

PLANNING TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

MCNAIR SCHOLARS Q&A

(MARCH 9, 2012)

SEARCH/SELECT/DECIDE

- HOW DO WE LOOK FOR [ACCREDITED PROGRAMS](#)?
 - [WEB SITE/PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS](#)
 - [REGIONAL](#)
 - [NATIONAL](#)
 - [PROFESSIONAL](#)
- WHAT IS THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAM? (CLASSES, TEACHING, ETC)
- WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR WHILE RESEARCHING POSSIBLE GRADUATE SCHOOLS?
 - [PROGRAM](#)
 - [GEOGRAPHIC](#)
 - [RESEARCH](#)
 - [FACULTY](#)
 - [LIFESTYLE](#)
- HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT PROGRAM IS BEST FOR ME?
- HOW DO I GO ABOUT CONTACTING CERTAIN GRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISORS? WHEN SHOULD WE DO THIS?
- IS IT TOO EARLY TO RESEARCH GRADUATE SCHOOLS WHEN YOU HAVE 1 YEAR LEFT OF UNDERGRADUATE?
- WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO CHOOSING A LARGE OR A SMALL GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAM?

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ATTEND

- HOW LONG CAN WE EXPECT TO ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL?
 - 6-10 YRS. – MASTER'S THROUGH PH.D.
- WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL
 - PEER DEMOGRAPHICS
 - CLASS SIZE
 - NATURE OF COURSE WORK
 - READING
 - GROUP/TEAMS
- HOW IS GRADUATE SCHOOL DIFFERENT FROM UNDERGRADUATE?
- WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF GRADUATE SCHOOL?
- HOW DO GRADUATE SCHOOLS GRADE YOUR PERFORMANCE?

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ADMISSION

- WOULD SIMPLY BEING IN THE MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM BE SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE LOOKED UPON FAVORABLY BY SOMEONE REVIEWING A STUDENT'S APPLICATION TO GRAD SCHOOL?
- HOW IMPORTANT IS [GPA](#) WHEN APPLYING TO GRAD SCHOOL VS. HAVING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, ETC?
- WHAT IS THE AVERAGE GRE SCORE FOR MOST GRADUATE SCHOOLS?
- GRE
 - WHEN SHOULD ONE START STUDYING FOR THE GRE
 - [WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT COVER?](#)
 - VERBAL REASONING
 - QUANTITATIVE REASONING
 - ANALYTICAL WRITING
 - SUBJECT TESTS? (BIOCHEM, CELL & MOLECULAR BIO/BIO/CHEM/COMP SCI/LIT IN ENGLISH/MATH/PHYSICS/PSYCH)
 - WHAT IS THE AVERAGE [SCORE](#)?
 - REVIEW GRADUATE SCHOOL WEB SITES
 - [WHAT A SCORE REPORT LOOKS LIKE?](#)
 - WHAT WOULD BE A REALLY BAD GRE SCORE?
 - WATCH PERCENTILE
 - AN EXCEPTIONAL GRE SCORE?
 - WATCH PERCENTILE
 - HOW IMPORTANT IS THE GRE?
- OTHER THAN TRANSCRIPTS AND GRE SCORE, WHAT OTHER THINGS SHOULD WE PREPARE TO GIVE TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ACCEPTANCE? E.G. RESUME. . .PORTFOLIO, ETC
- WHAT ARE THE TOP QUALITIES THEY LOOK FOR IN APPLICANTS?
 - MOTIVATION
 - SELF-DIRECTED
 - CAN ACCEPT CRITICISM
 - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (GPA)
 - CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
 - CLEAR IDEA OF GOALS
 - HARD WORKING
- DOES THE GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICANT WAIVER APPLY TO CERTAIN GRADUATE SCHOOLS THAT ARE NOT IN THE UNITED STATES?
- WHAT WOULD BE EXAMPLES OF STRONG REFERENCES TO INCLUDE IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION? (PROFESSORS, MANAGERS, MENTORS, ADVISORS, CLUB LEADER, ETC)
- HOW CAN I MAKE MY APPLICATIONS FROM A SMALL SCHOOL LOOK APPEALING TO A LARGE POOL OF APPLICANTS?
- WHAT EXTRACURRICULAR ASPECTS DO GRADUATE SCHOOL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FOR ADMISSION? (I.E. BESIDES GRADES, RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE)

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FINANCIAL

- HOW EXPENSIVE WOULD THE AVERAGE [MASTER'S DEGREE](#) BE? THE AVERAGE PHD?
 - ~\$20-40,000
 - LIVING EXPENSES ~\$10-15,000
- WHAT IS A [FELLOWSHIP](#) AND WILL IT PERTAIN TO ME?
 - ASSIGNED TO A PROGRAM, LAB, FACULTY
 - [ADVICE FOR WRITING A FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION](#)
- WHERE CAN I LOOK TO FIND OUT ABOUT FELLOWSHIPS PER GRADUATE SCHOOL?
- WHAT OTHER FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR A VARIETY OF SCHOOLS? (MCNAIR ACCEPTANCE)
 - ASSISTANTSHIPS
 - [GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS](#)
 - RESIDENCY
- WHAT IF I CANNOT AFFORD GRADUATE SCHOOL?

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LIVING

- DO MOST GRADUATE SCHOOLS OFFER ON CAMPUS LIVING?
 - RESIDENTIAL/FULL-TIME VS. PART-TIME
 - GRADUATE STUDENT HOUSING VS. NO DISTINCTION: ON- AND OFF- CAMPUS