This is a series of articles outlining resources and information in regard to planning for further education beyond a MacEwan University baccalaureate degree. The articles are as follows:

- **DECIDING** [Should I apply for Graduate School or Professional Education?]
- **CHOOSING** [Considering Graduate School or Professional Education? Find the right program]
- **APPLYING** [Applying for Graduate School or Professional Education]
- **FINANCING** [Finances for Graduate School or Professional Education]
- **WRITTEN STATEMENT** [Preparing a written statement for Graduate School or Professional Education applications]
- **CV OR RESUMÉ** [Preparing a resumé/cv or portfolio for Graduate School or Professional Education applications]
- **STANDARDIZED EXAMS** [Writing standardized examinations for Graduate School or Professional Education applications]
- **INTERVIEWS/AUDITIONS** [Preparing for interviews or auditions for Graduate School or Professional Education applications]
- **CHECKLIST** [Choosing and applying for Graduate School or Professional Education]

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**DECIDING: Should I apply for graduate studies or professional education?**

An increasing number of Canadian university degree graduates consider pursuing graduate school, professional education or post-degree certificates and diplomas. Reasons for this may be:

- Additional education may lead to new academic and career opportunities.
- Students are inspired by what they learn in university and they want to continue exploring topics that are of interest.

After you complete a degree, you may embark on graduate school or professional education:

- Apply during your last year of university for continuous study
  OR
- Apply after you have been in the work force for a period of time
  OR
- Apply while employed
Use the following steps to see if graduate or professional school is right for you:

• **Take time to reflect and consider the following:**
  - Life space and significant relationships (including your age, partner, children, health of family members and your own health)
  - Motivation for continuing your education
  - Whether the degree is a requirement or option for your career goals
  - Learning goals
  - Your skills, abilities and interests
  - Where you choose to live
  - Labour market trends and the possibility of successful employment
  - Finances
  - Admission requirements for the graduate or professional program you are considering
  - Refer to the article below in this series titled APPLYING
  - These factors may affect your educational plans. Reflection will not only help you assess where you are now, it will also help you begin to set a course for the future.

• **Gather information:**
  - Speak with MacEwan faculty and program advisors. Contact information is on the MacEwan University website.
  - If you are an alumnus, call faculty members you knew. If they are no longer available, try contacting current MacEwan instructors from your discipline.
  - Faculty members have taken the route of graduate study. They may share information about their experience and academic contacts that they have.
  - Contact the graduate school advisors in the departments that you are considering. Their contact information is usually on the department website.
  - Before you call or meet with people, prepare a list of questions about graduate school or professional education, so that you can make good use of your meeting.
  - Read university calendars and websites and attend information sessions or open houses.
  - Talk to faculty and students in your program of interest.
  - See more in the article entitled “CHOOSING”.

• **Learn from professionals who have the degree you are targeting:**
  - Communicate with people who are currently working in professions that are of interest to you.
  - If you are employed, you may encounter individuals who have interesting jobs at your workplace or with other organizations.
  - If you are a current student, consider people from your network (relatives, friends, individuals from organizations where you were employed or volunteered).
  - Interview professionals:
    - In the initial contact, explain your research interests.
    - Arrange meetings or phone calls at times when you will not be distracted (perhaps a lunch appointment).
- Prepare questions about their education and career paths. (For example, what degrees do they hold?).
- Request permission to record the discussion or take notes for your own future reference.

**Reflect on options:**
- Reviewing information about programs offered may increase confidence in your choices as you prepare applications.
- It is helpful to think holistically when choosing programs: consider your interests, goals, finances and family.
- Try using a decision-making tool, such as the ones available at [Mindtools](https://www.mindtools.com) or [Decision-Making Confidence](https://www.decision-makingconfidence.com), to help you choose the graduate program that’s right for you.
- If you decide to apply for further study, act now: planning for your educational journey generally takes between two to four years.

