Big Ten+ Graduate School Exposition

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1, 2018

purdue.edu/gradexpo

Engineering, Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Related Disciplines
GREETINGS & WELCOME TO THE BIG TEN+ GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPO!

On behalf of The Graduate School and Purdue University, I welcome you to the Big Ten+ Grad Expo. The Expo is the largest university-hosted, STEM-focused mini-conference in the United States.

During your two days here, you will make new friends, explore new possibilities for your future, and learn how to put together a competitive graduate school application. Take advantage of the workshops that are offered about choosing the right program at the right school, options you might have for funding your graduate studies, or how to write an impressive statement of purpose. Most importantly, ask questions – the experts are here to help you.

While you are here, why not take a walk around our beautiful campus, home to nearly 9,500 graduate students studying in more than 80 graduate programs. You will see a diverse mix of students from all 50 states and 122 countries. We are glad you are visiting, and I hope you can see yourself as a graduate student here someday.

Have fun at the Grad Expo!

Linda J. Mason, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Professor of Entomology
Purdue University

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Purdue University
The Graduate School

College of Engineering  College of Science  Polytechnic Institute  College of Pharmacy
GENERAL INFORMATION

**Attire:** Wear your name badge at all times – it will be needed to enter all Expo activities. Recommended attire for Sunday’s activities, including the Welcome Dinner, is casual. Attire for Monday’s Expo events is business casual (dress pants or skirt and shirt or blouse; suits are fine, but not necessary).

**Parking:** Parking is available in the Grant Street Parking Garage, located east of the Purdue Memorial Union (PMU). Parking passes may be picked up at the check-in table in the Purdue Memorial Union, Room 118.

**Restrooms:** A women’s restroom is located outside the South (recruiter) entrance of the South Ballroom. Men’s and women’s restrooms are located across the hall from the North Ballroom. See the map of the Purdue Memorial Union on page 21.

**Forget something?** A convenience store is located on the first floor of Stewart Center (STEW), just west of the Purdue Memorial Union. A copy shop, BoilerCopyMaker, is located on the main floor of the Purdue Memorial Union.

**Refreshments (Recruiters Only):** On Monday in the Terrace Room (just outside the South Ballroom’s South entrance), during the Grad School Fair, refreshments will be available.

**Wireless Internet:** Wi-Fi is available for registered guests and recruiters. Information about connecting to guest Wi-Fi can be found in your information packet that you received upon check-in. Recruiters may also use an existing Eduroam account.

**Airport Shuttles:** Transportation to and from the Indianapolis International Airport and Chicago O'Hare is provided for a fee by Lafayette Limo or Reindeer Shuttle services. Both services depart from the east entrance of the Purdue Memorial Union. Visit [www.lafayettelimo.com](http://www.lafayettelimo.com) or [reindeershuttle.com](http://reindeershuttle.com) for schedule and fee information. Additional service to Chicago O'Hare is provided for a fee by Express Air Coach. Express Air Coach departs from the Purdue University Airport, Main Terminal. Contact 765-743-3120 or [www.expressaircoach.com](http://www.expressaircoach.com) for schedule and fee information. Reservations are strongly recommended for all of these shuttles.

**Evaluation:** Please take a few minutes to tell us about your experience at the Big Ten+ Graduate School Expo to help us improve the experience. Evaluations should be handed in on Monday at the registration/check-in table in the Purdue Memorial Union, Room 118. Parking passes may be picked up when you return your evaluation form.

**Questions?** Check with registration/check-in staff or with individuals wearing a Purdue Graduate School shirt. They will be happy to assist you.

**Photos and Videos:** Your attendance at Big Ten+ Grad Expo events grants permission to Purdue University to reproduce the photos and/or videos taken for the purpose of publication, promotion, illustration, or advertising in any manner or in any medium. Please notify an event organizer if you have questions.
For more than 125 years, Purdue University has been a public land-grant university here in Indiana. Here are some interesting facts about your host for the Big Ten+ Grad School Expo.

**The Boilermaker Special (school mascot):** the locomotive design of Purdue’s official mascot celebrates the University’s renowned engineering programs. The first Boilermaker Special was presented in September 1940 and has been used to announce campus events ever since.

**Boilermakers:** the moniker for the University’s athletics teams has become a popular reference for all things Purdue. A reporter first used the name in 1891 to describe the year’s winning football team and quickly gained approval from students.

**Fountains:** beautiful water fountains adorn Purdue’s campus. A popular student tradition is to make a “fountain run” where students run through the fountains.

**“The Cradle of Astronauts”:** this is a popular term for Purdue due to its role in the United States space program. 23 graduates of Purdue have been astronauts, including the first man to walk on the moon – Neil Armstrong – and the most recent – Eugene Cernan.

**“The Cradle of Quarterbacks”**: 15 former Purdue athletes have gone on to play in the National Football League, accumulating more starts and throwing for more yards than those from any other school.

**Notable Alumni:**

- Neil Armstrong, NASA Astronaut
- Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, Pilot of US Airway flight 1549 (Miracle on the Hudson)
- Amelia Earhart, Aviator
- Michael L. Eskew, Chairman and CEO of UPS
- Orville Redenbacher, Popcorn Business Leader
- Brian Lamb, Co-Founder, Chairman, and CEO of C-SPAN
- Drew Brees, Quarterback of New Orleans Saints
- Don Thompson, CEO of McDonald’s
- Herman Cain, Former CEO of Godfather’s Pizza, 2012 Presidential Candidate
- David Crosthwait, African-American mechanical and electrical engineer
- Jerry L. Ross, NASA Astronaut
- Eugene A. Cernan, NASA Astronaut
- Gebisa Ejeta, 2009 World Food Prize laureate
- Ei-ichi Negishi, Nobel Laureate, Chemistry (2010)
- Kevin Gurney & Otto Doering, Nobel Laureates, Peace (2007)
- Herbert C. Brown - Nobel Laureate, Chemistry (1979)
- Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, 2017 World Food Prize laureate
- Phil Nelson, 2007 World Food Prize Laureate
THERE’S AN APP FOR THE EXPO!

