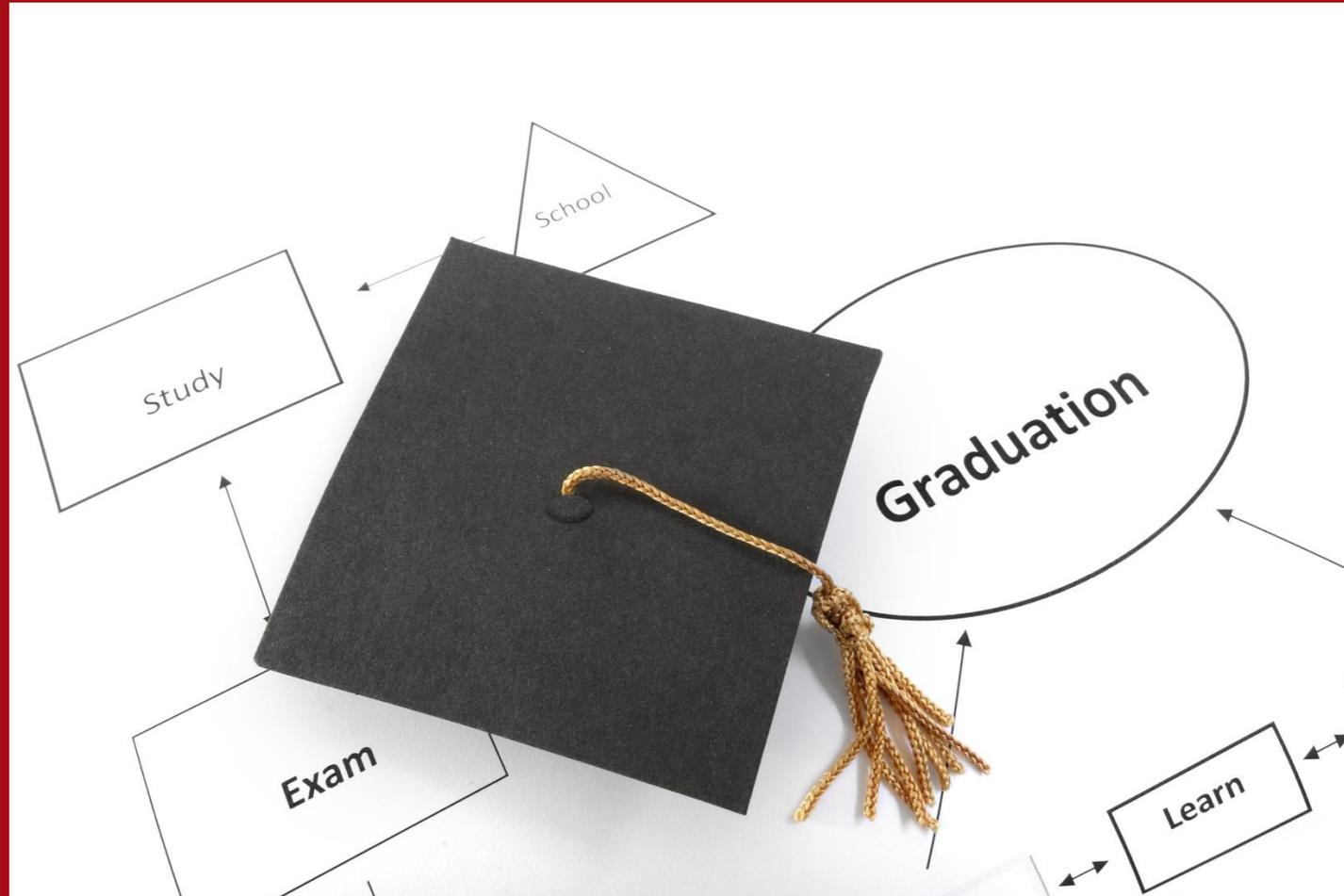


GRAD SCHOOL APPLICATION ESSENTIALS



PRESENTED BY **JULIA BURROWS**
THE CENTER FOR LIFE BEYOND REED

TOPICS



- Why go to graduate school
- How to know what to study
- How to reach out to prospective advisors
- Components of most grad applications
- Application timeline
- Funding
- Tips & Tricks
- Q & A

Why go to grad school?



Why go to grad school?

1

**A GRAD DEGREE IS
REQUIRED FOR YOUR
CAREER GOALS**

2

**YOU LOVE LEARNING AND
WANT TO EXPLORE A TOPIC
IN MORE DETAIL**

3

**YOU HOPE THE ECONOMY
WILL IMPROVE BY THE TIME
YOU FINISH SCHOOL**

Master's vs PhD?

Master's:

- You're not ready to make a 5+ year commitment to a specific research topic
- A Master's is the a terminal degree in your field or all that is needed to accomplish your career goals
- You start earning a "real" income sooner

PhD:

- Better chance of obtaining graduate funding
- You want to lead your own research group
- You don't want to be limited in your job options by your degree

Good news: You can change your mind!

- It's possible to change from a PhD to a Master's or a Master's to a PhD!

How do you know what to study?

