



What to Consider When Considering Further Education

By Colette Steer

Getting more education after undergrad is a wonderful option; there are several things to consider when deciding if it is what you want to pursue. Here are some common reasons students have for thinking about further education:

I want to study the subject/discipline/topic at the graduate level

Great! Consider checking out what graduate life is like in that area; talk to professors in those programs to find out what their research involves; talk to current grad students about their experiences; compare individual departments and potential supervisors in terms of their research area and supervisory style.

I thrive in an education environment and/or I don't want to leave yet

Great! Consider checking out different kinds of educational environments and programs. Find out the kind of environment that you thrive in best (in terms of your learning/work style). Visit in person to see for yourself. If the School does them, log into a webinar presented by them.

Further education is necessary for the work I want to do

Are you sure? Consider checking out the work, and ensuring that you understand what the key skills and qualifications necessary to work in it might be and what it is like on a day-to-day basis; talk to people in the field and do information interviews; ask about the kinds of educational backgrounds; figure out some of the sub-specialties or different kinds of work environments within the field that might suit you. You may also want to ask about professional development, because sometimes, employers will give you the time to do extra studies.

The process seems more straightforward than looking for a job

After being in school for so many years, you may be quite comfortable with the steps involved in applying for education programs, while starting a professional job search can feel like unfamiliar territory. The Grad School

application process however is different to undergrad applications, so make sure you understand the steps early on in your search.

The reasons for pursuing further education vary, but the better you understand your own, the more likely you will be satisfied with your decision over the long term.

Thinking about further education?:

Ask yourself...

- Do I have a strong pull towards something that I want to learn more about (enough to sustain me through 1-5+ years of additional study)?
- Are there programs available that are a good fit with my scholarly or skills development interests? Are there different types of programs (research, professional, post-degree diplomas, certificates) to consider?
- What work do I want to do after my schooling? Is further education required and if not, in what ways do I think it will help with my career goals?
- What financial variables should I be considering (examples include available funding, tuition, supplies, living expenses, moving, loss of employment income if delaying entering a paid position)?
- Does the program or supervisor seem like a good fit (location, social environment, employment opportunities, etc.)?

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Do you have more questions about further education? Career Services offers drop-in career advising, further education print resources and workshops as well as hosts an annual Career Fair that connects students with further education opportunities.

For more information on these and other resources visit careers.queensu.ca/students/furthered.html or the Queen's University School of Graduate Studies queensu.ca/sgs for more information about programs and resources for prospective students.