We are proud to announce our new event app for the Grad Expo this year! It will provide you with the schedule, speakers, recruiters, etc., all at your fingertips. This tool has been trusted by events across the country to not only act as the digital guide for the event, but also help you network with other attendees and build meaningful relationships! This is designed for both Attendees and Recruiters!

INSTRUCTIONS (PLEASE FOLLOW EACH STEP):

1. Download the Graduate School Events official App for iPhone or Android by visiting this website: goo.gl/55YPXW or search for “Graduate School Events.”

2. After the app is installed, please Sign Up and Setup Your Profile!

Important: Use the same email for the app that you used to register for the Expo.

3. Go the Events Tab and select Search for an Event

4. Search for and find: Big Ten+ Graduate School Exposition

5. Select Join Now
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Please use pages 20-21 for maps that identify specific locations. Workshop descriptions are on pages 8-9.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm  Student Registration and Check-In
   Purdue Memorial Union (PMU), Room 118

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm  Workshops, Stewart Center (STEW, 2nd Floor)
   • Can I Get A Master’s In Video Games? (STEW 202)
   • Writing Your Personal Statement (STEW 214)
   • Panel: How to Make Yourself Stand Out When Applying to Grad School (STEW 218)

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm  Refreshment Break, STEW 206

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm  Workshops, Stewart Center (STEW, 2nd Floor)
   • Researching Engineering Graduate Schools by Using ASEE Profiles (STEW 202)
   • Researching Graduate Programs (STEW 214)
   • Panel: Q&A for Engineering/Technology (STEW 218)

4:15 pm – 6:00 pm  Afternoon Activity (See registration packet for location and details)

6:15 pm – 8:00 pm  Welcome Dinners (Dress is casual)
   Engineering Students: PMU North & South Ballrooms
   Interdisciplinary Programs, Science, Pharmacy, and Technology Students: Outside in the tent directly West of STEW, on the Memorial Mall

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm  “Rack and Roll” Bowling & Billiards Social, Purdue Memorial Union (PMU)
   (Lower level - use the stairs by the exit facing the Grant Street Parking Garage)
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Please use pages 20-21 for maps that identify specific locations. Workshop descriptions are on pages 8-9.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2018

7:30 am – 11:30 am  Student Registration and Check-In  Purdue Memorial Union (PMU), Room 118

7:30 am – 9:30 am  Recruiter Check-In, Purdue Memorial Union (PMU) Room 118  Please use south doors to ballrooms.

7:30 am – 8:30 am  Students Only Continental Breakfast (STEW 206)

8:30 am – 9:25 am  Keynote Address, Stewart Center (STEW - Fowler Hall)  Gebisa Ejeta, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Plant Breeding & Genetics, and International Agriculture, Purdue University

9:25 am – 9:30 am  Break

9:30 am – 12:00 pm  Graduate School Fair, PMU, North and South Ballrooms & Lounge Areas  Students: Please enter through the South doors. Doors will open promptly.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  Lunch  Students: Lunch will be located in the tent directly west of STEW on the Memorial Mall.

  Recruiters: Lunch is on your own. The $10 lunch voucher in your registration packet may be used at any restaurant on the lowest level of the Purdue Memorial Union (one floor down). You may also eat with the students in the tent on the Memorial Mall.

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm  Workshops, Stewart Center (STEW, 2nd Floor)  
  • Career Planning During Graduate School (STEW 202)  
  • Navigating Campus Visits (STEW 214)  
  • Panel: Q&A for Science/Math Programs (STEW 218)

2:15 pm – 2:30 pm  Break

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm  Workshops, Stewart Center (STEW, 2nd Floor)  
  • Funding Your Graduate Studies (STEW 214)  
  • Panel: How to Make Yourself Stand Out When Applying to Grad School (STEW 218)

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm  Reception with Engineering Faculty (for prospective engineering students & guests)  PMU East/West Faculty Lounge, 2nd Floor
WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

How to Make Yourself Stand Out When Applying to Grad School - Panel Discussion (Offered Both Days)
(Recruiters from attending institutions)
Some graduate programs have hundreds of applicants. In such a crowded field, how does your application make its way to the top? Gain useful insight and advice from our panel of highly talented recruiters on ways to make your graduate school application shine. This panel discussion will be informal and have plenty of time for questions from those in the audience.

Can I Get A Master’s In Video Games?
Todd Deery, University of Central Florida
The answer is yes! In 2018, the Princeton Review surveyed more than 150 schools worldwide who offer graduate game design courses and degrees. But what should you look for in one of these STEAM programs and how can you best apply? You’ll get an overview of the game industry, graduate game design programs, the five questions you must ask and how to submit an application that stands out.

Funding Your Graduate Studies
Melanie Morgan, Ph.D. (Purdue University)
This discussion will cover the basics of how to fund your graduate education along with strategies for success. Be sure to ask how to identify funding opportunities and how to develop successful applications for those opportunities!

Career Planning During Graduate School
Amruta Inamdar, Ph.D. (Purdue University)
Start planning for your career early on during graduate school! The Center for Career Opportunities at Purdue University will discuss how students can maximize their time during school to develop a competitive professional profile. The presentation will also discuss the range of services we provide Purdue students and alumni (including reviewing applications to grad school).

Q&A for Engineering/Technology - Panel Discussion
(Recruiters from attending institutions)
What goes into a graduate school application for Engineering or Technology programs? Are there specific standardized tests I need to take? How do I properly display what I want to research? How do I align my research interests with what is offered at a particular institution? What are Engineering/Technology graduate admissions committees paying close attention to on my application? This panel discussion with highly-talented recruiters will address those questions and more. This panel discussion will be informal and have plenty of time for questions from those in the audience. Bring a few questions to ask and learn from the experts!