- **Talk to your professors, Reed alum in grad programs, other professionals**
- **Attend conferences, seminars, other presentations**
- **Read journal articles**
- **Find something that excites you!!!**

Make a list of potential grad advisors who are doing research you are interested in



Before you reach out to prospective grad advisors



- **Thoroughly explore their website (current research, grad students, recent grants and publications)**
- **Look for any info for prospective students and what to include (CV, personal statement, writing sample etc.)**
- **Don't assume website is up-to-date regarding grad students unless year is stated (e.g., Fall 2021)**

What to include in your initial outreach

- Your major, school, year (if alum, what you are doing now)
- Grad degree and year you plan to start
- Your research interests
- Show that you know their research interests and that there is a good research fit
- What you are asking for
 - Are you taking new grad students?
 - Time to talk?
- Anything else requested on their website

Example email

Dear Dr. X,

I'm a rising senior chemistry major at Reed College interested in pursuing a PhD program in Chemistry next year. When talking to Professors Smith about my research interests and career aspirations, she mentioned that I might want to look into your work. I have since familiarized myself with your website and read about your research on **renewable fuel production through catalysis, a topic I have been interested in for some time.** I would love to study **electrochemistry from an inorganic synthesis perspective.** I also am excited that your lab seems to have **a nice balance between synthetic and thermochemical research!**

I was wondering if you planned to take on any new graduate students for the fall of 2021? If so, **would you have 30 minutes or so to speak with me on the phone or Zoom in the next month so I could learn more about your lab and current research?**

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely, Awesome student

Activity



PART ONE

Describe your research interests. Be as specific as possible

PART TWO

Share your research interests with each other: practice eye contact and speaking with confidence

PART THREE

Begin to draft an email to a imaginary advisor. Include: major, school, year, grad degree, year start, your research interests, and what specifically you are asking for

Main components of grad school applications

- GRE
- TRANSCRIPTS
- CV/RESUME
- **PERSONAL STATEMENT/STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**
- **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**



Personal Statement

BACKGROUND

Your background as related to your professional accomplishments and development of your research interests. Why are you prepared for grad school? How have you overcome adversity?

FUTURE STUDY

What type of research do you hope to do in graduate school (and why are you qualified to do it)?

PROGRAM & ADVISOR FIT

Why the program and advisor is a good fit for you. Show you have done your homework. Use advisor's names and talk about their work.

CAREER GOALS

What is your ultimate career goal? How will this degree help you towards that goal?

Letters of Recommendation

- Most schools ask for 3 (so think about 4 possibilities)
- Don't wait until you need them to ask, develop relationships now and stay in touch
- Ask for a **supportive/strong** letter
- Give at least 2 weeks notice, 1+ month preferred
- Give **deadline weeks ahead** of when you need it, & send reminders
- Ask recommenders to address Reed's grading policy
- Send CV, personal statement, and **bullets of what you suggest they say about you**
- Include instructions for how to submit letter
- Choose letter writers who know you in different capacities



Activity

**1. BRAINSTORM WITH YOUR PEERS
*WHO YOU MIGHT ASK TO WRITE
YOU A LETTER OF REC***

**2. DISCUSS IN WHAT CAPACITY
YOUR POTENTIAL LETTER WRITERS
KNOW YOU (WHO CAN SPEAK TO
WHAT)**

**3. DECIDE WHEN AND HOW YOU
WILL ASK THEM**





SUMMER

- Research and reach out to potential grad advisors
- Study for and take GRE
- Polish CV/resume
- Begin personal statement

FALL

- Finalize list of grad schools (5-10)
- Finalize personal statement
- Make official request for letters of rec
- Submit applications

SPRING

- Visit campus to interview
- Final decision date April 15

Funding



MOST GRADUATE DEGREES SHOULD BE FUNDED

- Teaching, research, or graduate assistantships are offered through the grad school or advisor
- Should be provided living stipend plus tuition waiver for part time work

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS SHOULD APPLY FOR FELLOWSHIPS

- UCLA GRAPES database
- Pathways to Science
- CLBR Fellowship database
- NSF GRFP - upcoming info sessions



- **Reach out to graduate students currently working with your potential advisor**
- **You are evaluating potential advisor just as they are evaluating you**
- **Find more than 1 person you could work with at an institution**
- **Other tips?**

Contact us

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The Center for Life Beyond Reed is committed to continuing to provide support for students and recent graduates during this unique time.

Here are the ways you can work with us:

- Make a virtual appointment through Handshake, while we can't meet in-person an advisor can do a video or phone call appointment
- Submit documents for review through our Virtual Drop-in Form
- Book an appointment with a Peer Career Advisor, this is a great place to start, especially for underclassmen
- Check out our upcoming webinars
- Apply for funding

We look forward to working with you soon.

The CLBR Team

Who We Are

Our vision is that through your work with the Center for Life Beyond Reed, you will better understand your interests and **purpose**; learn about

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

FIND OPPORTUNITIES

SEARCH FOR FUNDING

APPLY TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT FUND

ATTEND EVENTS

Virtual Drop-in

Need applicants materials reviewed? Have a quick question? Submit them [here](#) for review!

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

VIRTUAL DROP-IN

<https://www.reed.edu/beyond-reed/>

EMAIL CLBR

beyondreed@reed.edu

EMAIL ME

burrowsj@reed.edu