# 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	
<ul> <li>Interest in research opportunities</li> </ul>	Can't find a job	
<ul> <li>Strong pull towards something that I want</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>I don't feel ready to start working</li> </ul>	
to learn more about	Belief that a graduate degree is necessary in	
<ul> <li>Graduate degree required for career goal</li> </ul>	order to get a "better" (or any) job	
<ul> <li>Provide you with more upward career mobility</li> </ul>		

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#### Graduate School vs. Work

Pro Grad School	Pro Work	
<ul> <li>Still in 'school' mode</li> <li>Used to papers, exams, student</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Take a break from school</li> <li>Gain knowledge of future career options</li> <li>Bring experience to your next degree</li> <li>Time to prep for exams (GRE, MCAT)</li> <li>Earn and save money</li> <li>Required for the program (e.g. MBA)</li> <li>Improve career prospects in the long run</li> </ul>	

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

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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

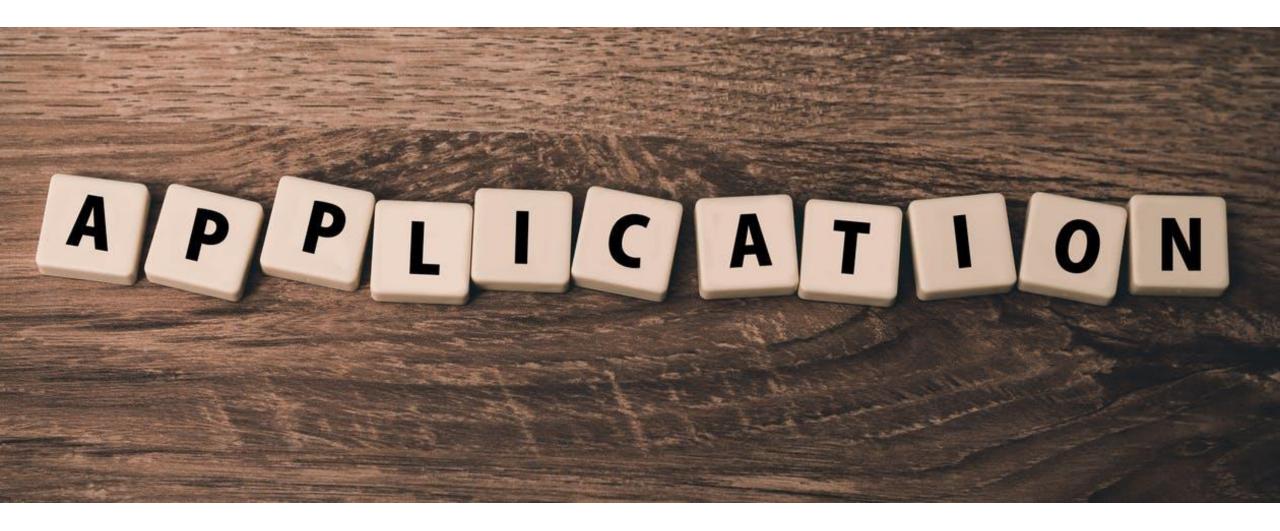


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#### Options to consider in Montreal after B.Ed.

- 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



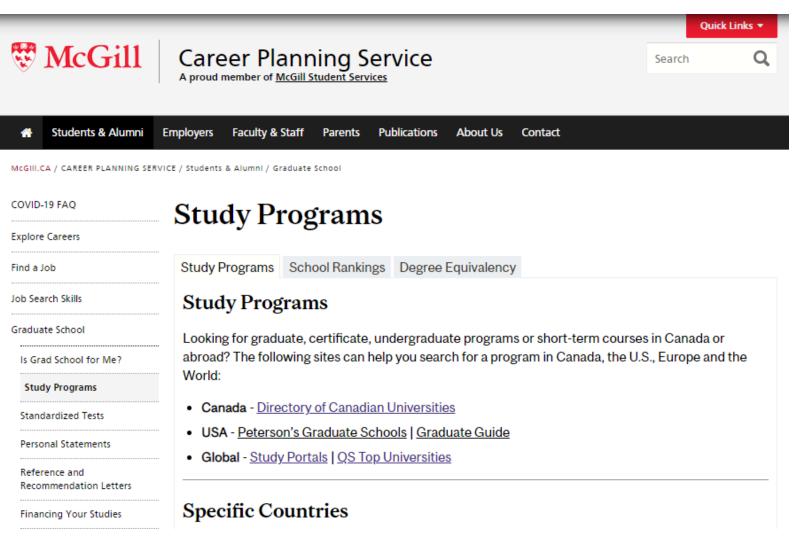
Emma Liptrot

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 <a href="http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply">http://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply</a>
- Graduate Student Funding Opportunities <u>https://mcgill.ca/gps/funding/students</u>
- Reference & Recommendation Letters <a href="http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/references">http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/gradschool/references</a>
- **Peterson's Perfect Personal Statement (4th edition)** available at McGill Library
- McGill Mentor Program <a href="http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/mentor">http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/mentor</a>
- Consult the Education Career Advisor or an Advisor at CaPS

#### Resources to find a Graduate Program



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