Is it the right move for you? Here are some questions for you to think about as you decide your next step.

How do I know if grad school is for me?
Do my career goals require an advanced degree? Am I looking for a specialized degree only obtainable through grad school? Do I need to go now or should I get some real life experience first? Am I truly committed & passionate to this possibility? Can I finance it?

Do I NEED an advanced degree to reach my career goals?
This will take some research on your part. To find out: set up an informational interview with a professional in your field of interest; search in the Occupational Outlook Handbook on-line: http://stats.bls.gov/oco/home.htm; and please make an appointment with Christy Hanson, Coordinator of Grad Services in the Career Center to make sure you’re on the right track!

What do I need to be successful in graduate school?
First and foremost, it takes self-awareness in terms of your interests and abilities for your chosen program. Secondly, grad school requires motivation, commitment, and a positive attitude. Find someone who has taken this step, and talk with them about their experience.

When should I begin preparing for grad school?
Start EARLY! Even if you’re not sure you will pursue an advanced degree, allocate the appropriate time for academic choices, co-curricular involvement, and relationships with those who may one day serve as references. Application deadlines vary, so begin your research at least 1 and 1/2 years before you’re ready for grad school.
How should I go about choosing a school/program?

Pay attention to the following factors and determine which are most important for you:

- **Geographic Location**— How far do you want to be from friends & family? What’s the difference between in- & out-of-state tuition? Do you feel comfortable in the environment?

- **Cost**— How will you finance school? What type of financial aid is available (scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers, graduate assistantships)?

- **Reputation**— Is the program/institution nationally recognized? Is it accredited by the appropriate accrediting boards?

- **Quality of Program**— faculty members’ academic backgrounds, distinguished achievements, and involvement? Are they experts in the field? Faculty/student interaction and ratio? It is helpful to speak with faculty members and current students before making your decision.

- **Internships/Assistantships**— How many students have them? Do they provide professional experience?

- **Facilities**— How technologically up-to-date are they? How extensive is the library? What resources are available?

- **Requirements & Preparation**— How many credits/years is the program? Will I need to complete a thesis, research project, internships?

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**Other Questions to Ask Yourself**

What are my goals? • How do my values play into my decisions?

• How motivated am I? • What kind of support network will I have? • What will the outcomes be if I pursue an advance degree? • Is the emphasis/philosophy of the program congruent with my goals?

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**Graduate Admissions Exams**

Some programs require certain exam scores as part of the application process. Do your research to find out what’s required of you. Here are some of the commonly required exams:

- **GRE**— Graduate Record Exam
- **GMAT**— Graduate Management Admissions Test
- **LSAT**— Law School Admissions Test
- **MCAT**— Medical College Admissions Test

*Free practice exams are held by the Career Center in the Spring. Ideally, this should be taken no later than your junior year.*
What to Do When...

**Sophomore Year**
Discuss your interests with your advisor and faculty members—
Brainstorm “specialties” in your chosen field as programs you might consider.

**Junior Year (Fall)**
Meet with Christy Hanson, Coordinator of Grad Services in the Career Center to discuss your interests, questions, & concerns. Learn what resources are available to you, and do your research!

**Junior Year (Spring)**
Register & prepare for the appropriate graduate admission test. Explore scholarship & financial aid info, and if applicable, begin obtaining letters of recommendation.

**Junior/Senior (Summer)**
Study for GRE, GMAT, LSAT, or MCAT. Send for & read catalogs from schools of interest. Visit schools & request application materials. Get started on required essays & set a timeline for yourself to meet application deadlines! Register for national application or data assembly service, if appropriate.

**Senior Year (Fall)**
Request & collect 3-5 recommendation letters. Take grad admission test if not done already. Make copies of & mail all completed applications after having them proof-read! Order & send necessary transcripts from registrar.

**Senior Year (Spring)**
Follow-up with schools to make sure your file is complete. Send fall transcripts when applicable. Visit programs accepted to & evaluate offers. Notify ALL accepted & rejected schools. Consider deferring admittance if option is available.

**Senior Summer!**
Get a head start & enroll in a graduate class if it fits your schedule. Thank all those who sent recommendation letters for their support. And finally, keep in touch with faculty and the Career Center to let us know what you’re doing!
For more information on...

Choosing a program • Application Process • Timelines • Essays & Personal Statements
Recommendation Letters • Portfolios • Graduate Admission Exams
Financial Assistance • Grad School Fairs & Workshops • Resumes • The Interview

...Please stop by or call the Career Center to set up an appointment today!

Take a moment to browse the following links on topics of interest to you! (*A limited sample of the many available resources)

Grad Schools/Programs
Www.gradschools.com
Www.petersons.com
Www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/grhome.htm

Law School
Www.lsac.org
Www.aba.org/legaled/prelaw/prep.html

Health Professions
http://www.aamc.org/audienceamcas.htm
http://www.aacom.org/
http://www.messiah.edu/departments/premedhealth/prehealth/

Financial Aid
Www.finaid.com

Testing
Www.kaplan.com
Www.gre.org
Www.prepmaster.com (LSAT)

Career Center Resources
http://www.messiah.edu/offices/career/grad/g_process_home.html
Library (Check out test prep books for free!!)

For more info on anything in this packet, call or make an appointment in the Career Center! (x6016)