

[CONSIDERING GRADUATE SCHOOL, PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION? RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS.]

If you are nearing completion, or if you have graduated with a degree, you may be considering further education. The choices are endless. In addition to a host of existing programs, recently, universities have developed hundreds of new programs. How do you know what is “out there”?

Research is important. Through this process, you can discover programs that specifically address what you would like to learn and your career goals.

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Content

If you were to pursue a program:

- Exactly what would you study?
- What courses are required?
- What are the requirements to complete the program?
- Are there choices of optional courses in the program?
- What stream or discipline would you focus on?
- Examples of a thesis or project submitted by previous students may provide you with insight into the content of this particular course of study.
- Biographical descriptions including descriptions of research, publishing, career and educational backgrounds of faculty and previous students can give you an idea of where this program could take you and reveal more about content.

One discipline, multi-discipline or professional education

Traditionally, graduate degree programs focus on one discipline. Your major in undergraduate study may be in this discipline.

- However, students may “jump” from their undergraduate major into a different field.
- There are cross-discipline or interdisciplinary master’s degrees where candidates for admission may come from more than one undergraduate major.
- There are increasing numbers of professional graduate school programs that may be career-focused, where students’ assignments would be connected to current or future employment.

Is it “course-based” or “thesis-based”?

- Thesis-based programs tend to have less course work. Students spend more time on research. They focus on a specific topic which may be described as a “question”. They submit research information and papers related to the process of discovering possible answers to the “question”.
- Sometimes, in addition to course work, a student must submit written work and make an oral presentation.
- Course-based programs tend to have more courses, and may require a paper or a project near the end of your studies.
- Professional graduate degree programs may require a project related to a specific profession or experiential, onsite learning in addition to course work.

Faculty

- As you review biographies of faculty members in the department, look for individuals with academic and professional interests that have some connection to your own learning goals.

Admission requirements

- Do you have the required GPA, undergraduate courses, work experience, volunteer experience and results from standardized examinations (if required) to enter the department?
- Most graduate schools focus their admission requirements on the GPA from your last two years or sixty credits in your undergraduate degree course of study.

Fees

- What are the costs including application fee, tuition, supplies, books and accommodation?
- What funding resources are available?

Geography: residence or distance programs

Traditionally, graduate schools require residency.

- With advances in technology, an increasing number of programs can be completed with a blended learning model. For example, you may travel to another city and live there for approximately six weeks each year to take courses on campus. When you go home, you would take other required courses and complete papers or projects by distance (online).
- Distance only: some programs are completed entirely online.
- Other programs have varying combinations of distance/residency requirements.



Length of program

- How long will it take you to complete your graduate degree? Most websites give you an estimate.
- Different people complete their studies at different times, depending on individual life circumstances and demands of course work, research and projects.
- Most universities define the maximum amount of time you have to complete your degree on their websites.

Legitimacy of the Program

There are many new and online programs. How do you know whether your degree is from a legitimate educational institution?

- Most provincial and state governments have information about the educational institutions within their jurisdiction.
- Professional associations may be helpful. Association websites often include a list of institutions and programs which will qualify you to work within a specific profession. If the university you are applying to is not listed, contact the association by e-mail or telephone to check.

THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES MAY HELP YOU WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Canadian and International websites:

Study in Canada: www.studyincanada.com (click on graduate/professional schools)
Canada's Higher Education and Career Guide: www.Canadian-universities.net (click on graduate programs)
Grad Schools: www.gradschools.com
Grad Source: www.gradsource.com
Peterson's Guide: www.petersons.com (click on grad school home)
Grad School Finder: www.gradschoolfinder.com
Top Universities: www.topuniversities.com/gradschool
The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com (click on the 'grad' tab and then schools & programs)
Grad View: www.gradview.com
A 2 Z: www.a2zcolleges.com (click on grad schools)
International Graduate: www.internationalgraduate.net
Alberta Learning Information Service: www.alis.alberta.ca/edinfo/Content/RequestAction.asp?aspAction=GetHomePage&Page=Home
Memorial University-Newfoundland: www.mun.ca/become/graduate

University websites:

- Look for the Faculty of Graduate Studies websites.
 - > Look up the departments where you think you may study.
 - > Check the list of faculty to find their research interests.
- If you cannot find all the information on the website, submit your questions to the admissions advisor in the department.
 - > Be thoughtful. Compile your questions. For example, if you are emailing, save questions in draft to give yourself time to recall any additional questions.
 - > Add new questions to the draft, then send the entire email or make the phone call.
 - > Advisors tend to prefer this instead of responding to several inquiries, every day.

- The following are examples of Alberta universities that offer graduate and professional education programs.

University of Alberta: www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca
University of Calgary: www.grad.ucalgary.ca
University of Lethbridge: www.uleth.ca/graduatestudies
Athabasca University: www.athabasca.ca/calendar/grad
University of Alberta-Extension: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/mact
Concordia University College of Alberta: www.concordia.ab.ca/prospective/admission/application_graduate.php
University of Alberta Law School: www.law.ualberta.ca
University of Calgary Law School: www.law.ucalgary.ca
University of Alberta School of Medicine: www.med.ualberta.ca
University of Calgary School of Medicine: www.medicine.ucalgary.ca
University of Alberta School of Dentistry: www.dent.ualberta.ca
University of Calgary-Veterinary Medicine: www.vet.ucalgary.ca

Communicate with Current Students:

- Sometimes, department websites include email addresses of current students who have agreed to communicate with prospective applicants about the program.
- Be thoughtful; save questions in draft to give yourself time to recall any additional questions.
- You may ask current students questions such as:
 - > What was the application process like?
 - > Do they have tips for you as you apply to the department?
 - > Do they enjoy the program?
 - > What do they like most? What do they like least?
 - > What are their research interests?
 - > Is the student doing a thesis, a paper, examinations or a project? What topic(s) are they working on? At what point during the course of study do you start working on this?
 - > What courses has the student taken and what were they like?
 - > Are they involved in student activities (i.e. a Graduate Students' Association)?
 - > Do they have suggestions about sources of funding for the course of study?
 - > Any ideas or suggestions in regards to living accommodations?
 - > If you are moving, you might ask about the environment on campus and the city that the university is located in.

Check Professional Association Websites

MacEwan Library: www.library.MacEwan.ca
You may access information about:

- How to use your undergraduate degree (including information on careers and further education).
- Researching graduate school or professional education programs (including specific information related to disciplines or majors of interest to you).
- Preparing your application for graduate school or professional education.
- Standardized examinations (which may be required for applications)

Find Information in Public Libraries

CHECK OUT THE OTHER BROCHURES IN THIS SERIES:

DECIDING [Should I Apply for Graduate Study or Professional Education]
APPLYING [Applying for Graduate School or Professional Education]
FINANCING [Financing Your Graduate School or Professional Education Degree]
WRITTEN STATEMENT [Preparing Your Written Statement for Graduate School or Professional Education]
RESUME [Preparing Your Resume, CV or Portfolio for Application to Graduate School or Professional Education]
STANDARDIZED EXAMS [Writing Standardized Examinations for Your Application to Graduate School or Professional Education]
INTERVIEWS/AUDITIONS [Preparing for your Interview or Audition for Graduate School or Professional Education]
CHECKLIST [Researching and Applying for Graduate School or Professional Education, A Checklist]

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL LIAISON AT GRADSCOOLLI@MACEWAN.CA OR 780-633-3405]

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