Navigating Campus Visits
Loren Bass (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)
Have you considered making a funded visit to prospective graduate institutions? Let’s talk about questions to ask during a visit, how to prepare for a campus visit, when you make a campus visit, and much more. It’s time to maximize your time so you can understand institutional fit, before you submit an application.
**WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS**

**Researching Graduate Engineering Programs Using the ASEE Profiles**  
**Bruce A. Lindvall, Ph.D. (Northwestern University)**

This workshop will teach participants to look up detailed information about M.S. and Ph.D. programs at the engineering schools listed in ASEE Profiles. Enrollments in programs, full-time and part-time status, gender and ethnicity, and international and domestic breakdowns can be very useful for prospective students as they want to learn about the student body make-up. Size and diversity of faculty, research expenditures, and other data points can be gleaned from the ASEE Profiles.

An Excel file is handed out so that participants can learn how to record comparable data points. Discussion will take place so students can learn how these can play into the decision making process of where to submit graduate school applications.

**Researching Graduate Programs**  
**Amanda Mendez (Stevens Institute of Technology)**

Are you just getting started selecting graduate programs? This workshop will help you identify a program that is a good fit for you, assist you in the search process, and help you plan a timeline for a course of action. The presentation will include topics from the time graduate school becomes an option to determining which school to attend post admission.

**Writing Your Statement of Purpose**  
**Susan Cates, Ph.D. (Rice University)**

This workshop is a discussion-style presentation covering four general topics about the graduate or professional program application personal statement. The four sections will cover (1) the structure and recommended components of the statement, (2) examples from good and not-so-good statements, (3) the pros and cons of making the personal statement specific to the school or program to which you are applying, (4) consistency with the personal statement during the interview process. Students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss their particular areas of interest.

**Q&A for Science/Math Programs**  
*(Recruiters from attending institutions)*

What goes into a graduate school application for Science or Math programs? Are there specific standardized tests I need to take? How do I properly display what I want to research? How do I align my research interests with what is offered at a particular institution? What are Science/Math graduate admissions committees paying close attention to on my application? This panel discussion with highly-talented recruiters will address those questions and more. This panel discussion will be informal and have plenty of time for questions from those in the audience. Bring a few questions to ask and learn from the experts!

**Panelists Include:**

**How to make yourself stand out when applying to grad school - Sunday, September 30**
- Molly Tiernan Bannow - University of Michigan
- Christy Mayo - Van Andel Institute Graduate School
- Donna Mohr, Ph.D. - Lehigh University

**Q&A for Engineering/Technology Programs**

- Moises Orozco Villicana, Ph.D. - University of Illinois
- Dagmar K Beck - Rice University
- Christian Balmaseda - Cornell Tech

**How to make yourself stand out when applying to grad school - Monday, October 1**
- Beth Leven - UC Berkeley College of Engineering
- Stuart Ravnik, Ph.D. - University of Texas, Southwestern
- Michael Waldhier - Penn State University
- Moises Orozco Villicana, Ph.D. - University of Illinois
- Emily Wertz - Carnegie Mellon University, MSCF Program
- Denzil Streete Ph.D. - Yale University

**Q&A for Science/Math Programs**

- Molly Tiernan Bannow - University of Michigan
- Elizabeth Tran, Ph.D. - Purdue University
- Stuart Ravnik, Ph.D. - University of Texas, Southwestern
- Emily Wertz - Carnegie Mellon University, MSCF Program
- Jim Musgrave - University of Michigan Medical School
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Gebisa Ejeta, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor
2009 World Food Prize Laureate
Purdue University

Gebisa Ejeta is a Distinguished Professor of Plant Breeding & Genetics and International Agriculture, and serves as Executive Director of the Center for Global Food Security at Purdue University. Professor Ejeta has had multiple extramural assignments serving at the highest level of science and policy advisory for several international development and U.S. government agencies.

He was appointed by President Obama as Science Envoy for Africa in 2010, and as a member of the U.S. Government Board for International Food and Agricultural Development in 2011. In 2013, he was appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to the first UN Scientific Advisory Board.

He currently serves on the boards of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the International Water Management Institute, and the National Academy of Sciences Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

A 2009 World Food Prize Laureate and recipient of a national medal of honor from the President of Ethiopia, Professor Ejeta is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America, and Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences.
HOW TO RESEARCH GRADUATE SCHOOLS

The Big Ten+ Graduate School Expo is one way to research graduate schools; you will be able to meet with dozens of prestigious schools throughout this event. As you continue to refine your search, be sure to consider some of these other avenues for identifying potential graduate schools:

- Professors and advisors
- Professionals in your field of interest
- Current graduate students
- Professional organizations and conferences
- Research publications/professional journals
- Career centers
- Graduate school guides and major publications
- University websites and other online resources

**NOTE:** Some guides only include schools which pay to participate, and some rankings are controversial in their methodology. Make sure you do not put too much weight on one guide/list.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING A CAMPUS VISIT

Visiting a prospective graduate school’s campus is a great way to identify whether or not that school is a “fit” for you. It is important to think about questions to ask when you’re on campus so you will have a realistic understanding of what that school will be like.

**Questions for Potential Advisors:**

- What projects are you working on currently? (Learn the professors main areas of research)
- What are your expectations of your graduate students?
- How many graduate students have you mentored?
- What is the average length of time it has taken your last few graduate students to graduate?
- How many grad students do you have now?

**Questions for Current Graduate Students:**

- What is it like working for _________?
- What’s your favorite thing about the program here?
- What’s your least favorite thing about the program here?

