

GRAD SCHOOL 101



McGill

Faculty of
Education

Internships and
Student Affairs

Agenda

- Presentation by Lara Franko, Education Career Advisor:
 - ✓ Grad school or not: making the decision
 - ✓ Tackling the application
- Panel Q & A → What is it like to be a graduate student?
 - ✓ Emma Liptrot, MA Educational Psychology - Learning Science (Thesis)
 - ✓ Alex Meredith, MA Education & Society (Thesis)

Learning Outcomes

By attending this session, you will be able to:

1. Identify key considerations to use when deciding whether to attend graduate school and how to choose which schools to apply to
2. Identify typical application procedures and standard components
3. Develop strategies for organizing your applications and promoting yourself as a competitive applicant

ASK YOURSELF:

Why do you want to go to graduate school?

Additional Questions to consider:

- Why do I want to go to grad school? Is it for the right reasons?
- What are my career goals? Will grad school assist me in meeting these goals?
- What will I specialize in? What are my interests?
- Am I willing to work much harder than I did during my undergraduate degree?
- Do I have the motivation for another two to seven years of school?
- Can I afford grad school?
- Do I have the academic and personal qualities to succeed?
- Am I doing this because I don't know what else to do?



Reasons for going to graduate school

Positive reasons	Reasons to think more about...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fervent interest in lifelong learning• Desire to advance or transition one's career• Interest in research opportunities• Strong pull towards something that I want to learn more about• Graduate degree required for career goal• Provide you with more upward career mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not sure what else to do• Everyone else is going to grad school• Can't find a job• I don't feel ready to start working• Belief that a graduate degree is necessary in order to get a "better" (or any) job



Graduate School vs. Work

Pro Grad School	Pro Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject material is fresh• Still in 'school' mode• Used to papers, exams, student budget• Strong rapport with professors, can obtain letters of reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a break from school• Gain knowledge of future career options• Bring experience to your next degree• Time to prep for exams (GRE, MCAT)• Earn and save money• Required for the program (e.g. MBA)• Improve career prospects in the long run



Types of degrees at the graduate level



- Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma
- Professional Degree / Masters
- Masters – Non-thesis
- Masters – Thesis
- Doctorate



Types of degrees at the graduate level

Graduate Certificate	Masters Non-Thesis	Masters Thesis	Doctorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years • Coursework • Practicum • Highly specialized content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 years • Coursework • Practicum • Applied Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 years • Some coursework • Research with thesis: may be more theoretical • Practicum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-7 years • Some coursework • Comprehensive exams • Original research dissertation <p>Two ways to start a PhD:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upon completion of a Masters 2. Integrated / fast track



Considerations when choosing a grad school

- Program (Thesis vs. Coursework vs. Project)
- Supervisor(s)
- Department
- University
- Location (city, culture, lifestyle, job opportunities)
- Admission Requirements
- Costs & Available Funding



How to Research schools, departments, experts, and potential supervisors

- University websites
- Journal articles, academic reviews
- School rankings (i.e. Maclean's)
- Department rankings
- Professor bios and CVs
- Reviews from former or current students
- LinkedIn Alumni Tool



Options to consider in Montreal after B.Ed.

- Following BEd, you might need to take **prerequisite courses**
 - MA Counselling Psychology (18 credits – Psychology)
 - MSc (A) Speech Language Pathology (24 credits: Linguistics, Statistics, Psychology)
- Some programs ask for **professional experience**
 - MA Child Studies (Concordia University), 1 year
- You may qualify directly for some programs
 - MA Education and Society (DISE, McGill)
 - MA Educational Technology (Concordia)
 - MEd Orthopédagogie (UdeM)



APPLICATION



McGill

Faculty of
Education

Internships and
Student Affairs

Components of a Grad School Application

(Please note that individual graduate programs application components may vary!)

- **Application fee**
- **Standardized forms**
- **Official university transcript(s)**
- **Personal Statement / Letter of Intent ***
- **Letters of Recommendation (3) ***
- **Curriculum Vitae**
- Interview(s)
- A research supervisor
- Portfolio and/or writing samples
- Test scores (GRE, GMAT, CASPer, MCAT, etc.)
- English proficiency exam
- Study permits / student visas



Personal Statement

- “Statement of Purpose” or “Letter of Intent” or “Biographical Sketch”
- Answer all of the questions that are asked
- Concentrate on crafting a strong opening paragraph
- Give the reader a sense of who you are: tell a story, be specific, find an angle, avoid clichés
- Brainstorm your ideas first:
 - Vision or purpose of the statement
 - Goals for obtaining that particular degree
 - Accomplishments and experiences that are most relevant
- Do not be repetitive
- Other ideas to include:
 - Describe what you know about the field and its future
 - Showcase your research about the school
- Write well and correctly, get feedback and have it reviewed by a career advisor, professor, friend, and/or family



Letters of Recommendation

Typically 3 strong letters are needed

- Check if all three must be academic, professional, or other
- Do not be afraid to ask professors. This is not a favour – it is part of their job!

