

# GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

## Career Guide



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BALTIMORE**

Career and Internship  
Center

# Overview

## The Importance of Graduate School

Graduate school provides advanced learning in a specialized discipline. A graduate degree will provide an in-depth understanding for a student to become an expert in their topic of study.

Attending graduate school is a major decision that requires confidence in the program selection. Your selection should be based on personal, academic, and professional factors.

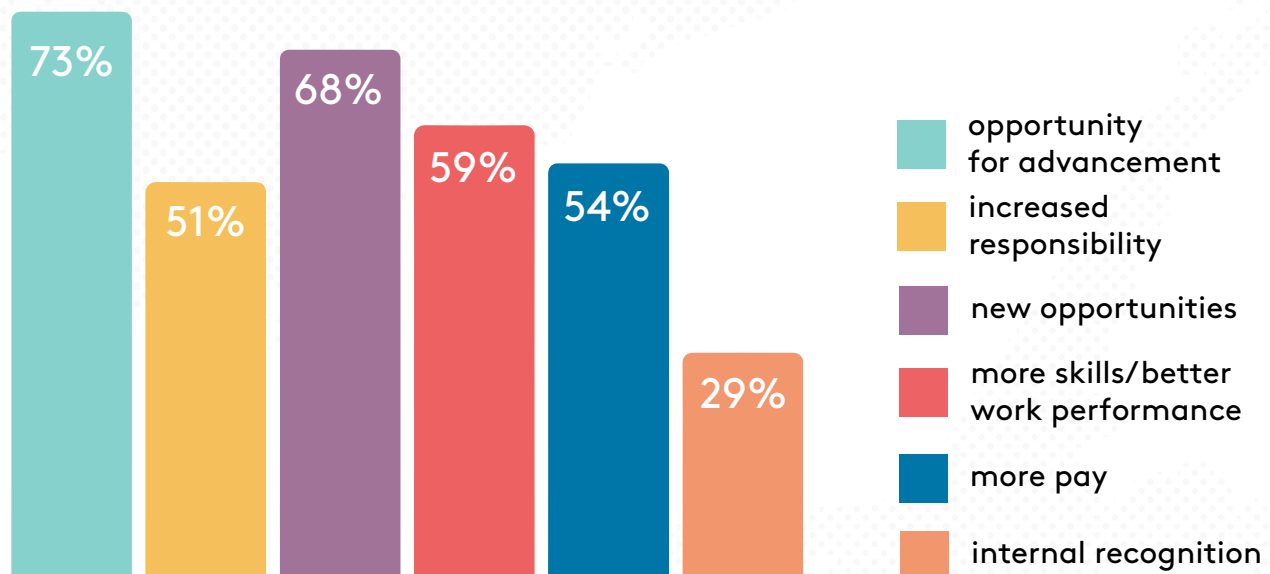
A student should consider graduate school when their career goals require advanced education, such as academia or specialized fields, to enhance skills, fulfill industry requirements, and gain a competitive edge in the job market.

## Breaking It Down

In 2020–21, postsecondary institutions in the United States conferred **1.1 million graduate degrees**,<sup>1</sup> an increase of 19% since 2010–11. More than two-thirds of these degrees (69%) were concentrated in five fields of study:

- business (202,300 degrees, 23%)
- education (153,800 degrees, 18%)
- health professions and related programs (142,000 degrees, 16%)
- computer and information sciences and support services (54,200 degrees, 6%)
- public administration and social services (49,400 degrees, 6%)

In the most recent UBalt Destination Report, graduate students surveyed reported a number of career-related benefits to attending graduate school.



<sup>1</sup> National Center of Education Statistics

# Step 1: Self-Assessment

## What are your professional goals?

Have you clearly defined your professional goals? This is a key step in deciding whether to attend graduate school. Depending on your goals, graduate school may be an important stepping stone when it comes to advancing your career. In other industries, it may not be strictly necessary to obtain a graduate degree.

## Can you afford graduate school?

A significant factor in determining the pursuit of advanced education is the financial allocation designated for graduate school tuition and related expenses.

## Is there an alternative pathway to achieve your goals?

While graduate school is very helpful in helping some achieve their goals, it may not be necessary for everyone seeking advancement. A few other ways to continue your education:

- Professional certifications
- Professional development programs
- Internships (while in undergrad)
- Industry specific training

## Other Considerations

How much will graduate school impact your personal life?

What is the current state of your field and its future?

**Are you sure of what you want to study?** If not, the Career and Internship Center provides the Strengths, Strong Interest Inventory, CareerLeader, and MBTI assessments for free.



# Step 2: Preparing to Apply

## Identifying Potential Institutions

Begin the application process by researching what schools have graduate programs that align with your interests. Narrow this down to a selection of 3–5 schools to apply to.

During this process, be sure to evaluate program rankings and accreditations. You can also connect to a school's alumni office or career services to ask about graduate rates and job success. Also consider the location and campus culture—it may be a good idea to visit campus, either in person or virtually.

## Academic Preparation

Review the admission requirements for your chosen schools, both general and specific. Is there a minimum GPA requirement? Are supplemental materials required for your program? Will you need to complete any testing, such as the GRE, GMAT, or LSAT?

When preparing for standardized tests, call to find out if your chosen school offers waivers, or if they recommend taking one exam over another. Some universities will accept an LSAT score in place of the GRE. If you've tested in the past, see if the school will accept an older score—some schools take tests from up to the last 5 years.

