



GRADUATE SCHOOL PREP

MAPPING YOUR JOURNEY TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thinking about graduate school? Use this roadmap worksheet to sort through your ideas, organize your research, and take intentional steps toward your next academic chapter. Before looking at programs, look at your "why." Take inventory of your motivations and keep your long-term career vision in mind.

Passions & Career Goals

What specific topics or areas of study genuinely excite you? What are you hoping to gain from a graduate degree (e.g., specialized knowledge, career advancement, research opportunities)? What are your 3-to-5-year career goals? Is a graduate degree a requirement for this field, or will it give you a competitive edge?

Research

Now that you know your goals, it's time to explore your options and see what is out there. Identify 2–3 potential programs or universities. What distinct features (faculty research, curriculum, clinical placements, or cohort style) stand out to you? Consider the format that works best for you. Do you need a program that is full-time or part-time? Online, in-person, or hybrid? Are you willing to relocate, or do you need to stay local?

Financial & Strategic Planning

Graduate school is a major investment. It's crucial to look at the numbers early in the process. How do you plan to fund your education? Look into graduate assistantships (GAs), fellowships, employer tuition reimbursement, scholarships, or loans.

Connections & Networking

Don't go through this process in a vacuum. Connect with the people who know the programs best. Make a plan to speak with admissions advisors, current students, or alumni to get a feel for the day-to-day culture.

Questions I want to ask them:

- What does a typical weekly workload look like?
- Where do graduates of this program typically find employment?
- What do you wish you had known before starting this program?

ACTION AND APPLICATION

9. Next Steps: Enrollment

Once the acceptances roll in, what factors will help you make your final decision to officially enroll? (e.g., financial aid package, campus culture, location, start date).

My final decision criteria:

DON'T FORGET!

You can always ask for help! Navigating graduate school can be confusing and overwhelming - the Otterbein Career team, your faculty and mentors are here to help. Ask questions, request document reviews and talk through what your graduate plan looks like.

Schedule appointments on EAB Navigate or by emailing sscd@otterbein.edu

