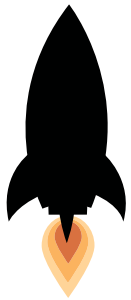


# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

# GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Next Level



At some point in your college career, you must decide what you would like to do after graduation – and that includes whether or not to attend graduate school. If you’re trying to determine whether graduate school is right for you, below are some pointers to help you make an enlightened decision.



## SHOULD I CONSIDER GOING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

### Going to graduate school might be a good idea if you ...

- » Want to be a professor, lawyer, doctor, investment banker or work in any profession that requires a post-secondary education.
- » Wish to develop additional expertise in a particular subject or field to maximize your future earning potential and opportunities for career advancement.
- » Are deeply interested in a particular subject and wish to study it in depth – AND have the time and financial resources to devote to further education.

### Going to graduate school might NOT be a good idea if you ...

- » Are trying to delay your entry into the “real world” with real responsibilities and real bills.
- » Aren’t sure about your career goals.
- » Aren’t prepared to devote the time and hard work needed to succeed.
- » Want to stay in school longer to avoid a poor job market.



## IS IT BETTER TO WORK FIRST OR ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY AFTER I COMPLETE MY UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE?

### Work first if ...

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- » You would like to get some real-world work experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
- » The graduate school of your choice prefers work experience (most MBA and some Ph.D. programs require this).
- » You cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven't applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships or assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

### Go to graduate school now if ...

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- » You are absolutely sure you want to be a college professor, doctor, lawyer, etc., and need a graduate degree to pursue your dream job.
- » You have been awarded grants, fellowships, scholarships or assistantships that will help pay for your education.
- » You're concerned that once you start earning real money, you won't be able to return to the lifestyle of a "starving" student.
- » Your study habits and mental abilities are at their peak, and you worry whether you'll have the discipline (or motivation) to write papers and study for exams in a few years.



## I AM BROKE. HOW WILL I PAY FOR TUITION, BOOKS, FEES AND LIVING EXPENSES?

**Family:** You've likely borrowed from them in the past; maybe you're lucky enough for it to still be a viable option.

**Student Loans:** Even if you've taken out loans in the past, another \$50,000 - \$75,000+ may be a sound "investment" in your future.

**Fellowships/Scholarships:** A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.

**Teaching/Research Assistantships:** Many assistantships include tuition waivers, plus a monthly stipend. It's a great way to get paid for earning an education.

**Employer Sponsorship:** Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.



Taken prior to 2020.



## WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF GOING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL FULL TIME VS. PART TIME?

### Benefits of attending graduate school full time:

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- » You'll be able to complete your degree sooner.
- » You can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
- » Ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

### Benefits of attending graduate school part time:

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- » Work income helps pay for your education.
- » You can take a very manageable course load.
- » You can juggle family responsibilities while completing your degree.
- » Allows you to work in the function/industry/career of your choice while continuing your education.
- » Employers will often pay for part (or all) of your graduate degree.



## ASSUMING I WANT TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

- » Identify your true strengths, interests and values to help you discover what is right for YOU, not your friends or parents.
- » Keep your grades up and sign up (and prepare) to take the required standardized tests.
- » Talk to faculty, friends and family who have gone to graduate school to get their perspective about the differences in time commitment between being an undergraduate and a graduate student.
- » Talk to faculty, friends and family who are in your targeted profession to get a realistic sense of the career path and the challenges associated with the work they do.
- » Investigate creative ways to finance your education; by planning ahead you may reduce your debt.
- » Research graduate schools to help you find the best match.
- » Investigate the admissions process and reach out to current graduate students at your targeted schools to evaluate your probability for admission.
- » Have faith and APPLY! Remember, you can't get in unless you apply.

*Credit: Roslyn J. Bradford, Assistant Director of the MBA Career Resource Center at the University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business in Los Angeles.*



## AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR GRADUATE APPLICATION

- » Maintain a strong GPA.
- » Remain involved in meaningful activities and positions.
- » Complete secondary/supplemental applications.
- » Practice and prepare for your graduate interview.
- » Review graduation requirements with your college and major advisers.
- » Accept the graduate offer at your school of choice.
- » Send thank-you notes to faculty and everyone who supported the process. Keep them updated on the admission process.

## WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT & STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Most graduate programs will ask you to submit both a Personal Statement and a Statement of Purpose. Both documents are great opportunities to stand out and convey what makes you unique from other candidates who might have similar grades, scores and co-curricular experiences.