**NOTE:** Keep in mind you may get very different answers from a brand new first year student than you will get from a 5th year student in the middle of writing a dissertation.
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**PMU East Main Lounge Area - Across from Ballroom Entrance**

**MORE SCHOOLS OUTSIDE MAIN AREA!**

**THESE BOOTHS ARE LOCATED ACROSS THE HALL FROM THE BALLROOMS.**

**DON’T MISS THEM!**
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE WORKSHOPS

The schedule on pages 6-7 lists the variety of workshops offered. This is your opportunity to learn from a range of experienced speakers how to make yourself a more competitive applicant. Make sure you read the full descriptions on pages 8-9 of this program, and come to the sessions ready to learn.

Here are some ways to get the most out of the Grad Expo workshops:

• **Identify ahead of time which workshops you want to attend.** Mark which sessions you want to attend so that you don’t waste time between sessions trying to decide where to go next. Note: Some panel discussions may be offered both days.

• **Bring a pen and paper...and USE THEM!** Pretend you are taking detailed notes for someone else, and you are much more likely to capture the important points of the talk. Notes allow you to precisely review the entire conference and have a resource to refer to later. Don’t assume that you will remember.

• **Personalize the information.** Think about how the information being presented directly relates to you. How can you apply it? Personalizing the information in this way makes it more memorable and more useful.

• **Ask questions,** even if you’re afraid it might be a “stupid question.” Don’t miss your chance to make yourself a better graduate school applicant. The Grad Expo is meant to be a learning experience. It is a time to get your questions answered. If you have questions, chances are someone else does too.

  • If you have several questions after the workshop but don’t have time to ask them right then, **request a time to meet with the speaker** before the end of the Expo. Most speakers will have a booth at the Graduate School Fair and there is also an open lounge area on the first floor of the Purdue Memorial Union where you can sit and talk further.

  • **Ask for business cards,** and ask if it is okay for you to contact them with questions after you have thought more about their presentation. Even if you are not sure exactly why you may want to follow-up, get their contact information. You never know when a question might arise down the road that the presenter could answer for you, or when a presenter could help you make another connection.

  • **Make a short note on the back of any business cards you collect** about the person – what topic did they present, what might you want to follow up with them on? This will help you remember later who each person is.

  • **Thank the speakers.** Introduce yourself, shake their hand, and thank them for their assistance.
ADVICE FOR YOUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The statement of purpose should be 300-500 words concerning your purpose for undertaking or continuing graduate study, your reasons for wanting to study, and your research interests, professional plans, and career goals. You also may explain any special circumstances applicable to your background and elaborate on your scholarly publications, awards, achievements, abilities, and/or professional history.

Because your Statement of Purpose is an important part of your graduate school application, you will want to make sure it is the best you can write. The following exercise will help you customize your Statement of Purpose by highlighting your relevant experience and focusing on why you wish to pursue a graduate degree at Purdue. This exercise can help you identify the most important elements you will want to include.

- First, list 2-3 qualities unique to your program of interest. Identify interdisciplinary opportunities and areas of specialization. What are the available academic, research and training facilities that will assist you in pursuing your degree?
- Next, name the faculty that interest you and briefly identify their research projects.
- Then, in 3-4 sentences, describe your research interests. Follow this by explaining how your professional goals can be achieved by pursuing your research interests in your program of choice. Mention the unique qualities and faculty members you identified in steps 1 and 2; show how they coincide with your interests.

Enhance your statement by considering the following:
- Have you had experience outside the classroom? If so, describe some of the details. Be sure to mention how it will help you in graduate school.
- Do you have any challenges that you would like to explain to the Admissions Committee (e.g., poor grades in a given semester, a low standardized test score, etc.)? Don’t dwell on anything negative, but sum up the situation in a sentence or two and explain what you learned from it. Show how you have since improved or realized success.
- Showcase your abilities. As a graduate student, what will you be able to contribute to your graduate program? Give evidence of your strong work ethic—mention jobs held or organizations supported while earning a high GPA. Give concrete examples. Be illustrative.
- If providing a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) is allowed, don’t hesitate to reference it, but do not restate all of its contents in your statement of purpose. For example you could say, “As you’ll note in my enclosed CV, I have received several academic honors, which include the Young Investigator award at Institution X. Receiving this award was a shining moment for me as it served as recognition for long nights in the lab researching tomato viral stains.” After this sentence you should describe your research. Remember that you are telling a story, not simply listing a multitude of facts.

Here are a few additional tips to remember:
- Pay close attention to the directions as they vary across institutions and programs.
- Be unique. Talk about interesting and relevant experience. One way to do this is to talk about a subject in your field about which you are passionate.
- Write with skill. The Statement of Purpose may be the only writing sample you provide, so editing and organization are imperative. Be sure that you proofread your statement and have others, such as professors, teaching assistants, advisors, and peers read it. Ask for constructive feedback as well.
- Be clear and specific. Instead of providing broad generalizations such as “my research internship provided valuable experience,” write, “By transcribing interview protocols and coding the data, I gained a deeper understanding of how teenage mothers make attributions.”
- Give yourself enough time to write the Statement of Purpose, to get feedback from a variety of people, and to make the necessary revisions.
- Be yourself; avoid using too much jargon and too many big words that aren’t a part of your daily vocabulary.
- Do not be “gimmicky.” Do not try to make yourself stand out by being overly clever in your statement. The people reviewing your statement may not think you are taking the statement seriously. Your statement of purpose is a professional statement about your reasons for applying to graduate school and should be written professionally.

Please note: this information is a compilation of general guidelines that we think will help you write your statement of purpose. Your program may request additional information or recommend an alternative exercise to writing your Statement of Purpose. You should always defer to the instructions provided by your prospective program. You can find specific Purdue graduate program requirements here: http://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/prospective/gradrequirements/. Good luck!
On my first day of graduate school, some of the older students took the newer students out after class. As the night was drawing to a close, one of my more experienced colleagues announced to the table, “Take a good look at these faces; you won’t see them smiling and outside of the department again until the end of the semester.” At the time, I wasn’t so much intimidated by that declaration as I was excited.