Allow minimum 4 weeks (ideally the more time the better)

Provide clear and specific information to referees:

- List of schools you plan on applying to, deadlines, how they should be submitted
- Guide the writer with specific points you want them to include
- Unofficial transcript, CV, other materials (if requested)
- Send a thank you email



Tips for your Application

Allow yourself enough time to compile a strong application package

- *The application process is time and energy consuming*
- *Strong applications (particularly for research projects) take time and revisions*

Check deadlines for scholarships/funding

- *Meet department deadlines for eligibility; apply to external opportunities*

Forge connections

- *Find a friend who understands what you're going through, can relate*



Strengthening your Application

- Volunteer to assist profs or PhD candidates with their research
- Gain work experience (part-time, summer, internship)
- Attend seminars and departmental lectures
- Find a mentor (CaPS, McGill Connect, LinkedIn)
- Meet with program directors or professors from other universities
- Contact recruitment officers and/or admissions



Upcoming Related Events

McGill Graduate & Professional Schools Fair

Monday November 6, 2023 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

3rd Floor Ballroom, University Centre, 3480 McTavish St, Montreal, Quebec H3A 0E7



McGill

Faculty of
Education

Internships and
Student Affairs



Alex Meredith

Grad Life Discussion

workload, tips for success, application advice



Emma Liptrot



Grad School 101 Resources

- Reach out to alumni or current grad students for advice
- **Is Grad School Right for Me?** <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/decision>
- **Future Graduate Students, Applying & Admissions** <http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply>
- **Graduate Student Funding Opportunities** <https://mcgill.ca/gps/funding/students>
- **Reference & Recommendation Letters** <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/references>
- [***Peterson's Perfect Personal Statement \(4th edition\)***](#) available at McGill Library
- **McGill Mentor Program** <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/mentor>
- Consult the Education Career Advisor or an Advisor at CaPS



Resources to find a Graduate Program

The screenshot shows the McGill Career Planning Service website. The header includes the McGill logo, the text 'Career Planning Service' and 'A proud member of McGill Student Services', a search bar, and a 'Quick Links' dropdown. A navigation bar below the header lists: Students & Alumni, Employers, Faculty & Staff, Parents, Publications, About Us, and Contact. The breadcrumb trail reads: MCGILL.CA / CAREER PLANNING SERVICE / Students & Alumni / Graduate School. On the left is a vertical menu with items: COVID-19 FAQ, Explore Careers, Find a Job, Job Search Skills, Graduate School, Is Grad School for Me?, Study Programs (highlighted), Standardized Tests, Personal Statements, Reference and Recommendation Letters, and Financing Your Studies. The main content area has a title 'Study Programs' and three tabs: Study Programs, School Rankings, and Degree Equivalency. Below the tabs, the text reads: 'Looking for graduate, certificate, undergraduate programs or short-term courses in Canada or abroad? The following sites can help you search for a program in Canada, the U.S., Europe and the World:'. A bulleted list follows: 'Canada - [Directory of Canadian Universities](#)', 'USA - [Peterson's Graduate Schools | Graduate Guide](#)', and 'Global - [Study Portals | QS Top Universities](#)'. At the bottom of the main content area is the heading 'Specific Countries'.

McGill Career Planning Service

Quick Links

Search

Students & Alumni Employers Faculty & Staff Parents Publications About Us Contact

MCGILL.CA / CAREER PLANNING SERVICE / Students & Alumni / Graduate School

COVID-19 FAQ

Explore Careers

Find a Job

Job Search Skills

Graduate School

Is Grad School for Me?

Study Programs

Standardized Tests

Personal Statements

Reference and Recommendation Letters

Financing Your Studies

Study Programs

Study Programs School Rankings Degree Equivalency

Study Programs

Looking for graduate, certificate, undergraduate programs or short-term courses in Canada or abroad? The following sites can help you search for a program in Canada, the U.S., Europe and the World:

- Canada - [Directory of Canadian Universities](#)
- USA - [Peterson's Graduate Schools | Graduate Guide](#)
- Global - [Study Portals | QS Top Universities](#)

Specific Countries

<https://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/program>