

So....You Want to Go to Graduate School: A Workshop on the Process and its Perils

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Worksheet and Resources: Grad School Decisions in Five Steps

1. Assess yourself honestly.

- On a piece of paper, briefly describe your ideal workday.
- Briefly describe one thing you are infinitely passionate and curious about.
- Then, briefly describe one impact you want to have on the world.
- Finally, how do you want to be remembered when you're gone from this world?

2. Educate yourself about program types and the career paths associated with them.

3. Identify schools you would apply to based on criteria that will affect your career outcomes and quality of life (faculty mentors, institutional resources, economic support, career outcomes of previous graduates, debt load of graduates). Location should be your LAST concern.

4. Set a timeline for your application process.

- If schools require a GRE (standard test and subject test), give yourself two test cycles before the due dates of your applications.
- Make sure that your recommenders have 6-9 weeks notice that you need a letter and be prepared to nag them until the letter has been received by the program to which you've applied.
- Your application materials (personal statements and writing sample) should be ready to go by Thanksgiving prior to application deadlines.

5. Draft, redraft, revise, and refine your personal statements and writing samples mercilessly.

Links to helpful resources:

MLA Advice to Graduate Students: From Application to Career: http://www.mla.org/advice_grad

MLA Report: Rethinking the MA Degree for the 21st Century: <http://www.mla.org/pdf/2011adhocrpt.pdf>

MLA Directory of Doctoral Programs: http://www.mla.org/gdp_intro

CFP Database: <http://www.cfplist.com/>