### PERSONAL STATEMENT

- » Describe experiences related to who you are and how it contributed to your interest in the career field.
- » Share Your Story: Draw in the reader, using a writing style that is fun and imaginative. Feel free to use dialogue and detailed examples.
- » Be Strategic: The best stories are dramatic. Find a THEME that will bring together all your paragraphs.
- » Remember, the lead paragraph is most important. Either grab the audience's attention or you will lose them. Use the first paragraph to set the tone and direction. The purpose is for the readers to grasp who you are and what your goals are by the end of the first paragraph.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- » Discusses your purpose for applying; Share your professional and research goals, and any experience you possess.
- » Demonstrate Your Knowledge: Show what you know and who you are. Show how you seek to impact the career field, or what has drawn you to the field.
- » Share specifics about your research. Explain how your academic and professional experiences have prepared you to pursue research at the next level. Detail important course information, faculty whose work you admire or aligns with your goals and speak to fellowship opportunities or career opportunities provided around the school's location.
- » Explain how and why your research interests should be pursued at this particular institution and in this particular program.



## REQUESTING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

### Before the Request

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- » Organize all your important documents for the graduate program or college.
- » Create a list of your accomplishments, achievements or personal attributes that you would like faculty and other professionals to address.
- » Make sure to update your resume to reflect specific research and work experiences for the graduate program.

### Timing of the Request

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- » Preferably two months before the deadline, but earlier is better.
- » Share the deadline date with the letter writers during the initial request and precisely where the letter should be sent.
- » Start developing relationships with faculty, staff, mentors and other professionals as early as possible. That way you're not put in an awkward situation of requesting a letter of recommendation from someone who is just getting to know you.

### Follow-Up

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- » Send a friendly reminder two weeks prior to the deadline (email or phone call) about the letter of recommendation, if you have not heard back from the writer.
- » Make sure to send a thank-you email after they have submitted the letter (or as part of your cordial reminder).
- » Remember to remind the writer of the outcome of your application, after completion.





Taken prior to 2020.

# INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

## A Great Investment

Today's employers are seeking out culturally diverse and experienced employees who can work effectively in an increasingly global workplace. Take advantage of the opportunity to gain international exposure, as it will increase your value in the workplace.

### CAREER ENHANCEMENT

- » Study abroad can enhance your full-time and/or internship prospects since employers are increasingly seeking students with such experience.
- » Employers recognize the fact that those students who have successfully completed a study abroad program are likely to possess the skills needed for the global economy: economic and geographical knowledge, cross-cultural communication skills, advanced analytical skills, flexibility, an understanding of and familiarity with local customs, an ability to adapt to new circumstances, and often a proficiency in a new language.
- » Students who study abroad should highlight these unique set of skills to potential employers to distinguish themselves from the rest.

## RESUME BUILDER

As you share your resume with prospective employers, you will want to highlight the experience that you gained while studying abroad. Many employers are looking for people who are versatile and adaptable, and by listing your study abroad experience on your resume you are demonstrating your ability to succeed in a new environment and your willingness to seek out new experiences. See examples below.

**1. Mention your international experience under QUALIFICATIONS.**

- » Enhanced awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences.
- » Foreign language proficiency.
- » Awareness of global economic, political issues and realities.

**2. List your study abroad separately under EDUCATION.**

- » Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Finance - GPA 4.0
- » San Diego State University May 20XX
- » Study Abroad, Institute ABC, Barcelona, Spain - Summer 20XX
- » Extensive study of the Spanish and Catalan cultures through classroom and host family experience. Learned valuable lessons in time management, foreign exchange rates and cultural aspects of business.

**3. An international internship can be listed under EXPERIENCE.**

**4. If you participated in volunteer work** you can put this under EXPERIENCE or VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE depending on how extensive the volunteer work was during your time abroad.

## COVER LETTER

Be sure to briefly describe the skills and experiences learned from studying abroad and how that learning is transferable to the position for which you are applying. You do not want to repeat your resume to the employer, but this is the opportunity to highlight related accomplishments while overseas that will make the reader want to learn more. Typically, this information is presented in the second or third paragraph of the cover letter.



## INTERVIEWS

During the interview, you may be asked about your study abroad experience, and you should be ready to answer these questions in a way that highlights how the skills attained overseas will “add value” to the employer’s organization and will enhance your job performance. Below are some examples of questions:

1. **“You studied in Barcelona, Spain. Why did you decide to go there? How was your experience the same or different from your expectations?”**

**Answer Strategy:** Think back to why you decided to go. It may help to refer back to the personal statement you wrote with your study abroad application. Think about the things that surprised you while you were overseas. For example, you may have realized that Spain is more diverse than you believed it to be.

