD)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many topics in short detail</td>
<td>Fewer topics in more detail</td>
<td>Fewest topic in most detail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large lecture halls</td>
<td>Seminar-style discussions</td>
<td>Mostly independent research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course planning clearly set with pre-requisites</td>
<td>Some broad guidelines but fewer required courses</td>
<td>Research topic and direction set by you and your supervisor</td>
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<td>Some choice of assignment within pre-determined options</td>
<td>More choice of paper topics, lab work, other assignments, or courses</td>
<td>Most choice of academic work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typically 4+ years in length</td>
<td>Typically 1-3 years in length</td>
<td>Typically 4-7+ years in length</td>
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</table>

In Canada, most applicants will typically complete a Masters before doing a PhD.
EXPLORING OPTIONS

➢ If you are hoping to work in a specific field, research the educational background of people working in that field or talk with them. **Is a graduate degree necessary to do this kind of work?** Are there specific skills/topics it is important for you to cover in your graduate program?

➢ What is most important for you to gain from your graduate school experience? (industry connections, hands-on experience, skills in particular areas, the opportunity to research or learn about a certain area …)

➢ What ideas do you have about what graduate school is like? What kind of person do you imagine having a graduate degree?
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CHOOSING A GRAD PROGRAM

• Location
• Reputation of program/school
• Structure of program and opportunities
• Choice of supervisor (research programs)
• Funding available
• Perspective from current students and alumni
• Other?
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESUME AND CV

1) Length (CV can be longer, but most UG CVs are often in the 2 page range)
2) Focus (CV will typically focus mainly on research and academic accomplishments, although it might touch briefly on work and leadership experience, especially if related)
3) Design (typically much simpler in design/layout, no colors, graphics, etc.)
4) References (include full contact details for 3-4 references on your CV, no need to include references on a resume)
5) Progression Over time (a CV will likely always have the same sections that you will add to, and it will grow much longer over time vs a resume that might still be 1-2 pages at any point in someone’s career)
COMMON SECTIONS

Education (all post-secondary degrees, exchange programs, etc.)

Honors/Awards (Primarily academic)

Research Experience

Presentations (if applicable)

Publications (if applicable)

Teaching Experience (if applicable… may include T.A work, tutoring at a post-secondary level)

Work/Leadership Experience (often less detail than on a resume)
STATEMENT OF INTENT

• Think like a reviewer: what will they want? What makes someone a good social worker/data scientist/anthropology Ph.D. student?

• Are you telling them about yourself, or about your proposed work in the graduate program? Or both?

• What criteria are they looking for (i.e. academic performance, social engagement, volunteer work)?
UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

✓ Why is this the right opportunity for you? Why will you be successful if given this opportunity?
✓ How does this opportunity reflect your future plans/goals?
✓ Where does your desire to pursue this opportunity come from?
✓ What do they need to know about you to see why you are the right candidate?
ASKING FOR REFERENCE LETTERS

Who Do I ask?
- Usually (but not always) an academic working in a relevant research field
- Someone who knows you well (ish)
- Be strategic

When do I ask?
- Early! Give your letter writers plenty of time… but be aware they may not write until the last minute
- Reminders are okay (but don’t nag)
- Letter writers will often want to see a copy of your personal statement, CV etc.

How do I ask?
- Respectfully but confidently
- Have a meeting with your recommenders if possible
- Give them all the information to write a good letter. Help them to help you.
RESOURCES

Sample CVs and Resumes: https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae

Personal Statements and Statements of Purpose:
https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/personal-statement/
https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/statement-purpose/

Additional Resources and Information: https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/pursuing-grad-studies
Closing Thoughts...

There is often more than one path to the same goals.

Take the time to reflect and research.

Some uncertainty is inevitable.