You see, one of the perks of graduate school is the work. That may sound odd, but presumably the reason someone goes to graduate school is because of a deep and abiding passion for a subject, and graduate school allows you to entertain that passion to an obsessive degree. Nose buried in a book or hovering over a laboratory bench, the graduate student devotes some number of years to happily plumbing the depths of the discipline, learning all there is to know. But therein lies the problem. There’s no such thing as all there is to know, and the student who attempts that goal is headed toward disillusionment and burnout.

Graduate school isn’t simply a continuation of college; it’s an apprenticeship. As you are beginning your career, you also need to figure out how this career will fit into your life, not the other way around. This means that as you develop your expertise in your area of study, you need to also develop your acumen as a friend, a family member, a colleague, a member of the community, and in the numerous other roles a human being inevitably fills while breathing oxygen. Learning how to respect the entirety of your life and not just your work is not a distraction from graduate school; it is part of your graduate school experience.

Whether the goal is an academic position or a future in industry, graduate school will set you up with the expertise you need to get started in your career, but that’s it. It will not be the end of your career. It will not fulfill your life’s desires, and it is unreasonable to expect that you can neglect your future goals and the life you want to live during your years of graduate school and yet be capable of taking them up again after you cross the commencement stage. So if you find that your face has not been seen smiling outside of your department in quite a while, understand that that is not a part of graduate school. In fact, you are neglecting the great potential of graduate school to help you grow into the full person you want to be.
Here are some suggestions you should think about now that you have attended the Expo:

1. Sort through all the information you gathered from the Expo. Visit the websites of programs that interest you. Review your notes and see if there was anyone you met with whom you would like to follow-up. Were there any “next steps” that workshop presenters or representatives at the Graduate School Fair recommended?

2. Finalize a list of schools and programs to which you want to apply. While you are researching schools, make a list of why you want to apply to that school specifically. This may be asked on an application, and this list will also help you narrow your selections.

3. Find out what standardized tests you will need to get into the program and schedule those tests. Be sure to give yourself enough time to study.

4. Update your résumé and determine who you will ask to write your letters of recommendation. Give them plenty of advance notice.

5. Start working on drafts of your statement of purpose. Make a list of your research, teaching and professional or internship experiences. List the experiences and what you learned.

Every program and every application is different. To help yourself stay organized, create a file for each program to which you plan to apply. Keep all your application materials in that folder, including:

- A checklist of the application requirements
- Contact information for the program and the graduate school
- Any notes about contacts you make
- Copies or print-outs of your application and statement of purpose
- A list of people you asked to write recommendation letters – and check them off as the letters are completed and received by the graduate school

FUNDING – AN OVERVIEW

The financial cost of an advanced degree may be daunting, but most universities offer funding to a high percentage of their admitted graduate students! If you can secure funding, you will likely receive full or partial tuition coverage, health benefits, and a monthly stipend to help with the cost of living. Here are the three main types of funding that exist:

- Fellowships: may be through the government, an independent organization, or the university. Most universities have a database where students can search for opportunities. Internet searches are another great tool in locating potential fellowships.

- Assistantships: may come in the form of a teaching, research, or administrative/professional assistantship. Your graduate school application will likely have an option to request that you be considered for one of these positions. It is also a good idea to contact your program of interest well in advance of the application deadline to discuss funding opportunities within the department.

- Loans: may be an option in some situations. You may be able to qualify for federal or private loans to cover your educational expenses or to supplement a fellowship or assistantship.

If you receive a fellowship or assistantship and your tuition is covered, that’s great news! However, you also want to be sure that your monthly stipend is enough to cover your cost of living, which can vary considerably depending on where the institution is located. Do your homework! Money may be tight no matter what opportunities you secure, but keep in mind that your hard work will pay off!
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Turn left (east) onto State Road 26 (State Street) and proceed 4 miles through Lafayette to I-65.

To Champaign, Crawfordsville, St. Louis, and Terre Haute:

Exit the Grant Street Parking garage and turn left. Turn right on Grant St. Turn left on Northwestern Ave. At second light, turn left on Stadium Ave. Turn left on McCormick Rd. Turn right on SR26 W. At light, turn left (south) on U.S. 231. Proceed on to I-74 (Crawfordsville) or I-70 ( Cloverdale).
1. Finalize your list of schools.

Revisiting schools can be overwhelming, but asking questions is usually a good place to start. Debra Kelly, the director of The Career Center at The College of New Jersey, says many universities have online chat sessions where you can speak to administrators and alumni from a specific program. Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania are just a few examples of schools who have done this.

If you’re looking for more personal advice, Kelly suggests using your network. “You’d be surprised what could happen if you just said [to people you know], ‘Oh, I’m thinking of going to [this] university but I don’t know much about it; I wonder who I could talk to,’” she says.

Once you know which programs are best aligned with your interests, you can start narrowing down your choices. Here are a few practical questions to ask grad school faculty that will help you decide if a school will meet your needs:

• What will my class schedule look like?
• How many years does the program take?
• How does the living cost of this city compare to others?
• Can I enroll part-time if I need to work?
• Can I find a job at the university?

Finding a job at your university can provide great financial support, because many schools will cover your tuition if you’re an employee. That’s what Erin McGee, a M.A. in human rights candidate at Columbia University, is aiming to do when she starts school this fall.

Since graduate programs are very specific, you might find yourself filling out fewer applications than expected. However, there’s no reason to worry, because it means you’re focused on the ones that are right for you!

2. Mark your deadlines.

We all know that once classes start, the temptation to procrastinate will hit hard (there are so many House of Cards episodes on Netflix to watch, after all). Here’s where you really need to do your research, because application deadlines can fall anywhere between January and March.

Kristi Ramos, senior assistant director of New York University’s Graduate School of Arts & Science, says it’s important to remember that the deadline isn’t just for the online application, but also for the other components, such as recommendations and test scores.

“One common mistake is that students don’t register to take the GRE until very close to the application deadline,” Ramos says. “Students should take their tests at least four to six weeks before their deadline, if not sooner.”

