

# Applying to Graduate School

MIT Careers Office ♦ 12-170 ♦ (617) 253-4733 ♦ <http://careers.mit.edu>

## Trends

A survey conducted by the MIT Careers Office of the Class of 2007 found that 45% of undergraduates intended to pursue an advanced degree after graduation. According to the Council of Graduate Schools, graduate school enrollment is on the rise, and this trend is likely to continue. The National Center for Education Statistics projects U.S. graduate enrollment to increase from 1,807,000 in 1999 to 2,041,000 in 2011.

### Top Graduate School Destinations for MIT Students

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Harvard University  
Stanford University  
UC Berkeley  
Princeton University  
University of Michigan  
University of Pennsylvania  
Columbia University  
Yale University  
Duke University  
California Institute of Technology

### Common Graduate Degrees

Master of Science (M.S. or S.M.)  
Master of Arts (M.A.)  
Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)  
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)  
Doctor of Science (Sc.D.)  
Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)  
Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.)  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.)  
Doctor of the Science of Law (J.S.D.)  
Juris Doctor (J.D.)  
Master of Laws (LL.M.)

### Key Skills for Graduate Students

1. Critical Thinking
2. Analytical Abilities
3. Research Abilities
4. Strong Written Communication
5. Strong Verbal Communication
6. Time Management
7. Self-motivation
8. Self-discipline

### Top Ten Criteria to select a Graduate Program

1. A program that matches your career interests/goals
2. Quality of the program
3. Strength and reputation of the department, faculty
4. Faculty to student ratio
5. Program cost
6. Internship or field-work opportunities
7. Quality of research facilities, laboratories, libraries
8. Financial aid resources
9. Alumni success and reputation in the field
10. Availability of alumni as a student resource

## Exploration Resources

Given your criteria, realistically assess what degree and program best suits your needs. Research potential programs, faculty, and facilities in depth. Explore web sites, professional and scholarly publications, and consult your academic and career advisors. Request information from the schools of your choice early. Keep in mind application deadlines (often Dec. – Jan.) and the time frame for required tests (LSAT, GRE, etc). Look into financial options and research deadlines for applying for financial aid and scholarships.

### Websites:

<http://www.princetonreview.com/home.asp>  
<http://www.petersons.com/>  
<http://www.gradschools.com/>  
[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php)

<http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/>  
<http://www.ed.gov/finaid.html>  
<http://www.finaid.org/>

### Books:

*Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning a Master's or a Ph.D.*, Robert L. Peters, Ph.D., New York: Noonday Press, Revised Edition 1997.  
*Applying to Graduate and Professional Schools*, Elinor R. Workman, Peterson's Guides, June 1987.  
*How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate and Professional School*, Richard J. Stelzer, Peterson's Guides, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition August, 1997.  
*Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice*, Donald Asher, California: Ten Speed Press, Revised Edition, March 2000.

# Applying to Graduate School Continued

## Preparation and Application Process

### Some Resources:

- Advice for MIT undergraduates applying to graduate school: <http://web.mit.edu/gso/admissions/advice.html>
- The MIT Careers Office workshop, Applying to Graduate School: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/gradschool/>
- Information on applying to an MBA program: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/infostats/sloan/>
- Information regarding PreLaw, PreMed, other health professions: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/>

### Testing Requirements

Depending on your chosen course of study, one of the following tests may be required to demonstrate ability or skills:

- Graduate Record Examination: <http://www.gre.org>, General test and Subject specific including: Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology
- Graduate Management Admission Test (Business): <http://www.mba.com/mba>
- Law School Admission Test (Law): <http://www.lsatsat.org>
- Medical College Admission Test (Medicine): <http://www.aamc.org>
- Miller Analogies Test (some Law and Graduate schools): <http://milleranalogies.com>
- TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language: <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>
- Testing requirements for MIT graduate programs: [http://web.mit.edu/admissions/graduate/requirements/testing\\_req.html](http://web.mit.edu/admissions/graduate/requirements/testing_req.html)

### Transcripts

Transcripts must be sent directly to a graduate school from the Registrar's Office.

### Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are an extremely important part of the process. Request letters of recommendation well in advance. Ask professors or employers in your field who know you well and have a high regard for your work. Information on letters of recommendation can be found at:

- <http://gradschool.about.com/cs/askingforletters/a/recletter.htm>
- <http://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradLetter.stm>

### Essays

A Statement of Purpose is often required and this essay usually describes your research and/or professional interests as they relate to the graduate program. Your essay is an opportunity to emphasize your unique qualities, your motivation, enthusiasm, and maturity, as well as the quality of your writing. For information on how to prepare your graduate school essay:

- <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/gradschool/statement.html>

## Financial Aid

### Grants and Assistantships

Graduate students fund their education in a variety of ways. Grants and assistantships are financial awards that may come in the form of stipends, salary or tuition remission. Find out more information by researching grants, assistantships, and resident assistantships at the institutions where you are applying.

### Scholarships and Fellowships

Scholarships and fellowships are financial awards based on a variety of criteria. Research and apply for relevant scholarships and fellowships at:

- [http://web.mit.edu/finaid/fin\\_aid/index.html](http://web.mit.edu/finaid/fin_aid/index.html)
- <http://scholarships.kachinatech.com/scholars.html>
- <http://www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/fellowships.htm>
- <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Student/GRFN/>
- <http://www.nafadvisors.org/scholarships.htm>
- <http://www.fafsaonline.com/>

### Loans

If you choose to use a federal or private loan to help finance your education, they must be paid back once you graduate. Remember to keep in mind living expenses as well as tuition costs. Investigate both federal and private loans and review payment terms (interest rate, length of loan payments, etc.)

- <http://www.gradloans.com>
- <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml>
- <http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/StudentGuide.pdf>