**Resources:**
- [MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning](https://www.macewan.ca/career-development-
- [Alberta Learning Information Service](https://www.alberta.ca)
- Professional associations:
  - If you are interested in a specific profession, look up professional association websites.
    - They list the type of education required to attain credentials within certain fields.
    - These associations are great places to find career information and mentorship opportunities.
  - Job postings on these sites provide information about the type of work done in a particular profession.
  - Check out The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [www.cicic.ca](https://www.cicic.ca)
CHOOSING: Find the right program.

Choices for graduate and professional degrees are endless. Look for, and consider the following information:

- **Content in the program:**
  How do you know what is available and right for you? Researching options is important. Through this process, you can discover programs that address specifically what you would like to learn and your career goals.

  You will want to balance how you weigh these factors:
  - Exactly what would you study?
  - When you read the course descriptions, are you comfortable and excited about what you will be learning?
  - What types of optional courses may be taken (if any)?
  - Are there specialties or streams within the program? If so, what would you focus on?

- **One discipline, multi-discipline or professional education:**
  - Traditionally, graduate degree programs focus on one discipline, which may correspond to your undergraduate major.
    - Sometimes, students “jump” from their undergraduate major into a different field.
  - Cross discipline or interdisciplinary master’s degrees are offered, where candidates for admission may come from a variety of undergraduate majors.
  - There are increasing numbers of professional graduate school programs, which tend to be career focused. Assignments and projects may be connected to current, or future employment.

- **Is it “course-based” or “thesis based”?** What are the guidelines for each?
  - **Course-based programs** tend to have more courses and may require a smaller paper or project near the end of the course of study:
    - Course-based programs may have an applied focus.
    - Professional graduate degree programs may require a project related to a specific profession, or experiential, on-site learning in addition to coursework.
  - **Thesis-based programs** tend to have less coursework. Students spend more time on research as they focus on a specific topic, which may be described as a “question.” Research and writing are related to the process of discovering possible answers to the “question.”
    - You will be expected to produce a written document between 60-100 pages (depending on the discipline) that you will submit to a committee of academics and eventually defend in an oral examination. You will develop and pursue your own research question.
    - Often, in addition to courses, exams and written work, the student makes an oral presentation to defend a thesis.

- **Gather information by communicating with academics:**
  - While you are in undergraduate courses, you may learn about ideas and concepts you want to explore further.
  - Communicate your research interests with MacEwan faculty and ask questions about academic research.
Graduate department websites usually list biographies of faculty members including information on their research interests and publications.

- If a graduate school program looks interesting, review publications by faculty members in the department.
- Read the researcher’s biography and any articles or books they have written to understand the type of research they are involved in and ensure that they have a focus that is relevant to your interests.

- Contact those academics who are doing research in topics that you are also interested in studying.
- Prepare questions in advance of any contact (MacEwan faculty may provide assistance).
- Inform the researcher that you are aware of the content of their work. Describe your research interests and show how they fit with their research agenda.
- As you connect with professors and graduate students, talk to a variety of people who have different experiences and disciplines.

**Gather information by communicating with current students:**

- Some department websites include email addresses of current students who have agreed to communicate with prospective applicants about the program.
  - You can also email the departmental administrator to find a contact in the graduate program who can tell you what the program is like on the ground.
  - Review examples of theses or projects submitted by previous students. This may provide you with insight into the expectations of the program.
- You may ask current students questions such as:
  - What was the application process like?
  - What tips do they have about applying to the department?
  - Is there a specific research focus that is not on their website?
  - Do they enjoy the program?
  - What do they like most?
  - Are they feeling supported by the department?
  - Are there any professors who are really strong supervisors?
  - What do they like least?
  - What are their research interests?
  - Is the student doing a thesis, a paper, examinations or a project? What topic(s) are they working on?
  - At what point during the course of study did they start working on these?
  - What courses has the student taken and what were they like?
  - Are they involved in student activities (such as, a Graduate Students’ Association)?
  - Do they have suggestions about sources of funding for studies?
  - What kinds of other financial supports are there in the department? Is the funding enough to live on?
  - Are there good student supports on campus for student life and academic success?
  - Ideas or suggestions regarding living accommodations?
  - If this program will require relocation, ask about the city that the university is in.
• Admission requirements:
  o Do you meet admission requirements? These include: GPA, undergraduate courses, work experience, volunteer experience, language and results from standardized examinations.
  o Most graduate schools focus admission requirements on the GPA from the past two years or last 60 credits in your undergraduate degree coursework.
  o Some graduate schools focus heavily on GPA, whereas others are more invested in making sure a student is a good fit for their program in other ways, such as academic promise or research potential.
  o Consider the number of students applying and how many are admitted.

