



# GRAD SCHOOL 101

Purdue University



## GRADUATE SCHOOL.... WHY NOT?



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**You don't have to go. So why go?**

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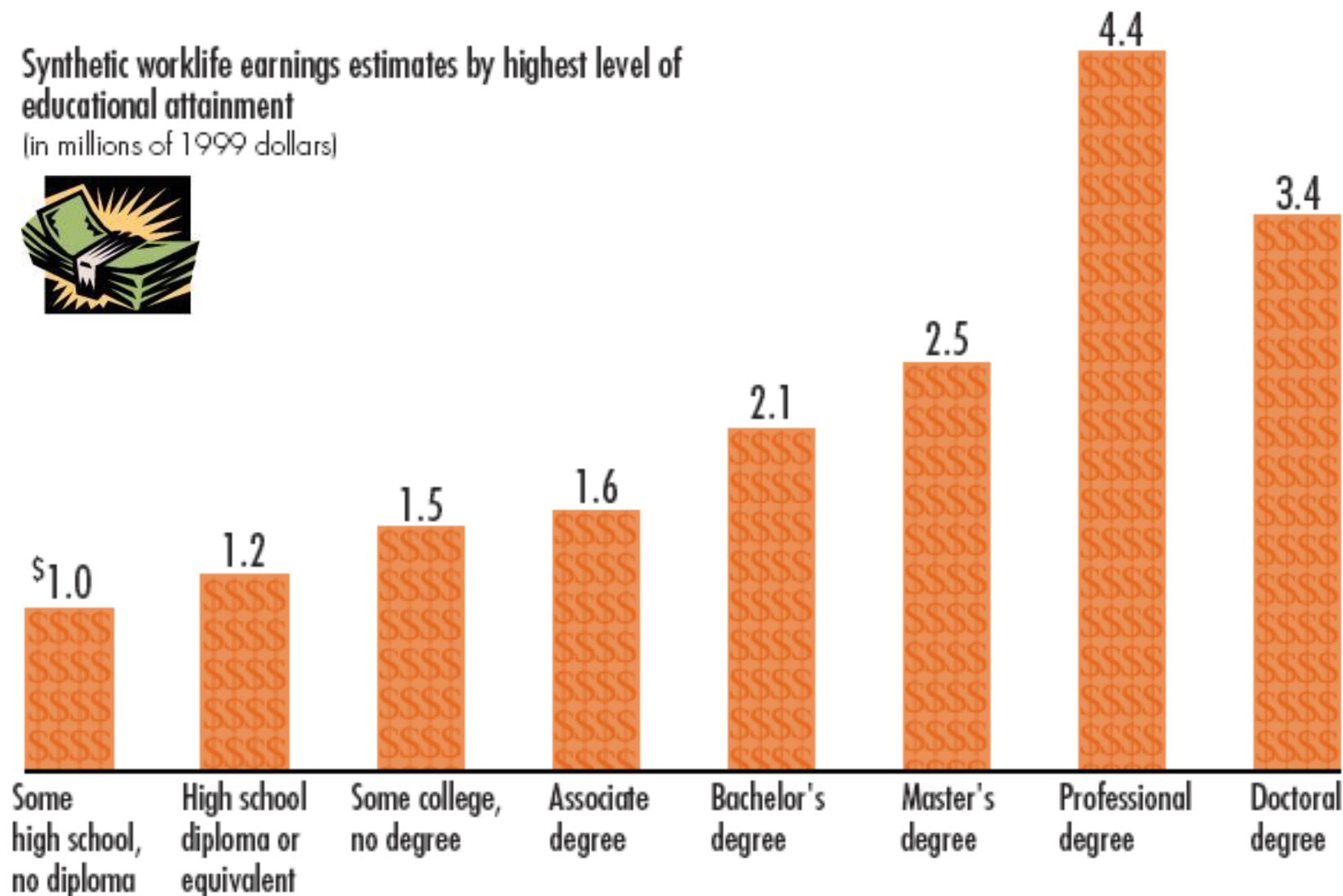
# Should You Go to Graduate School?

