

## PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

At the earliest stirring of interest in earning a Master's Degree or a Doctoral Degree in English, consult your adviser and the Department Chair. Gaining admission to a graduate program and securing funding for your studies require careful planning.

Ideally, your entire bachelor's program should prepare you for graduate study. Waiting until your senior year to "get serious" about graduate study sharply increases the odds against your success. The competition for places in graduate programs in English is more intense now than at any other time in living memory. It is not unusual for a graduate school to have 30 or 40 applications for every place.

Many factors determine the acceptability of your application for admission and for financial aid. Obviously, a record of superior achievement in your undergraduate English courses forms the basis for successful graduate work. Such a record, however, is not sufficient. Other factors require special attention and preparations:

- the quality of your writing;
- the breadth of your knowledge of literature, especially as measured by the Graduate Record Exam;
- the quality of your commitment to literary studies, especially as documented by independent study in an honors project; and
- the quality of your participation in co-curricular literary activities.

Creating a record of achievement in these areas will not only increase the likelihood of your admission to a good graduate school, but also, it will make your undergraduate years, regardless of your career plans, as worthwhile as they possibly can be.

## What Grad Schools Consider

*Factors that may determine your acceptance in a graduate program*

- Your transcript and grades
- GRE scores
- Writing sample
- Statement of purpose
- Letters of recommendation
- An honors project--see [Honors/ Independent Study](#)
- Extracurricular activities
- Your fit into the particular program

## What Prospective Grad Students Consider

*Factors to consider when researching and applying to graduate schools*

- The school's location
- The department's strengths in your areas of interest
- Notable faculty members
- Scholarship opportunities
- Teaching opportunities
- Tuition

- The possibility of tuition waivers or other funding
- Estimated amount of time to complete the program

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