



Seven critical components to include in your research on graduate schools

Consider keeping a “Graduate School” notebook where you can collect materials and hand-written notes about every school/program you are researching.

1. ALLOW ENOUGH TIME. Allow at least 6 months before you apply to review websites, gather info, contact helpful people and visit the campus.

- What semester do you want to start grad school? _____
- So when should you start researching? _____

2. KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY. Learn about what professionals in your chosen career do every day. Interview them. Do they like it? Would they do anything differently? What are the pros and cons of the job?

- List three people who have the job you want.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Schedule a day and time to chat with all three. Take good notes during the chat.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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3. TOSS A WIDE NET. Start with the internet and research at least 5-10 possible programs and schools. (Consider searching for broad keywords such as “Graduate programs in business.”)

Which have you chosen to research further?

1	2	3	4	5
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4. USE A SPREADSHEET. TRIO has an Excel spreadsheet that helps you compare different programs and the aspects that are most important to you in deciding what is best. Or feel free to create your own.

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5. **TEST THEIR PROGRAM.** Choose an important question you can't find the answer for and send an email to the program's admission office.

- What question did you choose? _____

For each program, keep track of the following:

1. How long did it take to hear back?
2. Was my question answered in a friendly and professional manner?

If you feel you were treated poorly as a prospective student, how will you be treated after you are enrolled?

6. **VISIT THE CAMPUS.** Will the physical and cultural environments be something you are comfortable with? Are the facilities up to date? What are their support programs like? Depending on the program you pursue, you may be on campus every day.

1. What are two things that are important to you about a college campus?
 - a.
 - b.
2. What support programs do you hope to find? Does the campus have them?
 - a.
 - b.

7. **TALK TO CURRENT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI.** Create a list of questions for students and alumni. Ask the program's admissions office to find currently enrolled students and alumni to speak to. Contact them. Request a few moments of their time and ask them to be candid.

List three questions you want to ask them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now create a timeline working backwards. Get out a calendar, mark the application deadline, and fill in the dates you want to gather all your materials—just like doing a term paper. Enjoy the process!