



Graduate school TOP 10 TIPS

Making the decision to go to Graduate school is not just for those pursuing a career requiring an advanced degree. It can also be an option for those making a career change after years of experience OR better preparing themselves from their undergraduate years. The JCU Center for Career Services can help you with one-on-one advising regarding the decision making process and reviewing necessary resources for the Graduate school planning and application process.

1. **Select an Area of Study:** There may be various options for the same or similar occupational path. Research programs at various schools using resources such as: www.graduateschools.com and www.petersons.com. Check with professional associations for common programs and advice.
2. **Network:** Meet with current faculty members, use John Carroll University Carroll Contacts on LinkedIn and other networking groups to seek advice and mentors in your field of choice. Reading bios on University websites of faculty or executive leadership bios on corporate websites can also help identify what advanced degrees others have on their résumé.
3. **Decide on Schools of Interest:** Check on accreditations, faculty research areas and entrance requirements using sites such as www.princetonreview.com.
4. **Request Reference Letters:** Normally, at least one academic and one professional reference are required, but check with your program of interest. Submission of letters varies by schools, and is often a confidential process. You will provide your references with the necessary documents and mailing pieces for them to complete and mail.
5. **Schedule a Test Date:** Using sites such as www.ets.org and www.gre.org or www.lsatsat.org you can identify where, when and how to schedule the appropriate graduate entrance exam.
6. **Compose Essays:** Graduate school applications will require personal statements and short answer essays. You will want to write the personal statements customized to each school. Understand the program and why you have selected it as an option.
7. **Complete Résumé:** Applications will require a résumé or curriculum vitae (CV). The JCU Career Center can help in developing the most effective résumé for your application as well as guide you through the CV process. Our Career Guide has samples of both, available online at: <http://sites.jcu.edu/careercenter/pages/additional-career-resources/>.
8. **Complete Applications:** Be sure you have applications deadlines confirmed and all requirements included before submitting.
9. **Applying for Financial Aid:** Scholarships, private funding and federal funding are available as in undergraduate programs. Researching each institution via their financial aid departments as well as resources in your community using sites such as www.finaid.org, www.collegeboard.com, and www.fastweb.com.
10. **Prepare for Your Interview:** An interview is not always required, but it is always best to be prepared. You can discuss interview preparation and participate in mock interviews with a Career Advisor at the JCU Career Center or by using InterviewStream via Career Connection.