Graduate School Road Map

Resources to Apply to Graduate School

Route Marker 1: Personal Reflection

**PURPOSE:** Why am I applying to graduate school? What are my career goals?
- Schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor to chat more about your direction. You can do this via ClaremontConnect.
- Speak with a faculty member in your department to learn more about opportunities within the industry and how graduate school may help.

**EXPERIENCES:** Do I have the relevant experiences to apply to graduate school at this point? What skills and experiences do they value?
- Consider applying for a Sponsored Internship in the nonprofit or government sectors. Visit our website for more info: [https://www.cmc.edu/career-services/sponsoredinternships/sponsored-summer-internship-programs](https://www.cmc.edu/career-services/sponsoredinternships/sponsored-summer-internship-programs)
- Work with faculty or our research institutes to get valuable teaching and/or research experience.

**FINANCES:** Can I afford graduate school at this time?
- Speak with Financial Aid to determine if this is something that is feasible.

Route Marker 2: Conducting Research

**PROGRAMS & INSTITUTIONS OF INTEREST:** Where should I consider applying? How long are various programs? What is the job placement rate following graduation?
- *Consider:* Admissions criteria, the quality of the program, overall cost, course offerings, facilities, post-graduation employment, geography, student life, graduate assistantships, academic & career advising services.
- Use resources at Career Services at CMC or Honnold Library.
- Attend graduate school fairs.
- Determine the overall cost of attendance. Consider housing costs, tuition, books, any work or assistantships, grants, loans, or cost-of-living expenses.
- Speak with current faculty and staff, in addition to campus recruiters at the schools of interest to learn more about what programs may be best for you.
Route Marker 3: Applying to Graduate School

TIMELINE FOR ADMISSION: How do I know what is required for graduate school admissions? How do I ensure that I’m on the right path?

- Give yourself 12-18 months to complete the process. Start backwards to determine when your applications are due. We recommend finishing applications by mid- to late-fall, although this varies by program.
- Make sure to give yourself enough time to take your designated test (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, or MCAT). Plan to take it twice in case you don’t get the score you desire the first try!
- Ask for faculty and staff recommendations during the summer of your senior year or at the beginning of the fall semester. Provide these individuals with needed materials.
- Write your essays and/or statements of purpose in the early fall when you find the topics.
- Interviews (if applicable) will be late fall-early spring.
- Admissions decisions tend to be in mid-spring, although this varies.
- Complete your financial aid (FAFSA) well before the March 2nd deadline.

Route Marker 4: Evaluate & Decide

SELECTING A SCHOOL: How do I decide which opportunity is best for me? What are important considerations?

- Ultimately, you have the final decision. Consider: Ranking of institution, amount of aid offered, cost-of-living, personal well-being, and placement rate of graduates.
- Compare and contrast the environments of the institutions. Ask current students their thoughts.

WORKING THROUGH REJECTIONS: My top school didn’t accept me. Now what?

- Think about your other options. If you have other great opportunities, consider accepting elsewhere.
- Consult with mentors, faculty, and the Career Services team to chat about creating an individualized plan for moving forward.
- In some cases, you can rework your resume, statements of purpose, and application materials for the next recruitment cycle.