2. **“What have you accomplished at school or during your study abroad experience that you are most proud of?”**

**Answer Strategy:** Think about the goals you had for going overseas. Which goals did you meet? Which ones were you most proud of? As you relate this to the interviewer, you might express it by ...

- a. Explaining the goal you had for traveling abroad.
- b. Describe how this goal was accomplished.
- c. Sharing what you learned along the way.

3. **“What did you learn overseas that will help you do this job successfully?”**

**Answer Strategy:** Think about the ways in which you have changed. You might have learned to be more flexible, adaptable, tolerant, open-minded and/or patient. You may have gained specialized skills or knowledge from your classes, an internship or volunteer opportunities. Think about how some of these changes and skills might be useful on the job.

*Credit: Center for International Studies, Northampton, VA*





# JOB SEARCH FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## Your Career in the States

Getting a job in the United States can be challenging, even for domestic students. As an international student, you will encounter obstacles during the job search process. The following advice is intended to assist you in overcoming these obstacles and find the perfect job.

### BEGIN YOUR SEARCH EARLY

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, it takes an average of five months to find a good-paying job, so please don't wait until you graduate to start looking for a position. As an international student you should also be aware that it takes 90 days for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to process and approve your Optional Practical Training application.

### NETWORK

Only about 20% of jobs in the United States are advertised on the Internet. The other 80% are not advertised. These non-advertised jobs or "hidden jobs" are usually filled by word of mouth. To find out about these jobs you will need to network. Make an appointment with a career counselor through Handshake for more information on networking.

### SEEK U.S. COMPANIES WITH OFFICES IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY

Multinational companies will have an interest in your cultural background and language skills because of the ties they have in your home country. Many of these companies prefer to place foreign nationals in offices in their home countries for a few years prior to transferring to an office in the U.S.

### BECOME AN EXPERT ON VISAS AND OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Many companies are hesitant about hiring foreign nationals because they don't understand the process. It is your job to educate the employer on how easy it is to hire an OPT student. If you want to stay in the U.S. longer than the year OPT allows, learn about the H1-B Visa so you can explain the process of hiring to your employer.

## CHOOSE A MAJOR/SPECIALIZATION IN DEMAND

If you want to work in the United States after graduation, choosing a profession in high demand is in your best interest. The top five occupations approved for H1-B Visa status were in the following areas:

- » Systems analysis and programming
- » College and university education
- » Accountants, auditors and related occupations
- » STEM-related occupations
- » Computer science and programming

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills (verbal and written) are the No. 1 quality desired by employers in job candidates. If your English needs improvement, take ESL, English composition or public speaking classes or contact the SDSU Writing Center for assistance.

## COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP

If you want a job right after graduation, spend at least a year in your internship. This doesn't necessarily mean working for free, as international students can get a paid internship for up to 20 hours per week if it is part of the curriculum (meaning you must register for an internship class). This is known as CPT (Curricular Practical Training).

## PRACTICE INTERVIEWING

If you are interviewing with a U.S. company, you will be expected to conform to certain cultural norms. Your dress, manner of speaking, and the answers to questions will be expected to match certain norms. Because interviews are different in the U.S., it is important that you practice your interviewing skills. Make an appointment with a career counselor through Handshake to get started sooner rather than later.



# SALARY NEGOTIATION

## Know Your Value

A famous songwriter once shared, “You don’t get what you ask for, you get what you negotiate.” — JadaKiss. Salary negotiation is a process that requires strategy and preparation. It is very difficult to negotiate when you do not have enough information about salaries in your desired field of employment. Do the research, and get every penny you’re worth!

### MEET WITH A CAREER COUNSELOR (VIA HANDSHAKE)

Receive guidance and learn about resources available to you.

### RESEARCH SALARY INFORMATION

- » Use the following websites to calculate an average salary for a specific job in your field:
  - » Salary.com - [salary.com](https://www.salary.com)
  - » Glassdoor - [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com)
  - » Payscale - [payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com)
  - » Indeed - [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
  - » SalaryList - [salarylist.com](https://www.salarylist.com)
  - » Salary Expert - [salaryexpert.com](https://www.salaryexpert.com)
  - » Bureau of Labor Statistics - [bls.gov/ooh](https://www.bls.gov/ooh)

## CALCULATE YOUR LIVING EXPENSES

Calculate your living expenses to determine your income requirements. Keep in mind that the cost of living increases an average of 3% per year. If you are considering relocation, there are internet resources that can assist you in comparing the cost of living by location. For instance, **bestplaces.net** and **payscale.com** have cost of living calculators. Use the worksheet below to start your calculations.