• Fees:
  o Calculate the costs including application fee, tuition, supplies, books and accommodation.
  o Determine what funding resources are available. Be sure to check whether a funding offer includes tuition payment or not.
  o See the article in this series entitled “FINANCING”.

• Residence, distance or online?
  o Traditionally, programs are full-time and require residency. Other programs offer various combinations of distance/residency requirements.
  o Many programs are going online and can be completed at a distance after an in-person course work is complete.
  o In some programs, you may do your coursework on campus during the first year or so and then work on your thesis or project elsewhere.
  o With advances in technology, an increasing number of programs can be completed with a blended learning model. For example, on campus courses combined with online courses, papers and projects.
    - Blended programs are partial residency and partial online.
  o Requirements to complete the degree may require a placement or project with an employer or researcher.

• Length of program:
  o Websites give you a schedule of how long it will take to complete your graduate degree. This is not exactly how long students actually take. When you contact a department to inquire about studies, ask about their time-to-completion rates—not just their ideal schedule.
  o Different people complete their studies at different times, depending on individual life circumstances and demands of coursework, research and projects.
  o Most universities define the maximum amount of time you have to complete your degree on their websites. There are usually a standard number of extensions you can get if your program is delayed. This will be posted on the graduate faculty website.

• Reputation of the program:
  o Consider the quality of the resources available, such as laboratories, equipment and research facilities.
  o Most provincial and state governments have information about educational institutions within their jurisdiction.
  o Association websites often include a list of institutions and programs which qualify for work within a specific profession.
  o If the university you are applying to is not listed, contact the association.
If you are applying to a graduate program with the intention of teaching and researching in higher education, you will want to factor in the size, prestige, and budget of the institution where you are applying. You want to be supported in your studies as much as possible.

- **International experience:**
  - Check with the department to see if such opportunities may be available for funding, travel, and other expenses related to research and academic advancement.

- **Resources:**
  - Public Libraries: may have school calendars, company abstracts and survey results on top graduate schools, along with information on how to choose the right program.
  - University Websites: explore departments or school of graduate studies on institutional websites
    - Look up the departments where you think you may study.
    - If you cannot find all the information online, submit your questions to the admissions advisor in the department. Advisors tend to prefer that you submit your questions all at once.
      - Compile your questions. For example, if you are emailing, save questions in draft to give yourself time to recall additional questions.
      - Add new questions to the draft, and then send the entire email or make the phone call.
  - Graduate studies exploration websites:
    - [Universitystudy.ca](http://Universitystudy.ca) (Canadian Universities)
    - [Gradschools.com](http://Gradschools.com): Graduate programs in USA and Canada
    - [FindaMasters.com](http://FindaMasters.com): Master’s degrees in Europe and Canada
    - [TopUniversities.com](http://TopUniversities.com): Graduate programs world side
    - [Peterson’s Guide to Graduate Schools](http://Peterson’s Guide to Graduate Schools): Graduate programs in the USA and Canada
    - [LSAC Law School Links](http://LSAC Law School Links)
    - [GMAT](http://GMAT): Find and compare schools (for MBA)
Applications for graduate school or professional education have several requirements. It's important that all documents are sent in on time as it is very difficult to get a good application ready at the last minute.