If staying organized isn’t one of your strengths, plan out your application process on its own calendar to minimize distractions. Start by marking the hard deadlines for each application, then set personal goals, such as dates for finishing essays. Color-code each university’s deadlines so it’s easier to track your progress. Lastly, remember that other people need time to write your recommendations, so be sure to consider their schedules as well!

3. Study for the GRE.

While taking the GRE early is vital, the hard part is getting that stellar score! The GRE, or Graduate Record Examinations, has a general test, which costs $195. It’s comprised of verbal reasoning, analytical writing and quantitative reasoning (in other words, reading, writing and math). The difference between the SAT and the GRE is that the GRE is administered on a computer, your score is valid for five years and you can take it every 21 days for up to five times every 12 consecutive months. There are also subject tests at $150 each for students applying to programs in the sciences, English and psychology.

Hannah*, who will be a Ph.D. candidate in physical sciences at Stanford University starting this fall, says she paid special attention not to make any careless mistakes in the first few sections of the test, because the GRE is adaptive. That means your performance at the beginning determines the difficulty later on. If you get harder questions, you’ll likely get a higher score.

To get the best score possible, Kelly suggests making use of a variety of resources, such as test-prep classes, books and online materials. Start with the free practice questions that Educational Testing Service, or ETS (the GRE testing agency), provides online for the general test and the subject tests. There are also test-prep books such as Kaplan and The Princeton Review. Many of these organizations, such as Kaplan, also provide free evaluations based on an online practice test you can take, as well as test-prep courses. While these courses may be a little pricey, ranging from $500 to $2,000, Kelly says since the test itself is already a huge investment, taking a course to be as prepared as possible is something students should consider.

Programs put different values on test scores; the sciences weigh them more heavily, while the humanities tend to...
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consider other factors, Ramos says. Whatever program and budget you’re working with, the important part is to give yourself plenty of time to figure things out and study hard!

4. Ask for recommendations.
Most schools will request at least two letters of recommendation, preferably from professors who have been impressed by your academic skills and work ethic. Kelly suggests setting up a meeting with a professor by sending a professional email expressing your interest in graduate studies (be sure to attach your resume!).

“The reason why you want to have a conversation with them is that you want to know if they’re going to give you an excellent recommendation, not just a [mediocre] recommendation,” Kelly says.

If you’re applying to a field that’s different from your undergraduate major, Kelly suggests asking academic advisers, coaches or supervisors from organizations you joined. However, if you have professors or academic-related people who can give you recommendations, it’s still best to focus on those, because graduate school admissions officers are primarily trying to evaluate your academic potential.

5. Do some graduate-level work.
To get a sense of what graduate school will actually be like, consider writing an honors thesis or taking some graduate courses senior year. An honors thesis is an extensive paper usually written during senior year for which work under the guidance of a faculty adviser (often a professor you’ve had a course with) to research a topic in your field. At the end of the year there’s a defense, where you present your research in front of a panel of professors who will evaluate your work. It can be a challenging process, but it’s the perfect opportunity to get a feel for what you’ll be doing in graduate school. Also, if your professor’s impressed by your work, writing a thesis is a great way to secure a stellar recommendation letter!

Most schools require students to submit thesis proposals before the fall, so check with your department to see if there’s still time. Take the same steps Kelly gave for securing recommendations: Set up a meeting to express your interest in writing a thesis.

If a thesis isn’t a commitment you can fit into your schedule, Ramos suggests taking a few graduate courses senior year. “A lot of students take a few graduate courses as a non-degree student [to] show that they can handle the coursework,” she says.

Not only will these courses demonstrate your academic skills to admissions officers, but they’ll also help you decide if staying in school for another two, three or even more years taking these courses is something you realistically see yourself doing.

6. Write your personal statement.
Some schools might ask you to submit both a personal statement and a statement of purpose, one for life experiences and one that’s purely professional. Whatever the format, make sure you proofread your work! Ramos says more often than you’d expect, students write the wrong school name in the essay. When Hannah wrote her essay, she took care to be clear and concise because she was applying to a research program, which values students who can articulate themselves well.

7. Establish a rapport with the faculty in every program.
Unlike college admissions, where decisions are made by a central office, graduate students are admitted by the specific department that they’re applying to. The upside to this is that there are more opportunities to get to know the specific administrators, students and professors in your field. If you’re waitlisted, the best way to get off a waitlist is to act professionally early on and continue to show your enthusiasm for the program throughout the process.

“When a student is in touch with a department, they should be on their best behavior and have excellent questions before they call and start asking things that might be easily available on a department’s website,” Ramos says. Here are some questions you could ask to avoid sounding like you haven’t done your research:

• I’ve read these articles you wrote, and I was surprised by ____. Could you tell me a little more about your work in this area?
• As a double major in college, I want to combine my interests. How would someone with my background fit into this program?
• I’m interested in working at ____ organization someday, and I noticed that you did some research there. Could you tell me about your experience?

Just like with your personal statement, it’s always good to share your story because it makes your questions unique and personal, and it’ll help professors provide better answers if they know where you’re coming from.

To summarize our advice in two words: Start early! Graduate school is all about finding the right fit. The application process is different for everyone, so give yourself plenty of time to do some serious research as well as soul-searching!
QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE EXPO

It is important to maximize your time during the Expo. Make a plan and set a few goals you want to accomplish during the Expo. Review the program and make a list of the workshops you want to attend and the institutions with whom you want to meet.

Because there are different types of representatives at the Expo, not all representatives will be able to answer your specific questions. Even if they aren’t from your exact program of interest, they should still be able to tell you about the campus and community. Consider asking these questions:

**Program:**
- Do you have the specific program I am looking for? The terminology may be slightly different.
- When is the application deadline?
- How long will it take to complete the program?
- Is this program ranked?

