A Snapshot: Tufts Students and Graduate School

Typically 14-20% of Tufts seniors go directly to graduate or professional studies immediately after graduation. Of those students who are not planning to immediately attend graduate school, 50% plan to pursue graduate work in the future. The decision to pursue graduate study is highly individual; however, most seniors who go directly to graduate school share one of the two following characteristics:

- Commitment to specific occupation that requires advanced degree or professional training (e.g., medicine, law, university teaching).
- Commitment to a specific field of study and a drive to gain knowledge and expertise.

Q & A: Assess your readiness

Q. Is grad school a good way to avoid a job search or to escape from a tight job market?
A. No. Both job search and economic fluctuation are inevitable. You will face both throughout your life.

Q. Are you uncertain about how your undergraduate major will ‘get you a job’?
A. The link between an undergraduate major and a job is not at all clear in many professions. Philosophy majors work on Wall Street, and Economics majors join nonprofits. See for yourself by visiting “What Can I Do with This Major?” in the Exploring Majors section of our website, or the “Where do Tufts Graduates Go” destination information on the front page of our website.

Q. Heard about a ‘hot’ career or industry and you want to break in?
A. Graduate school is a path for students who are committed to a specific field of study. It is not designed to explore or “try things out” in the same way as an undergraduate liberal arts degree.

Thinking about graduate school?

Undergraduate experience is about discovering yourself and your professional interests. Graduate school is a place for those who are firmly committed to a career path that requires additional training.

The majority of Tufts students plan to go on to graduate school at some point in their careers. For students entering higher education, law, and medicine, advanced degrees are required, and a major decision is whether to attend now or later. It’s important to do your homework and gain a better understanding of what’s needed to succeed in the work you choose. In some cases, you may flourish with only a bachelor’s degree.

General Resources for Researching Graduate Programs

www.petersons.com • www.gradschools.com • www.graduateguide.com

For additional field-specific resources, visit the Graduate School section of the Career Center website.
How will you select a graduate program?

School reputation is undeniably a factor; however, beware of relying on this single and often overrated variable. In general, the most important factor to consider is how well the program matches your specific interests, abilities, academic background, career interests, and finances. This requires research. Be aware that some organizations and industries may develop relationships with specific programs or schools. To decide where to apply, consider the following steps:

**Consult with faculty, graduates, and students in your field of study.** Talk to professors and current students to learn about their graduate schools and experiences. Read professional journals to learn about professors who are researching and publishing in your area of interest. Take the initiative to contact them. You could gain valuable information to differentiate yourself in the application process. Seek out those already in your chosen line of work and ask how their selection of school/program has influenced their career development. If you’re targeting employers, contact their Human Resources Departments and ask where they recruit graduate students.

**Evaluate the specific program.** The quality and reputation of an academic program and the professors with whom you’ll work will wield more clout than the overall status of the institution. Seek out faculty and coursework that correspond to your specialized interests. Explore the theoretical underpinnings of the program. Stay focused on how the program will help you get to the next step of your career.

**Consider the best financial aid package.** Which school offers you the best deal? Your package will depend on how much a school wants you. This might include financial support, assistantships, fellowships, work-study, and loans. Inquire about the duration of funding and the possibility of increased funding depending on your academic performance.

**Use the Tufts Career Networking Group in LinkedIn.** Alumni have offered to share their professional and academic experiences with you. Identify those in your chosen career and ask about the requisite training. Find alumni who have earned graduate degrees - especially one(s) you’re researching - and learn from their advice. Visit the Networking section of the Career Center website to learn more including using LinkedIn strategically.

What’s next?

After conducting your research, if you’ve decided to take the next step in exploring graduate study, consider the following options:

- Visit the Graduate School section of the Career Center website for details about the application process and websites to explore programs and financing. You’ll also find valuable first-hand information from faculty and from alumni with grad school experience.
- Determine the requirements, from standardized tests to essays and recommendations, and develop a timeline.
- Gather information from schools and programs that interest you.
- Watch your Career Center eNews for graduate school programs and information sessions.
- Schedule an appointment with the Career Center, the Pre-health or Pre-law advisors, and/or faculty to discuss your plans.