- It is crucial that you read information on websites and calendars carefully.
- Deadline and admission requirements for each university and department vary considerably. Some departments require completed applications up to one year before classes begin.
- Check with the graduate school and the department to assure them that you will have your information sent to them by the deadlines that they define.
- Application deadlines are often tied to funding and award considerations.

OVERALL TIMELINE

The following are tips that may help you get started. This is a general outline. Create your own checklist to ensure that all requirements are met for study and funding for each application.

- Note that many students apply for graduate or professional education years after they have attained an undergraduate degree.
- The information below applies to a student in their final year of study at MacEwan University and the ideas can be used by alumni as well as the timelines would be similar.

Application Components:

- Transcripts with grades (from each post-secondary institution you attended)
- A written piece that may be called a statement of intent, statement of research, or statement of purpose
- Reference letters
- An interview(s)
- A resume or curriculum vitae
- A portfolio
- An autobiography
- Proof that you took the required prerequisite courses
- A writing sample: this would be a polished seminar paper you would submit as proof of your scholarly writing and research abilities.
- Proof of proficiency in the language you will use in your studies
- A qualifying standardized examination such as the DAT, OAT, LSAT, MCAT, GRE and others.
- Information on available financial resources to complete your course of study
- Audition (often required for Performing Arts)

WINTER SEMESTER IN THIRD YEAR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES OR 18-20 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

Most questions will be answered on department websites. Look for information on:

- Admission requirements
- Research interests of faculty members
- Fees
• Content of the program (course descriptions)
• Note the times and years that certain courses are offered. You will want to contact the department to find out what is being offered during the terms you would be attending.
• Degree requirements: How many courses are required?
  o How are they categorized?
  o Is research a significant component of the program or does it include other requirements such as a project?
  o Are practicums or placements required?
  o Is the program offered on location, by distance or online or both (blended)?
• Past and current student research projects (often available through that university’s library, or on their website).
• Graduate student associations: What kinds of supports and services do they offer?
• Meet with advisors and MacEwan’s Office of the University Registrar to ensure you meet the requirements for graduation and for the program you want to enter.
• Review your transcript and ensure you have all the prerequisites for the graduate program.
• Do not delete or destroy undergraduate assignments, projects or papers which may be helpful in the future. For example, a referee may request samples of coursework (especially for classes where she/he was your instructor), research experience, transcripts and a résumé listing volunteer and work experience.

SUMMER AFTER THIRD YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES OR 16 MONTHS IN ADVANCE
• If admission requirements include standardized examination results, you may find it helpful to write the exams in the summer.
• See the article below in this series entitled “STANDARDIZED EXAMS.”
• Investigate sources and ways to apply for funding. See the article in this series entitled “FINANCING.”
• In many disciplines, it is helpful for you to find and communicate with a faculty member who is involved in research that is of interest to you before you apply.
• Some completed applications must be sent at this time; however, the majority will be due during late fall, or in the early part of the winter semester.

FALL SEMESTER OF FOURTH YEAR OR ONE YEAR IN ADVANCE
• Institutions charge fees to apply. Amounts vary widely.
• You will want to factor application fees into your decision about how many programs to apply to. It is best to give yourself options, but these fees can add up.
• Check the websites so that your information is submitted as the graduate school requests.
  o Be prepared to send application packages in advance, so that they arrive at the university on time.
• Review all components required for application to ensure that you send everything the department is requesting.
• Apply for funding, assistantships and scholarship opportunities.
ADDITIONAL TIPS

• References
  o Decide who your reference letter writers will be. You will need two or three references.
    ▪ Speak to your potential referees and ask if they would be comfortable writing an academic reference letter for you.
  o Specific information requested varies. Check with the department to clarify the type of content an appropriate reference should include.
  o Ask your letter writer who they know in the field to which you are applying and ask if they have specific knowledge of the program or department.
  o Check to see how references should be sent:
    ▪ Occasionally, letters must be mailed. If so, provide your referee with stamped, addressed envelopes.
    ▪ Some graduate schools may allow you to include reference letters with the application package...usually in a sealed envelope.
    ▪ Increasingly, institutions request that reference letters be sent electronically. If an electronic reference is required, give the referee the URLs and email addresses that she/he will need to prepare a letter for you.

