To Go or Not to Go?

Considering whether or not to go to Grad School? Here is several things that can help you decide:

1. Talk to a career advisor or councilor about your future career goal and the programs that you are considering doing and ask them if the program would help with your career.

2. Talk to a major professor and ask them about their grad school experience to see if that is something that you want to do.

3. Research grad programs both at their official websites and pay closer attention to the job placement section.

Getting Started—Research

You may want to consider seriously as many as 10 or 12 programs, but it is usually unnecessary to apply to more than 8 graduate schools. You may narrow down your choices by doing some investigation of each and every one of them. Below are some resources that you may find helpful:

1. Resources about applying to grad school:
   - The Gourman Report: A Rating of Graduate Programs
   - Index of Majors and graduate Degrees
   - Peterson's Grad. School Guide Series (available at CC)
   - Real Life Guide to Grad & Professional Schools (available at CC)
   - US News and World's Report's Premium Online Grad School Ranking (for more info see left)

2. Advisors for Professional Schools
   - PreMed Advisor: Pam Middleton, Prof. of Biology
     pmiddlet@carleton.edu
   - PreLaw Advisor: Kim Smith, Assoc. Professor of Political Science/Env. Studies
     ksmith@carleton.edu

TIPS: Deadlines for application run from December 15th to late in the spring, but it is advisable to have all applications and supporting materials in before the deadline. When you request application materials, be sure to mention the field you’re interested in, whether you need financial aid application materials, and when you plan to matriculate. Make sure to make note of the financial aid deadline; it is often quite a bit earlier than the admissions deadline.
Financial Assistance

Financial aid is available for graduate study in many academic fields, particularly in the sciences. Free aid for professional study is less available; loans are available, however.

Useful Resources:
- Financial aid (blue binder) (available at CC)
- Graduate Scholarship Directory
- Grants for Grad & Postdoctoral Study
- The Grants Register
- Diversity Resources
  - Out and In: Information for LGBT Law School Applicants
  - A Woman’s Guide to Law School
  - The African American Pre-Law School Advice Guide
  - Marketing Yourself to the Top Business Schools

During the Application Process

Check these items as you complete them

- Entrance tests: Do you need to take tests such as the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or Miller Analogies? The Career Center recommends that you take the GRE while you are still test-savvy. The scores are good for five years. GRE and LSAT info/registration booklets are available in the Career Center or online (www.gre.org, www.lsac.org).

- Transcripts: Order them early from the Registrar, to be sent in time to arrive by the deadline. Carleton transcripts are supposed to be sent out by the Registrar.

- Trimesters, Semesters, or Quarters: Often in applications, you will be asked to list major courses that you have taken. The following is information about converting Carleton credits to the standard Semester or Quarter systems. Contact the Office of the Registrar if you need assistance converting your credits.

A Carleton course is the equivalent of a Semester course. The standard course unit is six credits; for purposes of transfer evaluation, six credits are comparable to 3.33 semester hours.

- Statement of Purpose: Prepare a statement in essay form on why you want to attend graduate school: i.e., plans regarding course of graduate study; career objectives; your hopes and aspirations; education experiences which influenced you in reaching decisions about this type of objective; what you expect to give as well as receive as a result of the particular kind of study you have in mind. All these points will have to be covered or explained at some time during the completion of applications for any kind of graduate study. The requirements vary from 500 to 1000 words; the latter is more common. A statement of purpose should represent your best thinking in clear, concise, grammatical statements. By clarifying and organizing your graduate study plans and objectives, completing applications will be much easier throughout the year. If you have any questions about presentation or content, do not hesitate to bring in a draft for review at the Career Center, or have a professor review your statement.

- Contact: Do not hesitate to inquire directly to the Admissions Office of the university or, better yet, to professors there. Send supporting materials such as papers you’ve written here if you think this would be of interest to the admissions committee. Review websites to learn about specific research interests of the faculty. Visit if you possibly can before making the final choice.

- Letters of Recommendation (see separate “Reference” tip sheet for more info)