If an institution sent a representative from the specific program in which you are interested, ask about professors’ and graduate students’ research areas and projects. See if there are projects that interest you. You could also ask about job placement rates and what types of jobs graduates obtain.

**Funding:**
- What type of funding do you typically offer graduate students in my program of interest?
- Is funding offered to both master’s and Ph.D. students?
- Is funding guaranteed for the length of my program?
- What kind of insurance and other benefits are included with the funding package?
- Will my tuition and fees be remitted (waived)?

**Community:**
- How big is the institution? How many graduate students does the institution have?
- Is the campus rural, suburban, or urban?
- What is the cost of living? (This is an important question because you want to see how far you can stretch your funding!)

Remember to ask a lot of questions—and write down the answers! Getting the right information at the Grad Expo will make your application and decision making process easier. **Good luck and enjoy the Big Ten+ Grad Expo!**

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- Dr. Karen Kelsky

“What is written without effort is, in general, read without pleasure.”
- Samuel Johnson

“Back in graduate school, I’d learned how to survive without funding, power, or even office space. Grad students are lowest in the academic hierarchy, and so they have to squeeze resources from between the cracks. When you’re last on the list for telescope time, you make your observations by hanging around the mountaintop, waiting for a slice of time between other observers. When you need an electronic gizmo in the lab, you borrow it in the evening, use it all night, and return it before anyone notices. I didn’t learn much about planetary physics, but weaseling came naturally.”
- Clifford Stoll, The Cuckoo's Egg

“Don’t let school get in the way of your education.”
- Mark Twain

“If you don’t feel like you want to drop out during your first semester, you’re not doing it right. If you do feel like you want to drop out, don’t. Hang in there. You will make it through.”
- Bret M. Webb

“You are no longer being taught, instead, you have started a guided quest for discovering knowledge and gaining skill.”
- Gil Bohrer

“Grad school is an extremely rewarding opportunity, but you need to make sure you take time for yourself and relish those moments. Whether this means taking Sunday mornings off to go out to breakfast and shop at a local farmer’s market, or taking weekend trips to new cities with your friends... You need to enjoy the little things when entering the graduate school apocalypse.”
- Katy Meyers

“Being a graduate student is like becoming all of the Seven Dwarves. In the beginning, you’re Dopey and Bashful. In the middle, you are usually sick (Sneezy), tired (Sleepy), and irritable (Grumpy). But at the end, they call you Doc, and then you’re Happy.”
- Ronald T. Azuma
The Lord of the Rings: An Allegory of the PhD?
by Dave Pritchard, Ph.D., University of Strathclyde

The story starts with Frodo: a young hobbit, quite bright, a bit dissatisfied with what he’s learnt so far and with his mates back home who just seem to want to get jobs and settle down and drink beer. He’s also very much in awe of his tutor and mentor, the very senior professor Gandalf, so when Gandalf suggests he take on a short project for him (carrying the Ring to Rivendell), he agrees.

Frodo very quickly encounters the shadowy forces of fear and despair which will haunt the rest of his journey and leave permanent scars on his psyche, but he also makes some useful friends. In particular, he spends an evening down at the pub with Aragorn, who has been wandering the world for many years as Gandalf’s postdoc and becomes his adviser when Gandalf isn’t around.

After Frodo has completed his first project, Gandalf (along with head of department Elrond) proposes that the work should be extended. He assembles a large research group, including visiting students Gimli and Legolas, the foreign postdoc Boromir, and several of Frodo’s own friends from his undergraduate days. Frodo agrees to tackle this larger project, though he has mixed feelings about it. (“I will take the Ring,’ he said, ‘although I do not know the way.’”)

Very rapidly, things go wrong. First, Gandalf disappears and has no more interaction with Frodo until everything is over. (Frodo assumes his supervisor is dead: in fact, he’s simply found a more interesting topic and is working on that instead.) At his first international conference in Lorien, Frodo is cross-questioned terrifyingly by Galadriel, and betrayed by Boromir, who is anxious to get the credit for the work himself. Frodo cuts himself off from the rest of his team: from now on, he will only discuss his work with Sam, an old friend who doesn’t really understand what it’s all about, but in any case is prepared to give Frodo credit for being rather cleverer than he is. Then he sets out towards Mordor.

The last and darkest period of Frodo’s journey clearly represents the writing-up stage, as he struggles towards Mount Doom (submission), finding his burden growing heavier and heavier yet more and more a part of himself; more and more terrified of failure; plagued by the figure of Gollum, the student who carried the Ring before him but never wrote up and still hangs around as a burnt-out, jealous shadow; talking less and less even to Sam. When he submits the Ring to the fire, it is in desperate confusion rather than with confidence, and for a while the world seems empty.

Eventually it is over: the Ring is gone, everyone congratulates him, and for a few days he can convince himself that his troubles are over. But there is one more obstacle to overcome: months later, back in the Shire, he must confront the external examiner Saruman, an old enemy of Gandalf, who seeks to humiliate and destroy his rival’s protege. With the help of his friends and colleagues, Frodo passes through this ordeal, but discovers at the end that victory has no value left for him. While his friends return to settling down and finding jobs and starting families, Frodo remains in limbo; finally, along with Gandalf, Elrond and many others, he joins the brain drain across the Western ocean to the new land beyond.
GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATIONS: REQUESTING RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Contributors:
Alisha Karabinus, Joshua M. Paiz

Summary:
During the application process, much of the process is in the hands of the applicant, but recommendation letters are often in the hands of the recommenders. You can’t control what someone says, or whether or not they’ll meet the deadline, but you can make the process run more smoothly overall. This resource is designed to offer applicants advice on handling the occasionally sticky process of requesting letters of recommendation.

Getting organized
The first thing you’ll want to do when planning for recommendation letters is to organize your application materials. For example: Where are you applying, and to which program(s)? What do you need to send them? What criteria will each school look at when considering applicants? Collect transcripts and test scores as well, and compile a dossier on yourself. You’ll want to provide your recommenders with as much information as possible. Even if you think they know you very well, they might find it useful to have reference material. If there are any other particular points on which you’d like them to focus—such as your extracurricular or research activity—be sure that you have a document with that information available for your recommenders. You may also want to include a copy of your résumé or CV.

