

Choosing a School

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Consider the criteria listed below to help you evaluate and determine the graduate program that best suits YOU!

Program of study

- What degrees are offered? What areas of concentration are available?
- Does the program focus on theory and original research, or does it emphasize the practical application of knowledge and skills?
- Does the program provide hands-on experience such as practicums and internships?
- Is the curriculum structured or flexible?
- Are there opportunities to work on research projects?
- What is the average length of time students spend in the program?

Faculty

- What is the size of the department?
- Is there diversity?
- What are their credentials?
- What have they published?
- What research have they conducted?
- What is the student/faculty ratio?

Costs

- What are the tuition and fees?
- What types of financial assistance are available? Loans, scholarships, grants, etc.?
- Are graduate assistantships available?
- How much is out-of-state tuition?

Community

- Would you be happy with the location, weather, political, and social climate?
- What is the size of the school and community?
- Does the area offer cultural or recreational activities?

Admissions

- Does the program prefer recent graduates or applicants with work experience?
- Must you meet any prerequisites before acceptance?
- What are the admissions requirements? Do they include:
 - Graduate admissions test (i.e. GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT)
 - Transcripts
 - GPA
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Application essay/personal statement
 - Interview
 - Portfolio

Reputation

- Is the university/college accredited?
- Is the program well established or relatively new?
- Who has graduated from the program and what are they doing now?

Facilities

- Are there adequate study facilities including library, research, and lab space available?
- Are student services, recreation, and organizations available on campus?
- Are medical services available?