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- Why do I want to go to graduate school? Is it for the right reasons?**
  - What are my career goals? Will graduate school assist me in meeting my career goals?**
  - What will I specialize in? What are my interests?**
  - Do I have the motivation for another two to seven years of school?**
  - Do I have the academic and personal qualities to succeed?**
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## Synthetic worklife earnings estimates by highest level of educational attainment

(in millions of 1999 dollars)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings." Current Population Reports, P23-210, by Jennifer Cheeseman Day and Eric C. Newburger, available via a link at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-atta.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-atta.html). Data are from March supplements to the Current Population Survey, 1998-2000.

# How do you know which programs to apply for? Start by evaluating your situation:

## What work do you hope to do?

- Determine your academic / career goals.
- Decide what work you want to do and how you'd like to spend your life.

## What are your chances of success?

- The next step is to learn as much as possible about your chances of succeeding in that field once you have the degree.

## What are your abilities and interests?

### ■ ***CAN YOU DO IT?***

Graduate school is an enormous commitment of time, money, energy and effort. It is important to make an informed choice.

# Are you tired?

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- Exhaustion is understandable.
- After all, you've just spent 16 or more years in school.
- If this is your primary reason for taking time off, consider whether your fatigue will ease over the summer.
- You've got two or three months off before grad school starts; can you rejuvenate?

# What to do in the meantime?

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- A year off may enhance your application
    - Prep for GRE
    - Take other professional exams
  - Research experience
  - Gain work experience
    - SAVE MONEY
    - Determine your specialty and abilities
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# **Academia versus Industry?**

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### Employment of doctoral graduates by selected industry, 2000 (percent)



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# **Life as a Graduate Student**

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# What is it like being a graduate student?

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*"Being a graduate student is like becoming all of the Seven Dwarves. In the beginning you're Dopey and Bashful. In the middle, you are usually sick (Sneezy), tired (Sleepy), and irritable (Grumpy). But at the end, they call you Doc, and then you're Happy."* - Ronald T. Azuma

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# **Application Process**

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# DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY

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## WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- **THE FACULTY (Department)**
  - **THE STUDENTS**
  - **THE REQUIREMENTS**
  - **WHAT ABOUT JOBS**
  - **FINANCIAL AID**
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# Components of the Graduate School Application

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Regardless of discipline, virtually all graduate school applications entail the same basic components:

- Transcript
  - GRE or other standardized test scores
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Personal statement and/or admissions essay(s)
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# Criteria that are important are:

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To sum up, the criteria that are important are:

- reputation of the faculty,
  - breadth and depth of class offerings,
  - required examinations,
  - average time to degree,
  - employment success of graduates,
  - selectivity of the program,
  - library, computer and other facilities,
  - journals in your field published by the university.
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# Questions to ask / Issues to raise

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# Think about these questions:

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- What are my career goals?
  - Master's and/or doctorate?
  - Am I interested enough in the subject to stay with it for two or three or six years?
  - Do I have the energy and commitment to work hard for as long as it takes?
  - Can I take the pressure?
  - Can I find the money to pay tuition, living expenses, and books?
  - Can I make satisfactory arrangements for my family?
  - Can I go without working full time and give up the income in order to remain a student or, if I am out, to return to college?
  - What do I want my life to be like a few years after completing the degree?
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# QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

To help make up your mind where to apply, take each program you are considering; on a separate piece of paper write the name of the university at the top and then the answers to these questions:

- What degrees are given in the field?
- How high does the program rate?
- Are the faculty good?
- Are they doing what I am interested in?
- How specialized is the department?
- What are the course and thesis requirements to get my degree?
- How long will it take?
- Can I afford it?
- What are the possibilities for financial aid?
- Do I have the prerequisites for the program?
- What are my chances of being accepted?
- What are my chances of getting a job I want after I finish there?
- What is the tuition?
- Are there fees in addition?
- How much will it cost me to live there?
- Does the university have suitable graduate student housing?
- Other questions you might have to consider are:
- Will I find help in getting child care?
- Will professional licensing requirements tie me to that part of the country?
- What about the expenses of moving there?

# You should know:

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- whether you have the requirements to be admitted
  - how long it will take to get the degree
  - how the program is ranked
  - whether it is accredited
  - how the graduates do on professional exams
  - what percentage of graduates of the program get jobs in the field
  - what your prospects are for getting financial aid
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# Things to do

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- VISIT IF YOU CAN**
  - WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?**
  - THE FUTURE YOU WANT**
  - BE REALISTIC**
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