GRAD SCHOOL

Agenda

- Presentation by Lara Franko, Education Career Advisor:
 - ✓ Grad school or not: making the decision
 - ✓ Tackling the application
- Panel Q & A \rightarrow 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 | |
|--|---|--|
| Fervent interest in lifelong learning | Not sure what else to do | |
| • Desire to advance or transition one's career | Everyone else is going to grad school | |
| Interest in research opportunities | Can't find a job | |
| Strong pull towards something that I want | I don't feel ready to start working | |
| to learn more about | Belief that a graduate degree is necessary in | |
| Graduate degree required for career goal | order to get a "better" (or any) job | |
| Provide you with more upward career mobility | | |

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Graduate School vs. Work

| Pro Grad School | Pro Work | |
|--|---|--|
| Still in 'school' mode Used to papers, exams, student | 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 | |

TO GO

NOT TO GO

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Types of degrees at the graduate level



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

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Types of degrees at the graduate level

| Graduate Certificate | Masters Non-Thesis | Masters Thesis | Doctorate |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1-2 years Coursework Practicum Highly specialized content | 1-3 years Coursework Practicum Applied Project | 2-3 years Some coursework Research with thesis: may be more theoretical Practicum | 4-7 years Some coursework Comprehensive exams Original research dissertation Two ways to start a PhD: Upon completion of a Masters Integrated / fast track |

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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

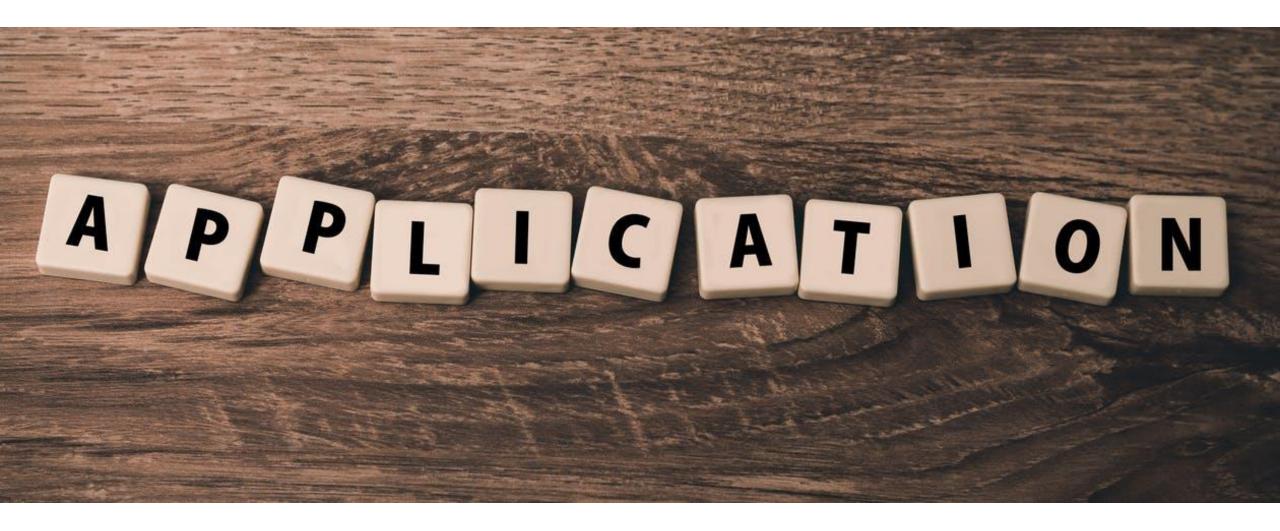


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Options to consider in Montreal after B.Ed.

- 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)





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



Alex Meredith

Grad Life Discussion

workload, tips for success, application advice



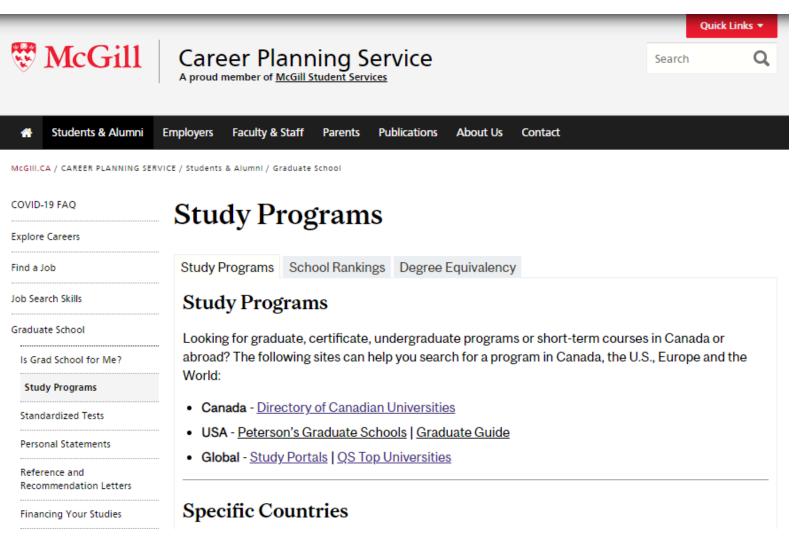
Emma Liptrot

Image: Market Market

Grad School 101 Resources

- Reach out to alumni or current grad students for advice
- Is Grad School Right for Me? <u>http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/decision</u>
- Future Graduate Students, Applying & Admissions http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply
- Graduate Student Funding Opportunities <u>https://mcgill.ca/gps/funding/students</u>
- 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



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