

# **Graduate School Exploration Assignment**

## **Career & Professional Development Center**

### **Assignment Overview**

Use this assignment to explore whether graduate school aligns with students' career goals and to compare graduate programs. This activity should take 60-90 minutes. It has 5 sections and a reflection submission at the end. This activity can be broken into sections if needed and it may be completed in class or asynchronously. Instructors, please edit as you see fit for your course or student population.

### **Career Competency Alignment**

#### **Career Navigation & Growth**

- Evaluates graduate school options and develops a plan that aligns with personal career goals. Explores local opportunities by investigating faculty and their research.

#### **Critical Thinking & Adaptability**

- Compares graduate programs, evaluates admission requirements, and identifies the best fit based on individual interests and goals.

#### **Communication & Professional Presence**

- Clearly communicates career interests, research findings, and reflections through written responses.

#### **Digital & AI Fluency**

- Uses credible digital resources to research graduate programs and make informed decisions.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Assess whether graduate education aligns with career goals and professional aspirations.
- Compare graduate programs using admission requirements, costs, curriculum, research opportunities, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Evaluate graduate program options to identify the best fit based on personal interests, career goals, and academic qualifications.
- Develop a realistic action plan to strengthen their graduate school application and prepare for future educational opportunities.
- Utilize credible digital resources to research graduate programs and make informed academic and career decisions.

### **Part I – Career Exploration**

**What career(s) are you interested in pursuing after graduation?**

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**Why are you interested in this/these career(s)?**

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**Is graduate school Required / Recommended / Optional? Explain.**

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**What graduate degree(s) are commonly required?**

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**Average salary and job outlook:**

Research the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), [Salary.com](#), [Glassdoor](#), etc.

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## **Part II – Graduate Program Research**

### **Graduate Program #1**

University:

Degree:

Location:

Website:

Length:

Estimated Tuition:

Minimum GPA:

GRE/Test Required:

Application Deadline:

Research Opportunities:

Internship/Clinical Opportunities:

What do you like most about this program?

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**Graduate Program #2**

University:

Degree:

Location:

Website:

Length:

Estimated Tuition:

Minimum GPA:

GRE/Test Required:

Application Deadline:

Research Opportunities:

Internship/Clinical Opportunities:

What do you like most about this program?

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**Graduate Program #3**

University:

Degree:

Location:

Website:

Length:

Estimated Tuition:

Minimum GPA:

GRE/Test Required:

Application Deadline:

Research Opportunities:

Internship/Clinical Opportunities:

What do you like most about this program?

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### **Part III – Program Comparison**

| Criteria | Program 1 | Program 2 | Program 3 |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
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Lowest Tuition:

Most Interesting  
Curriculum:

Best Research:

Best Internship:

Best Location:

Most Competitive:

Overall Favorite:

### **Part IV – Faculty Spotlight: Explore Researchers**

**Faculty Member @ TAMUCC or Potential Graduate Program**

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**Department**

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**Research Interests**

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**Publication or Project**

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**Why would you want to work with this faculty member?**

## **Part V – Reflection**

**What surprised you most in your research?**

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**Which program best fits you and why?**

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**What concerns do you have?**

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**What experiences would strengthen your application?**

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**List three action steps you can take this semester to get you closer to your goal/vision.**

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## **Part VI – Submission**

Please share your reflection by submitting your response to the instructor.

## Continue Learning with the Career & Professional Development Center

Enjoy these activities? Below are a few resources you can utilize to support resume development, career exploration, graduate school prep, and developing interview skills!

### Quinnia [\[Link Here\]](#) \* Use your student email to access.

Provides an AI Resume, Mock Interview, Elevator Pitch, and LinkedIn Profile Review.

- Gives thorough feedback and recommendations for changes.
- Like an Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) which is an AI tool companies use to filter through resumes quickly.
- Helps prepare for interviews at your convenience.

### Handshake [\[Link Here\]](#) \* Use your student email to access.

- Provides an AI resume review and rewrite feature.
- Connects with internships and jobs both on and off campus.
- Handshake is a way to connect with your career counselor and schedule appointments.

### Career Assistance Drop-ins: Career Corner (UC 108)

*Hours subject to change due to holidays, staffing, and semester.*

#### Monday through Thursday

- *Spring & Fall:* 10am – 6pm
- *Summer:* 10am – 5pm

#### Friday

- *Spring & Fall:* 10am – 2pm
- *Summer:* 10am – 2pm

#### Virtual Drop-In Day

- *Check I-Engage for dates and times.*

### Career Counselors

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