

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL GUIDEBOOK



**MORAVIAN
COLLEGE**
CAREER & CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT

CENTER FOR CAREER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

www.moravian.edu/careercivic

CAREERCIVIC@MORAVIAN.EDU

610-861-1509

MORAVIAN COLLEGE

CENTER FOR CAREER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

careercivic@moravian.edu

www.moravian.edu/careercivic

610-861-1509

Center Drop-in Hours: Monday-Thursday: 2-4pm



@MCCareerCivic



Moravian College Center
for Career and Civic
Engagement



MCCareerCivic

DECIDING ON GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

REASONS TO ATTEND

- **Passion:** You are interested in this area of study and have a love for the field.
- **Specialization:** Your undergraduate major gave you a broad overview of the field. Graduate school will (in most cases) have more specialized/specific concentration areas within your field. If you are interested in the specialization, graduate/professional school will help you gain that knowledge.
- **Necessity:** Certain career fields require graduate/professional school.
- **Advancement:** Certain career fields require graduate/professional school for career advancement and marketability.
- **Salary:** You would like to maximize your earning power.
- **Motivation:** You are motivated to finish your graduate/professional degree now.

REASONS NOT TO ATTEND

- **Indecision:** It is common to be unsure what you would like to do post-graduation. Diving into graduate/professional school when you are not certain of your next-steps is not a good reason to attend.
- **Prolonging the Inevitable:** It is common to be nervous about entering the “real world” Going to graduate/professional school to avoid finding a career or job after graduation prolongs the inevitable.
- **Salary:** Avoid seeking graduate/professional school to get more money in a field that you are not interested in.
- **Pressure:** People try to be helpful in your career decision-making. They may strongly suggest graduate/professional school. You know yourself best. Ask yourself if you are really interested in attending and if the timing is right.
- **Motivation:** You are not ready to commit to X number of years in graduate/professional school.
- **Expense:** Graduate/professional school can be expensive. If you are finding that you cannot afford it at this time, you may decide to wait until your finances are more able to afford the expense.

NEED HELP DECIDING?

Contact the Center for Career and Civic Engagement to schedule an appointment:
610-861-1509
careercivic@moravian.edu

CHOOSING A GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

You've decided to apply to graduate school. How do you find the program that is right for you?

Make sure to research in order to find out what programs are available and which would be best for you. You should consider several areas when you make this decision.

WHERE TO START

Don't know where to start? Try these third-party guides to find programs of interest:

- www.petersons.com
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.universities.com
- www.gradschools.com

TYPE OF PROGRAM

- What degrees are granted?
- How long does it take to complete the degree?
- Do you have prerequisite courses to fulfill?
- Are there any other requirements?

QUALITY AND REPUTATION

- What is the reputation of faculty and alumni?
- What are the admission standards and how much care is taken when selecting graduate students?
- Is the program accredited?

LOCATION AND SIZE

- How large is the department?
- What is the faculty-to-student ratio?
- What is the typical class size?
- How near will you be to friends and family?
- Do you prefer a small university? A more urban setting? Certain types of cultural activities?

COST AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- What are the opportunities for fellowships, assistantships and scholarships?
- How does the cost of living of the area compare with that of other places?

VISIT!

The **best** way to get a feel for the schools you are interested in is to **visit them in person**. You can do this before you apply, after you apply but before you know if you were accepted, and after you have accepted.

- Explore the campus and surrounding area
- Meet with some faculty members and current students
- Check out the offices, library, laboratories, and other facilities

GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

JUNIOR YEAR/SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- Research schools and academic programs
- Research financial aid
- Visit schools
- Send for applications and materials
- Check application deadlines
- Take test prep courses (or free online practice tests)
- Draft personal statement/essay

EARLY FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

- Talk to Center for Career and Civic Engagement Staff and faculty to discuss personal statement
- Ask for letters of recommendation, giving your recommenders deadlines, submission instructions, and any useful materials, like your resume and/or personal statement, to help them write the letter
- Register for and take graduate admission exams
- Request financial aid materials

LATE FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

- Request transcripts from Registrar
- Complete applications and submit them

WINTER OF SENIOR YEAR

- Complete applications and submit them if you have not yet
- Fill out and send financial aid forms, including the FAFSA (often due before application deadline)
- Check with schools to make sure your file is complete

SPRING OF SENIOR YEAR

- Wait for responses from schools
- Solidify financial aid plans
- Visit schools where you are accepted

APPLYING FOR GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY?

Each graduate/professional school will request different entrance requirements. Review each school's admissions requirement. Below are the most common requirements and some tips regarding these pieces:

APPLICATION

Check the graduate/professional school's website for their application deadline(s). Applications are typically due in late fall or early spring of your senior year. Either way, complete your application early!

Some programs will offer rolling admission. Rolling admission allows for applications throughout the year until the program is full. Apply sooner than later for these programs.

