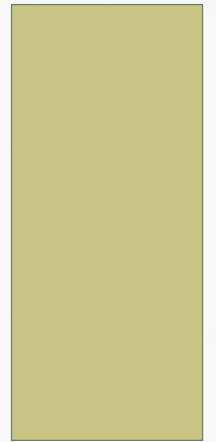


SO, YOU HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO GRAD SCHOOL

WHO TO TALK TO AND WHAT TO ASK!



A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Why have I decided to pursue a graduate degree?
 - Is there a specific topic that interests me
 - Is there a specific person I want to study with
 - Is it necessary for the career I have chosen
- What do I want to study?
 - The field of Kinesiology is very broad. Are you interested in Physical Education, Exercise Physiology, Biomechanics, Motor Learning/Behavior, Psychological, Sociocultural, or more clinical, professional degrees (Physical Therapy, Medicine)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Before you talk to a Graduate Coordinator , take the time to review the graduate program on-line. With the Internet, you can virtually search every University in the world from your living room.
- **Does this program have what I want?**
- Then, review the requirements

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- University Requirements:
 - Most Universities have minimal requirements for every graduate student they accept (i.e. proof of completion of your Undergraduate degree with a specific GPA (grade point average), GRE (graduate record exam) scores)). Once you have met those requirements, you go to the specific department requirements.
- Departmental Requirements:
 - Equal or more stringent GPA and/or GRE requirements.
 - Specific courses that you must have completed, usually with a “B” grade or better, to show you are prepared to start graduate study in that area.
 - A personal Statement (this is your chance to let them know what has inspired you to pursue a graduate degree and what has motivated you).
 - Letters of Recommendation (some Universities require these, others do not)

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ALL THE REQUIREMENTS, WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS

- Many programs will allow students to be “conditionally” admitted (usually if they are lacking in one of the required courses, or not quite reached the acceptable level on the GPA or GRE scores, but look promising based on their statement or letters of recommendation). **Specific stipulations are stated in the acceptance letter, i.e. Student must complete Kin XXX during her first semester at University and earn a “B” or better to continue in the program).**

WHAT ARE MY CHANCES OF BEING ACCEPTED

- How many students do they accept each year
- How competitive is the admission process
- How many students are currently in the program
- Start looking early:
 - If this is something you think you might want to do, start looking at programs in the summer before your senior year. Talk to people, narrow down your choices, start to get information.
- When are the applications due.
 - For most programs, applications are accepted anytime after December through the 1st of May, but you should check specific deadlines for each school.

WHAT ARE THE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS, AND HOW LONG DOES IT USUALLY TAKE

- Most Master's programs have a 30 unit requirement, with a specific culminating experience, usually taking 2-3 years.
- The Culminating Experience is usually
 - a comprehensive exam,
 - a project,
 - a thesis, or
 - some combination of these
- Most Doctoral programs do not have specific unit requirements, but specific courses (agreed upon by the student and their advisor) and the writing of a dissertation, usually taking 4-6 years.

WHAT'S THIS GOING TO COST?

- Graduate Education is more expensive than Undergraduate Education, and most Universities have a website where all the costs are broken down for you:
 - Tuition
 - University fees
 - Books
 - Cost of Living (housing/food)

WHAT CAN THE DEPARTMENT OFFER IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL HELP

- Most Universities and Departments have **scholarships** available to qualified students. This information is also available on-line, but it never hurts to ask specifically which ones you are best suited for, how to apply, and when are the deadlines.
 - Are there **teaching assistantships**? Most departments prefer to employ their graduate students to teach their undergraduate lab sections and activity classes. This is a great way to get to know the professors and really learn the material taught in a course.
 - Are there **research assistantships**? Many faculty will have grant support to do their research which may have money for research assistants

HAVE YOUR CURRENT RESUME READY!

- If there are teaching or research assistantships available, the department will need to know what skills you can bring to the program.
- A professional Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV) can make a very good impression. Even if the Department does not have anything at that moment, you have let them know what skills you have and that you are interested in working.

FOLLOW UP

- You should receive notification that the University has received all your material from the Graduate Division. If that has not happened, give the University a call.
- If everything is complete, your application should have been sent to the Department and the decision is now in their hands.
- Call or email the Department directly and speak to their Graduate Coordinator. This person can tell you where you stand.

BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION:

- If at all possible, **visit the campus**. Set-up a meeting with the grad coordinator and get a tour of the facilities. While there, attend a class or two and talk to the current Grad students.
- Ask them about:
 - their interactions with their advisor (how available is he/she, how often do they meet, how are they treated)
 - what are their impressions of how the faculty interact with each other,
 - how well do the Grad students get along,
 - do they study/socialize together,
 - is there a Graduate Student Club in the Department, and what does it do
 - Is this a “comfortable” place to study/ work/ grow.
 - ASK YOURSELF if you could see yourself thriving in this environment

PROFESSIONALISM

- As a Graduate Student, you are joining a group of professionals. You have chosen to go further with your studies to become a “MASTER” or a “DOCTOR” in a specific area. All areas have professional organizations, and becoming an active participant in these organizations is expected.
 - Is this encouraged at the University you are applying to?
 - Are the faculty actively involved in these professional organizations? Do they regularly attend conferences and present their research?
 - Can the faculty introduce you to other professionals which may help you further your career?

ALWAYS, ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS

Ask the opinion of people you trust:

- Ask the faculty members at the institution where you are earning your Undergraduate Degree
 - Ask your family members who have gone to college
 - Ask yourself what YOU want to get out of this degree, what is most important to you, what are your goals in life. Will this degree help you achieve them, will this institution/faculty help you achieve them.
- **GOOD LUCK!**