IS GRAD SCHOOL FOR ME?

Centre for Student Involvement & Careers (CSIC)

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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)

TYPE OF PROGRAM

Research-based	Course-based/Hybrid	Professional
Some course work	Clearly defined course / cohort model	Cohort based
Research-based thesis	Final project, capstone, or graduating paper	Set program length and courses
Typically designed to prepare for future research (ie PhD) but can also be applied to various career paths	Typically designed to provide training to enter the workforce, but not a specific accreditation	Aligns with professional designation or accreditation
May have the opportunity for funding/stipends		Often more expensive than research-based programs

TYPE OF DEGREE

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

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

References

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/

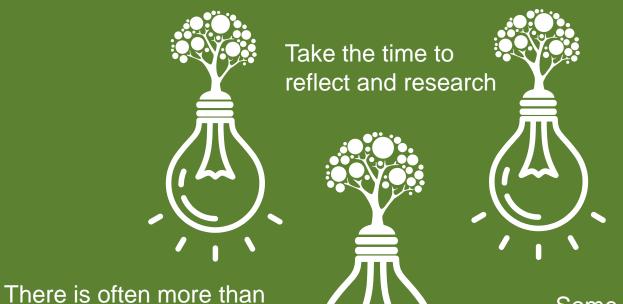**Additional Resources and Information:** https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/pursuing-grad-studies

Closing Thoughts...

Take the time to reflect and research

There is often more than one path to the same goals

Some uncertainty is inevitable

Q&A

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