

# Graduate Studies: The 5 Ws in "5" Minutes

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# Too Many Choices?!?

- What is a graduate degree?
- Why do a graduate degree?
- When do a graduate degree?
- Where should I do a graduate degree?
- Who should I select as a research supervisor?



# What is a Graduate Degree?

- **advanced** academic degree (masters or doctoral)
- admitted students must have earned a previous **undergraduate degree**
- demonstrates in-depth knowledge through **courses** and possibly a **thesis**
- often involves producing **original research**



# Why do a Graduate Degree?

- Society needs graduate degree holders
  - most highly educated and skilled group!



# GOOD REASONS



- Invest in your future



- Get noticed in today's job market



- Develop yourself professionally

- Pursue your interests in more depth

- Contribute to the world's knowledge

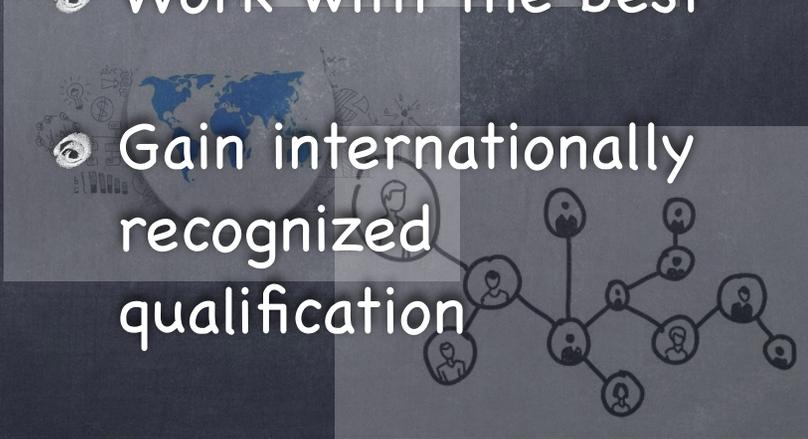
- Make connections

- Increase financial prospects



- Get academic recognition

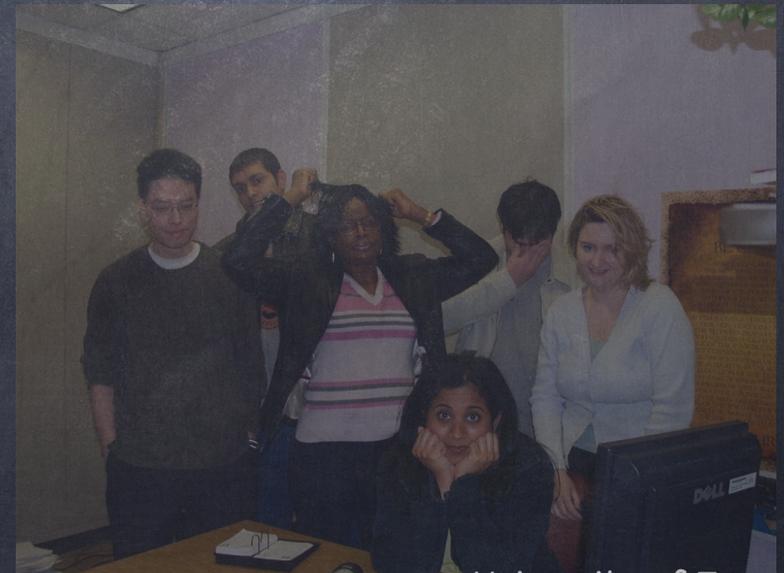
- Work with the best



- Gain internationally recognized qualification

# BAD REASONS

- ◉ Avoid job hunt and personal/financial obligations
- ◉ Don't know what to do with your life
- ◉ Dissatisfied with current employment
- ◉ You "wouldn't mind" learning more about a subject



# When do Graduate Studies

- Right after undergraduate degree?
  - you have momentum and skills are sharp
  - may have fewer obligations
  - can target the “right” entry-level position
- After some work/life experience?
  - better know yourself and career goals
  - broader and more mature view
  - employer may support studies

# What Program is best?

- **Master's** (course-based, 1.5-2 years)
  - specialization; advanced knowledge
- **Master's** (course + thesis-based, 1.5-2 years)
  - enhances creativity, flexibility and analytic skills
- **Doctorate** (~4 years)
  - original research
  - enhances independence, creativity, flexibility

# Transferable Competencies

- questioning and inquiring attitude
- self-confidence
- ability to defend new ideas
- problem-solving skills
- determination to find better ways to tackle challenges
- maturity and autonomy
- ability to make impact
- critical judgement
- ability to rise to the challenge
- ability to learn quickly
- ability to acquire new skills quickly
- expertise at analytic thinking
- adaptability
- ability to make impact
- talent to bridge different areas and communicate with others in different disciplines
- capability to handle high pace of knowledge economy



# What Program is best?

- Determine your **commitment** and **goals**.
- Identify your **strengths** and **assets**.
- Identify your **weaknesses**.
- Select what you can **compromise** on.

# Where should I do Graduate Studies?

- Existence of
  - desired supervisor
  - critical mass in field of interest
  - desired courses and opportunities
- Reputation, location, support network
- Does it “feel” right?

# How do I Select a Research Supervisor?

- Area of interest
- Personality match
- Research/supervision style
- Scale of research group and resources
- Placement of former students
- Expectations



Talk to other students, but  
be discriminating!

# Decisions, Decisions ...

- You and your career are both a work in progress.



YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT  
CONTROL OVER WHO  
YOU ARE AND WHAT  
YOU DO

STRATEGY 2: YOU MODIFY YOUR  
CAREER GOALS TO SUIT  
WHO YOU ARE



STRATEGY 1:  
YOU MODIFY YOUR CHOICES  
TO MEET YOU CAREER GOALS

YOU HAVE  
PARTIAL CONTROL  
OVER YOUR CAREER

NEED BOTH!

STRATEGY 2: YOU MODIFY YOUR  
CAREER GOALS TO SUIT  
WHO YOU ARE



STRATEGY 1:  
YOU MODIFY YOUR CHOICES  
TO MEET YOU CAREER GOALS

# It helps to ...

- have your academic and career goals aligned with:
  - your interests
  - your strengths
  - the existence of a critical mass of supporters

“... find your passion.”

# Don't Worry!



- There are many paths to success.
- You can make the best of a variety of situations.
- You can change your mind.
- Regardless of your stage of success, you can be happy; Note: Success  $\neq$  Happiness

“Success is getting what you want.  
Happiness is wanting what you get.”

– Dale Carnegie

# Don't Be Fearful!



“Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.”

– Yoda, Star Wars

# Contact

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