

Researching Graduate Programs

Researching graduate programs and schools can seem daunting, but the following steps might be of some help.

1. Decide on the type of graduate program that interests you. Some factors to consider include:

- Size
- Faculty
- Location
- Facilities
- Reputation
- Financial Aid
- Tuition
- Student Organizations
- Campus Environment
- Placement Rates

Peterson's Guides--various guides that outline what degrees are offered by what colleges and universities--are an excellent resource and can be found online or in most university career centers.

2. Research specific programs and develop and rank a criteria sheet to compare different schools and programs.

- Research program department catalogs as opposed to general catalogs to get more specific information about program faculty, coursework, etc.
- Review specific Peterson's Guides to compare programs
- Review educational rankings to find out program/school rankings
- Talk to faculty members to learn about the schools they attended
- Identify professional associations in your career field. These groups often publish guides to graduate education targeted specifically to one profession or career.

3. Begin narrowing your options.

- Visit the campuses you are considering.
- Talk to people you know who attended the school you are considering to get more insight into their programs.
- Ask the department for the names of current graduate students who might be willing to talk to you about their experience with the program.

Source: Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling, 2017