It’s important to compile this information before you determine whom you’ll ask for your letters of recommendation, as it can save considerable amounts of time. It also gives your recommenders the impression that you are well prepared. Taking the time to compile this information for potential reviewers can also highlight gaps that might appear in your other application materials, gaps that might be filled by approaching the right person for a letter of recommendation. Perhaps, you are applying to a school that values research, but your research background—as it is presented in your other application documents—appears lacking. This means that it might be beneficial to get a recommendation from a professor that has worked with you on research, or that could speak to your potential to carry out meaningful research.

It may also be helpful to prepare any essays, or writing samples, that you might need in advance. Your potential recommenders may want to see your work in progress. Providing your recommenders with the writing samples that you plan to include in your graduate school application gives them additional reference material while writing your recommendation. Given the time-sensitive nature of these documents, you do not want to be caught unprepared should a recommender ask for a copy of your writing sample. Being unprepared may delay the process, which can have potentially negative consequences for your application.

Letter of Recommendation Formats
Unfortunately, there is no standard submission format for recommendation letters. Some school will require that you use a standardized form specific to that school or program, some will accept more traditional letters, and others will require electronic submissions. Be sure that you keep track of the format required for the schools to which you are applying. If the school requires that you use a standardized form that they provide, be sure to take a copy of that form with you when you approach potential recommenders. Also, be sure that you have filled out any required, personal information on the form. This may include information such as: your name and the program to which you are applying. It may also include a box where you can give up your right to see what your recommenders have written. Please note that you are not required to waive your right to see the letters that your recommenders have written. However, not waiving this right may limit what and how your recommender might write their letter.

continued on next page
Choosing recommenders

Choosing who you will ask to write your recommendation letters is very important, and if you are fortunate enough to have several potential recommenders, narrow your list down early. You’ll want to approach your potential recommenders early because many professors and professionals often find themselves inundated with recommendation requests during the application season.

Your field of study will play a large role in your choice of potential recommenders, as you will want to have at least one person who knows your work, and the field, quite well. If you completed any internships or fieldwork, professionals who you have worked alongside of may be excellent choices for potential recommenders. However, if you are having problems finding potential recommenders from within your field, remember that sheer academic readiness can count for a lot. Professors in related fields may also make good choices, so long as they are familiar with your character and your work ethic.

Regardless of your field of study, choose recommenders you are certain are familiar with your scholarship, skills, and personality. A boilerplate letter from a big name in your field may not be worth as much as a lesser-known scholar who can speak candidly about you as an individual. It may also be wise to have a backup recommender in case one of your recommenders is unable, for any reason, to complete a letter or two on time.

Requesting recommendations

There is no one ideal way to request a recommendation letter—your relationship with and access to the potential recommender will determine your best course of action—but there are certain steps you can take to facilitate the process. While you may want to ask some potential recommenders in person, it is always a good idea to follow up with a reference request letter or email. See the OWL’s resource on requesting employment references for a model. This allows you to track the date you requested the reference. If they have already agreed in person, reference the conversation, but still include the relevant information about the school to which you are applying, the due date for the letter of recommendation, and the method for letter submission—paper, electronic, etc. You may also want to include the application materials mentioned above (CV, writing sample, etc.) so that your recommender is prepared.

Make your requests early. Give your letter-writers at least six weeks to complete the letters, though ideally, eight to ten weeks is a comfortable amount of time. If you are applying to eight or more schools, you may want to begin twelve to fourteen weeks before the deadline.

Set reminders on your calendar for follow-up dates. Many recommenders will inform you that the letters have been sent, but it is a good idea to follow-up on the status of your letters just in case. This can be done by contacting the school or program to which you are applying. If the school is requiring electronic recommendation letters, it may be possible to track these online. Work backwards from the deadline, setting reminders at one, two, and four weeks before the deadline date. Inquire politely as to the state of your letters, and ask your recommenders if they need any additional information or if they have encountered any problems. Send these follow-ups via e-mail, unless you know a recommender is unlikely to keep up with e-mail. Do not be afraid to follow-up with your recommenders. Professors and other professionals are busy individuals, and they may appreciate the follow-up. Be polite, courteous, and, when necessary, firm in your follow-ups.

Some schools allow applicants to collect sealed letters and include them with their application packets. While this may cost extra postage, it does allow a measure of certainty regarding the status of the recommendation letters, as you will often collect all of your letters of recommendation for a particular school before sending them in together as part of your application packet. Schools with fully electronic applications may also display information about whether or not a letter has been submitted. If a letter has not been submitted, check in periodically with the schools, even after a recommender says they have sent letters. Materials sometimes get lost in the shuffle, or are misfiled. Keep up with your applications. You may find it helpful to include a spreadsheet or handwritten chart that tracks the status of recommendation letters.

After the application process

Many people send their recommenders thank-you cards or small gifts after their applications are complete. A handwritten note, a small gift card, or baked goods are popular choices, though decisions should be tailored to the individuals. This a nice way to thank recommenders, particularly those who have written many recommendations on your behalf. You may need to ask them for further letters down the road. Not everyone is successful on his or her first attempt at getting into graduate school, and even students who are accepted sometimes turn down offers in favor of trying again in the next application season for a better offer. Sending thank-you notes or gifts can pave the way for asking for more letters on subsequent attempts.

It is also a good idea to keep your recommenders apprised of the outcome of your applications. Do not inundate them with e-mails every time you receive a response from a school, but do let them know about your final results. Your recommenders have invested time and effort in your academic career; they will want to know if their work has paid off.

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NOTES, ETC.

*************** TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!!! ***************

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• Complete the reimbursement form.
• Return all receipts by October 31st!
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