This handout will answer some basic questions regarding graduate school and will give you some quick tips on how to choose a graduate program that fits your needs. You will also find key concepts to keep in mind when thinking about continuing your educational journey.

What is Graduate School, and do I need to go?
- Graduate school is a concentrated course of study, where an individual will receive an advanced degree with elevated academic expectations.
  - If you are looking to pursue a master or doctoral degree, graduate school will be in your plan.

When should I start thinking about Graduate School?
- It is never too early to think about Graduate School! Do your research and find what programs you would be interested in and align with your career goals.
  - Make sure to earn good grades, choose your classes wisely, gain leadership and work opportunities, and visit the Career Center!

What types of degrees are there?
- Master's Degree – Utilized to boost professional goals and achievements (Master of Science, Master of Business Administration, etc.)
  - Full-time students can expect to complete a Master's Degree in 2-3 years
- Specialist Degree – Earned in addition to a Master's degree and requires specific training (Professional Certificates or Licensures)
  - Full-time students can expect to complete a Specialist Degree in contingent with a Master's degree in 2-4 years
- Doctoral Degree – Highest level of specialized educational degrees (M.D., D.O., PhD's, J.D., etc.)
  - Full-time students can expect to complete a Doctoral Degree anywhere from 3-6 years depending on their program requirements, dissertation expectations, and accreditation standards

How do I research and find the right school?
- Start researching your interests and what graduate degrees you are interested in; a quick internet search will help you find a plethora of insight. For more information about graduate schools, you can consult the sites below:
  - Gradschools.com
  - Peterson's Graduate School Search Tool
  - The Princeton Review – Find Your Graduate School

You can find CMU Graduate programs with the link below:
  - Graduate Studies at Colorado Mesa University

Take charge of your future. Start with Career Services.
THINKING OF GRADUATE SCHOOL?

How do I apply to Graduate School?
• Take a look at your program's application requirements. The standard Graduate School application will have you create a profile where you will upload all of your application materials. In your application you will most likely have:
  o Personal Statement/Goals Statement
  o Letters of Recommendation
  o Resume/CV
  o Transcripts
  o Test Scores
  o Writing Sample/Research Project Submission

Do I need to take a Standardized Test?
• Most graduate school programs will require their applicants to take a standardized test as part of its application process. Below are a few different standardized tests and descriptions. Please remember to check if your specific program requires you to take a standardized test, or not. You will be required to send your score to the instruction you are applying to which can range in cost anywhere from $45-$150 in addition to your application fee.
  o GRE – Graduate Record Examination
    ▪ Broad and widely used graduate school test
    ▪ Additional information can be found at ETS.com
  o GMAT – Graduate Management Admission Test
    ▪ Specifically for those who are wanting to obtain their MBA, it is formatted similar to the GRE and is a question-adaptive test.
    ▪ Additional Information can be found at MBA.com
  o LSAT – Law School Admissions Test
    ▪ Specifically for those who are looking to attend law school and obtain their J.D.
    ▪ Additional Information can be found at lsac.org
  o Additional admissions tests include MCAT, DCAT, etc.
  o Check out GoGrad.com for more information on test prep and standardized tests

How do I pay for Graduate School?
Most graduate school loans have an interest rate of 5-8%
• You will be **required** to apply for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
• You can only take out an Unsubsidized loan which will amount to $20,500 per year
• You can apply for the Grad PLUS loan (can cover full amount of tuition, fees, and cost of living per year)
• Private loans (higher interest rates anywhere from 6-12%)
• Receive Merit-Based Aid/Scholarships
• Apply for Graduate Assistantships (conducting research for a stipend or reduction in tuition)
• Work Study

There are various opportunities that come with obtaining a graduate degree. If you are interested in exploring some degree programs further and have additional questions, feel free to schedule an appointment with our office or contact us.

Attending graduate school is a big process, and we are excited to help guide you throughout your journey.

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