You should also find contact information for the head of your prospective department and/or your admission counselor to get an overview of the program or an opportunity to connect to speak about the program. Try to schedule an appointment to discuss the program. Many program directors will meet with a prospective student who has questions.

## Need to practice for the test?

Scan the QR codes below to gain access to free practice tests.



Kaplan (LSAT)



Princeton Review (GRE)

# Step 2: Preparing to Apply, cont.

## Gathering Application Materials

### Letter of Recommendation

Find out if there is an academia or working supervisor requirement, and also find out which is recommended. If you recently graduated, it is best to have your professors write your letter of recommendation.

### Statement of Purpose

This is your chance to sell yourself. Is your GPA below the requirement? Share downfalls and how you will be able to maintain the requirement moving forward. Is there a prompt? If so, follow it! You should also take a moment to articulate your career goals and demonstrate your fit into the program. Consider highlighting what skills make you a great candidate.

### Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Understand the difference between a resume and a CV, or curriculum vitae. A resume is a 1- to 2-page document highlighting your most relevant experience and achievements, whereas a CV details a full history of your academic credentials. The Career and Internship Center offers a helpful guide on how to prepare both a resume and a CV.



Resume Guide



CV Guide

### Transcripts

Find out if you need all credits received (community college) or just degree-conferred transcripts—it will save you a lot of money.

# Step 2: Preparing to Apply, cont.

## Funding and Scholarships

### **FYI: Graduate financial aid will be loan-based.**

Just because graduate school may seem financially out of reach does not mean you cannot attend. You may be able to find alternative funding sources to reduce or cover the cost of tuition, such as graduate assistantships, employment-based tuition remission or assistance, scholarships, and grants.

Research financial aid opportunities at your chosen schools. You can explore scholarships and grants, both inside and outside the institution. For example, some state delegates offer scholarships to residents of their districts. Many scholarships require you have FAFSA filled out (even if you do not plan to take out a loan).

You can also investigate employment opportunities that assist or cover tuition costs—some opportunities to consider and be on the lookout for are graduate assistantships\*, work-study positions, and other external employers that may offer partial or full tuition remission as part of their compensation package.

\*Graduate Assistantships (GA Positions) are a type of employment opportunity available to graduate students that provides them with financial support, professional development, and experiential learning opportunities. Graduate Assistants may work in various roles across campus, such as teaching assistants, research assistants, administrative assistants, or in other capacities depending on their field of study and the needs of the university. In exchange for their work, Graduate Assistants often receive a stipend or salary, tuition remission, and sometimes additional benefits like health insurance. These positions are highly sought after by graduate students seeking to gain practical experience in their field while pursuing their degree.

# Step 3: Applying

## Submitting the Application

When you are ready to submit your applications, be sure to follow all deadlines. Soft deadlines are great, but the sooner you apply, the more access to scholarship funding.

Also, be sure to double-check all of your materials. Ensure that the appropriate committees are addressed and that your letters of recommendation have the correct university or program listed.

## Following Up

Once your applications are submitted, now is the time for follow-up. Send thank-you notes to your recommenders, and prepare for any interviews if applicable.

You should also begin monitoring the process of your applications. Many schools will have a portal you can access to avoid a lot of calls or emails.

## Want help from a Career Coach?

See below to find out who your assigned Career Specialist is.



 **ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
UBalt Career Community  
The Career and Internship Center

Daniel Bowley



 **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**  
UBalt Career Community  
The Career and Internship Center

Helen Pittman



 **BUSINESS**  
UBalt Career Community  
The Career and Internship Center

La-Toya Gomez

# Step 4: Once Admitted

## Making Your Decision

When evaluating your admission offers, it is prudent to thoroughly assess each option and select the institution that aligns most closely with your career or personal objectives. Additionally, take into account the financial aid packages and other forms of support available. It is essential to recognize that the suitability of a graduate school extends beyond academic reputation alone; rather, it encompasses a holistic alignment with your aspirations and values. Thus, prioritizing the congruence between your goals and the institution's offerings is paramount in making an informed decision regarding graduate education.

## Conclusion

Upon finalizing your decision, take a moment to reflect on the journey of your application process. Consider the insights gained throughout this experience and contemplate how they can be leveraged to facilitate a seamless transition into graduate studies. Reflecting on the challenges overcome, strengths honed, and lessons learned can inform strategies for navigating academic rigor, adapting to new environments, and maximizing opportunities for growth and success in your chosen program. By integrating these insights into your preparation for graduate studies, you can enhance your readiness and optimize your prospects for a fulfilling educational experience.

## Still wondering if graduate school is for you?

We highly recommend scheduling an appointment with your Career Coach to explore and refine your career goals, particularly as you embark on the graduate school application process. Even if you are confident in your decision to pursue advanced education, engaging in a discussion with your coach can offer valuable insights and clarity regarding your professional aspirations. Additionally, for those considering the University of Baltimore for graduate studies, we can facilitate connections with your assigned graduate counselor to further support and guide you through the application journey.





### **Career and Internship Center**

UBalt Student Center, Room 306  
410.837.5440  
careercenter@ubalt.edu  
ubalt.edu/careercenter


#### **Hours:**

Monday-Wednesday: 9 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Thursday: 9 a.m.–7 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m.–6 p.m. (virtual only)

For extended and walk-in hours, visit  
ubalt.edu/careercenter.

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