GRADUATE ADMISSIONS TESTS

Practice the test:

- www.kaplan.com
- www.petersons.com
- www.princetonreview.com

Take the test:

- GRE www.ets.org/gre
- MCAT www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/
- LSAT www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/about-the-lsat/
- GMAT www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam.aspx
- DAT www.ada.org/en/home-ada/education-careers/dental-admission-test
- OAT www.ada.org/en/oat
- PCAT pcatweb.info/
- MAT www.milleralogies.com

NOTE: Not all graduate/professional schools require graduate admissions test scores.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Start early!** Don't wait until the deadline to ask for recommendations. Allow for a 6-8 week completion time.
- **Pick faculty and internship supervisors who have a good opinion of you**, knowledge of your work, and familiarity with the discipline that you desire to study in graduate school and will write you a positive recommendation.
- **Make sure to send those you have asked to write a letter a copy of your resume**, a list of courses you have taken with them (if applicable), examples of your strongest work, and anything else the person may ask you to send.
- **Be sure to also send them a thank you note.**

NOTE: Every person that writes a letter of recommendation has a different style. They may require different information to complete your letter. Give them exactly what they ask for so they are able to complete a letter that is the best representation of you as possible. Some writers will allow you to view your letter of recommendation, others will not. Please respect the style of the writer.

PERSONAL STATEMENT/ ADMISSIONS ESSAY

This is arguably the most important aspect of your application. Make sure to put time and effort into writing a good one. You should also plan to write multiple drafts and be sure to follow instructions exactly regarding length, topic, etc. Obviously, do not have grammar or spelling mistakes. Be original and creative without being cliché or using gimmicks. Be positive and use a positive tone throughout.

Note: You can schedule an appointment to have your personal statement reviewed by the Center for Career and Civic Engagement staff.

What might schools be looking for in your essay?

- **Passion:** A desire to commit to and succeed in this field.
- **Career/Goals:** Where do you see yourself going? How is this program going to help you to get there? Show how you will use the program to accomplish career goals following the completion of the program.
- **Interest:** What topic(s), populations, etc. interest you?
- **Experience:** (*Research, work experience, academic experience, internship experience*) Why should they accept you? What do you offer their program?
- **Education:** What knowledge do you have that will help you to be successful in this program?
- **Fit:** Why do you see yourself in this particular program? (This will be different for each program.) Sell why you are a good fit for the program.
- **Uniqueness:** How do you stand out amongst all other applicants?

RESUME/CV

- **Resume:** Typically, a one-page document highlighting your experience and skills in a clear and concise way.
- **C.V.:** Usually a document that is more than one page with a detailed description of your experiences. Academic experience should be described in more depth.

Note: See our Resume and Cover Letter Guidebook for more information about writing a resume or C.V.

TRANSCRIPTS

- Make sure you send official transcripts.
- Undergraduate G.P.A., major and success in relevant courses are reviewed.

INTERVIEW

Programs may require an interview for acceptance. This can be an individual or group interview, based on the preference of the program. Not all graduate/professional schools will require an interview.

Note: See our Interviewing Guidebook for more information about interview types and skills.

AUDITIONS/PORTFOLIOS

- May be required for art, music, theater, journalism, architecture, and dance programs.
- This is an opportunity to showcase your talents. Be prepared and organized.

PAYING FOR GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

Financial support is available for graduate and professional studies, but it might be a different process than you were used to during your undergraduate career. There are several ways to fund your continued education:

Note: For both assistantships and fellowships, don't wait to get accepted into a program. Apply for these opportunities early.

- **Assistantships:** Pay your tuition and/or a small stipend, but require you to work for the university part-time. This can be research, teaching, or practice based.
- **Fellowships:** Grants from foundations and other sources that pay your tuition and/or a small salary.
- **Scholarships:** Free money! Not as widely available at the graduate level.
- **Federal work study:** Employment opportunities for students demonstrating financial need. Fill out and submit your [FAFSA](#) form. *Some institutions only allow undergraduate students to participate in the Federal Work Study program.*
- **Student loans:** Typically have lower interest rates than private loans. Fill out and submit your [FAFSA](#) form to be eligible for Stafford Loans.
- **Private loans:** Often at a higher interest rate than student loans. *Avoid private loans if possible.*
- **Part-time/full-time job:** Can help to supplement the cost of a graduate/professional school program. Full-time employers may also provide tuition assistance. The type of program (night, day, part-time or full-time, etc.) will help you to determine if and to what degree, employment is possible during your program. Some programs are extremely intensive and will not allow for time to work.
- **Military or educational benefits:** Can be used toward a graduate/professional degree. Contact the Financial Aid Office of the graduate/professional school (s) that you are applying to determine eligibility.

MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.finaid.org

www.studentaid.ed.gov

www.fastweb.com

www.accessgroup.org

www.collegescholarships.org