Selecting a Graduate School

There are four primary ways to research graduate and professional schools. The best way to start is to talk with professors and administrators who know your academic work and skills. In many cases, they have attended graduate school in the field that interests you, and they are certain to know alumni or colleagues who have.

Peterson’s Guide, the resource below, offers general, unbiased information about schools in all categories. You can use it to make some preliminary selections (based on geography, degrees offered, etc.), so that you can then investigate schools directly.

Rankings of schools in various fields can help you to target schools to investigate. In most cases, rankings are accompanied by statistical data on students who attend the programs in question. By comparing that data (usually GPA’s and test score medians) to yours, you can get some idea of whether students like you are commonly admitted. If they are not, it does not mean you can’t be, but it means that you should also apply to some programs where entrance credentials like yours are typical.

The final way to research schools is to look at their websites. All universities have information posted about the programs they offer, as well as about admission, financial aid, student life, and other matters. Start with the university’s main page, then follow the logical links, or use the search feature, to find the program you want.

- Peterson’s Guides
- Graduate School Rankings from US News and World Report