• Application Form:
  o Each application will have a general form with all your basic information. Fill out the application form entirely.
    ▪ The application information will also explain timelines and required supporting documents.
  o Keep copies of everything that you send to any institution.
  o Most online systems will notify you when all materials are received. You cannot necessarily rely on this especially if there are hard copies that need to be sent via mail-so check with the graduate department staff.
  o See the articles on application components in this series entitled “WRITTEN STATEMENT,” “CV or RESUME” and INTERVIEWS/AUDITIONS.”

• More details:
  o One package is sent to each program applied for. You should be aware that the application is usually processed through two organizations within the institution simultaneously.
    ▪ You apply to the faculty of graduate studies.
    ▪ You apply to the faculty of the discipline or department that you hope to enter.
    ▪ Be careful to meet the admission requirements of both the institution and the department as outlined on websites and in calendars.
  o Select the earliest closing date to apply for study and for funding.
    ▪ To keep focused, use this as your final date. Prepare all materials for all applications aiming for this date.
    ▪ You will find that even if there are few things you still need to complete, likely you will have everything ready for the application that is due the earliest and you will have the bulk of the other applications completed as well.
  o As you plan your education, be aware that different options are available.
    ▪ It is possible to enroll in a doctoral program directly, though you may require a high GPA and research background to do this.
Some students begin in a master’s program and, before they complete it, may have opportunity to transition to a PhD program and graduate with a doctoral degree.

Some students study toward their master’s and doctorate degrees in the same institution.

- Students may find that completing a graduate degree at a different university provides them with a broader education. If you plan on pursuing a PhD, the importance of achievement at more than one institution grows.

Resources:

- **MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning**: Book an appointment via [MacEwanLife](#) for graduate and professional school advising
  - After you register, select “Career” in the blue box
  - Then select “appointments’ and follow the instructions

- **MacEwanLife Career Resources**
  - Select “Career” in the blue box
  - Scroll down to select “Career Resources”

- **Alberta Learning Information Service**: [Planning for Graduate School](#)
Investigating and applying for sources of funding for further education has the potential to make learning opportunities accessible. Universities offer funding for prospective and current graduate students. These awards may be based on research interests and experience, GPA, participation at conferences and publishing background.

Faculties of graduate studies may review your written statement to ensure that your research interests match designated funding resources.

**Be aware of funding resources specific to your discipline:**

- In graduate schools, there are often opportunities for graduate students to apply for paid teaching or research assistantship positions.
  - These positions usually involve assisting faculty with teaching responsibilities or with research, usually 8-16 hours a week with a bursary to top up the funding.
  - Opportunities for assistantships tend to be offered to full-time students in programs with residency requirements.
  - In addition to finances, assistantships offer teaching, research and professional development opportunities.
  - Information about opportunities and how to apply for paid teaching or research assistantships can be found at the institution’s Faculty of Graduate Studies website or the department website.

- Universities inform and provide support regarding awards, scholarships or bursaries for students throughout their graduate studies career:
  - Most graduate school websites list contact information for a financial advisor. Advisors assist prospective and current students with applications for funding.
  - Updates with information on opportunities to apply for awards or scholarships are sent to graduate students regularly.
  - There may be specific criteria for prospective recipients of some bursaries or scholarships. Examples could include:
    - The field of study
    - Proof of financial need
    - Ethnic heritage
    - Age
    - Gender
    - Socio-economic background
    - Employment experience
    - Contributions as a volunteer
    - Community or campus life involvement
  - Some departments offer co-op, practicums or placement programs where a student can earn income along with experiential learning.
Increase your chances of accessing finances for learning:
- Filling out application forms for grants, bursaries, research opportunities or scholarships may seem tedious, however the pool of applicants for post graduate studies is much smaller than undergraduate studies. Most post-graduate scholarships require as much application information as applying to the graduate school itself (letters, statement and transcript). Since you already have most of this information, it isn’t too much work to revise the application for scholarships. Some of the most important post-graduate scholarships in Canada are NSERC and SSHRC, which you would apply for in the second year of a master’s program.
- For awards based on financial need, ensure that you prepare and send all financial information that may be required.
- If you are applying to a university outside of Canada, you will be required to send detailed information regarding financial resources available for your education.
- If you go to a university elsewhere in Canada, provincial governments may allow out-of-province students to apply for funds.
  - Some scholarships or bursary applications state that, if you can propose that your research will benefit the province you are studying in, you may be able to apply.