<p><b>HOUSING:</b></p> <p>Rent _____</p> <p>Insurance _____</p> <p>Taxes _____</p> <p>Maintenance _____</p>	<p><b>FINANCIAL:</b></p> <p>Credit Cards _____</p> <p>Student Loans _____</p> <p>Life Insurance _____</p> <p>Investments _____</p> <p>Savings _____</p>
<p><b>UTILITIES:</b></p> <p>Electricity _____</p> <p>Water/Trash _____</p> <p>Cell Phone _____</p> <p>Internet/Cable _____</p>	<p><b>FOOD:</b></p> <p>Organic Foods _____</p> <p>Restaurants _____</p>
<p><b>TRANSPORTATION:</b></p> <p>Car Loan _____</p> <p>Insurance _____</p> <p>Gas/Maintenance _____</p> <p>Public Transportation _____</p>	<p><b>PERSONAL:</b></p> <p>Clothing _____</p> <p>Laundry _____</p> <p>Grooming _____</p> <p>Entertainment _____</p>
<p><b>HEALTH RELATED:</b></p> <p>Insurance _____</p> <p>Medicine/Prescriptions _____</p> <p>Gym Membership _____</p>	<p><b>MISCELLANEOUS:</b></p> <p>Travel _____</p> <p>Memberships _____</p>
	<p><b>Total:</b> _____</p>



## DEMONSTRATE YOUR WORTH

Make sure that you can demonstrate why you are worth a specific salary. Use accomplishments and internship/work experience to demonstrate how you can benefit the employer. Use concrete and real-life examples to support your request, not theoretical or hypothetical situations.

## SALARY GROWTH POTENTIAL

Know the salary growth potential in the career path you have chosen. Find out what the typical salary growth and advancement timelines are with the prospective employer. Even if the starting salary is not ideal, a strong potential for growth can easily make up for the first couple of years with the company.

## CALCULATE THE BENEFITS

Keep in mind that benefits can add value to your salary offer. You can also negotiate benefits. Some common benefits are: paid vacation, sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, stock options, tuition reimbursement, discounts in products and services and retirement plans.



*Taken prior to 2020.*

# EVALUATING A JOB OFFER

## Making the Decision

Congratulations! You've successfully managed your first/second interviews and have been offered a job! Perhaps you've even received offers from more than one employer. Whether it's one offer or more, your excitement can quickly get replaced by anxiety about the decisions which lie ahead. Take your time, and make the best strategic decision for your long-term career success.

### 3 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

#### How closely does the offer match your career goals?

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- » What factors regarding a job, organization and work environment are on your "wish list?" How well does this position fit these factors?
- » You may want to consider the factors on P. 81 in evaluating your offer. Some of these may not be important to you, and there may be other factors not listed which are extremely important to your decision.

#### Do you need additional information about the offer (or anything) in order to make a decision?

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- » It is not unusual to discover that you have additional questions, lack some factual data or simply need a better sense of what the job and organization are like.  
**If this is the case, STOP! Don't go any further in your deliberations until you address these issues.**
- » You may need to call one of your interviewers and ask additional questions or contact an alum who works for the organization. If you need a better understanding of what it would be like during a day on the job, call the employer (if they are local) and ask to spend an afternoon shadowing an entry-level employee in the job you're considering. Most employers will be willing to accommodate you.

#### Are there additional issues you want to negotiate, which would bring the offer closer to your goal?

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- » Perhaps the issues which concern you about the offer can be changed. If the job seems ideal except for location, then you might want to raise the issue with the employer. Some start dates are non-negotiable because training classes must begin together. In some instances, however, the start date can be adjusted.

The more you know about a position, the better prepared you will be to articulate why you are the right candidate.

**FINAL FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Nature of Work	Level of Responsibility
Organizational Culture	Location
Level of Autonomy	Work Hours
Travel	Benefits
Salary	Variety of Work
Mentoring	Stability of the Industry
Lifestyles of Employees	Advancement Opportunities
Stability of the Organization	Training and Development Opportunities
Quality of Higher Management	Opportunities to Learn and Grow in Job/ Company
Support for Continuing Education/ Advanced Degree	Transferability of Skills/Experience from Job