Resources:
- Employers: Some employers are interested in the career development of their employees and intentionally provide support for continuous learning:
  - Employers may provide finances, allow use of paid time to study or give you a leave with the assurance that a position will be open when you complete a master’s degree or a professional credential.
  - Sometimes these arrangements are made when you, as an employee, initiate a discussion or make a proposal outlining how further education will benefit your workplace.
  - If you are working at a larger organization, check with the Human Resources Department as they may have a policy on further education.
  - Professional master ‘s programs that are closely linked to a specific sector may provide scholarships as a recruitment and retention tool and to ensure that students complete their program of study and become valuable employees in the industry.
- [ALIS Scholarship and Bursaries](http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/scholarships): ALIS Funding Graduate School
- [MacEwan University Alumni Award for Graduate or Professional Studies](http://www.macewan.ca/alumni-award): Available once you have been accepted into a graduate program.
• Review the list of admission requirements on the department graduate study website:
  o Generally, information on the site defines what should be included in your statement.
  o If you need more information, contact an admissions advisor for the department.
  o Some programs include a template for the statement on their website.

• Applications for graduate school or professional education often require a written document such as:
  o A statement of intent.
  o A narrative explaining your background and describing why you want to enter this particular program.
  o A statement of intended research if you are applying for scholarships.
  o You may be required to submit similar statement for assistantships or bursaries.

• Although requirements for the number of words in the document vary according to departments, many ask for one or two pages. It is best to be brief and stay under the given limit.

• Educate yourself before you begin to write. Review the specifics of the program, faculty biographies, descriptions of research projects that faculty and students are working on, and the organizational culture.

• Think about your audience. The purpose of a written statement is to help the department or admissions office determine whether you would be an appropriate candidate for the program. They may consider the following:
  o An explanation of what you want to study (proposed area of research) and why.
  o The schools are looking for your research and scholarly potential. It is important to show them that you can think critically and productively about the area you want to study.
  o If you are interested in working with a specific researcher, explain how your learning interests connect with this faculty member’s research.
  o An explanation of how you would contribute in the department’s environment with faculty and other graduate students. Some examples may be, starting a writing group, participating in a planning committee, volunteering at the yearly conference.
  o How this particular field caught your interest.
  o Mentors who inspired you with their interest in this are related project work or research that you did in undergraduate study.
  o Volunteer, travel and employment opportunities where you learned more about your area of interest.
  o Acclamations, awards or scholarships you received due to academic or other achievements in this field.
  o Your career and educational goals in this area.

• If there are significant gaps or issues with your studies or transcript, then you should try to explain them in your letter. You do not want to go into too much detail because you want to show the evaluating committee that you will be successful in their program.

• If you are asked to describe your experiences or submit a brief autobiography, be creative yet succinct. Avoid long, rambling narratives or too much personal information.

• In some situations, a compelling story of the events that started your interest in a field of study can be a useful tool.
The writing process:

- Highlight how your background connects with the course of study you are applying for.
- Look online to see specifically how people write their statements for that particular program.
- Check and re-check the specific instructions for the written statement.
- Ensure that you have answered all the questions that you are asked.
- Read the document out loud to a friend. Listen for grammatical errors.
- Visit the Writing Centre at MacEwan to work on your proofreading skills (see “Resources” below).
- Write in a clear, yet scholarly, tone. Avoid academic jargon or overly complex language.
- Before you submit the document, ensure that someone else has read it and given you input:
  - Connect with MacEwan faculty or advisors for some tips.
  - Provide them with information from the program that you are applying to along with your statement, so that they understand specifically what is required.
  - Edit and re-edit until you are comfortable with the content, grammar and style of the document.

Resources:

- Princeton Review
- OWL-Purdue University
- MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning
- MacEwan University Writing and Learning Services
Applications for graduate school or professional education may require a resumé, portfolio or curriculum vitae (CV). Typically, the differences between a resumé and CV in North America are:

- The resumé is one to two pages. Resumés focus on your skills, education, employment and volunteer experience. In addition, you may highlight technical skills, awards, bursaries and community involvement.

- A curriculum vitae is a record of your professional academic experience. It is also a way to demonstrate how well-rounded and socially involved you are. It should include the following areas:
  - First and foremost, all your education history should be spelled out in the first section, including travel abroad, and exchanges.
  - Research experience. Some examples may include, work done for an honours undergraduate degree program, or assisting a faculty member with a research project
  - Samples and highlights (papers, projects) from university coursework
  - Published papers or articles
  - Public presentations
  - In class presentations
  - Involvement on the MacEwan campus such as writing for the school newspaper, student union, volunteering.
  - A list of your memberships or leadership roles in associations or clubs, for example, the MacEwan chapter of the Golden Key International Honour Society
  - Descriptions of your job history that is relevant to your intended area of study.
  - A list of languages you speak/write.
  - A list of scholarships, awards or special recognition
  - Specific computer programs that you can operate
  - A list of references

- Some departments, such as fine arts, communications or English programs may require a portfolio:
  - A portfolio contains information, pictures and examples that are compiled in a binder or other specified format, such as an eportfolio.
  - Department websites usually list what should be included. Some examples are:
    - Samples of creative work (may be on the cloud, on a CD or USB)
    - Letters of recommendation
    - Photos, or descriptions of projects, that demonstrate past experience significant to the program for which you are applying
    - Links to digital work

- Develop your resumé, CV or portfolio making sure to include the specific information that the admissions committee is looking for:
  - Required information will be outlined on the website or explained by an admissions advisor.
  - Some department websites include a format for your resumé or CV. In this case, use the template on their
site as their format outlines the essential information that they require from you.

- Formats that you find online (other than on the actual department website) may or may not be useful. You may find it limiting to conform to one particular outline. Instead, search a variety of examples for ideas and develop your own format.

- **Formatting your CV:**
  - Ensure that you have contact information (name, address, phone number, email) at the top of the page.
  - Sections should have headings. Research how they are formatted in your discipline by looking online.
    - For example, the ordering might be: Education, Languages, Publication, Presentations, Research Assistantships, Coursework, Volunteer/Leadership, Relevant Work Experience, Contact Information for References.
  - Everything that you list should be in reverse chronology (most recent first).
  - Look at the visual presentation to ensure that it is clear, professional and easy to read.
  - When you list employment and volunteer experience, use action verbs to describe your activities.
    - It can help to recall a typical day step-by-step or hour-by-hour to remember tasks you accomplished and responsibilities you held.
  - Get feedback from a trusted source.
  - Target resumes, CV's and portfolios so that they highlight aspects of your previous work and volunteer experiences that connect with the department and program to which you are applying.
    - For example: if you are applying for a graduate degree in child and youth care, this experience could be included
  - It can be useful to find a CV of someone in the field to which you are applying and customize yours to look like theirs.

- **Resources:**
  - [The Professor is In](#)
  - Glean useful tips from books, publications or websites. Resources are available at: [MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning](#)
  - University and public libraries
  - [Purdue Owl](#)
  - Seek assistance from discipline advisors and faculty:
    - MacEwan faculty are constantly updating their own curriculum vitae documents.
    - Faculty members will be aware of the style and content appropriate for your area of study.
STANDARDIZED EXAMS: Writing Standardized Examinations for Application to Graduate School or Professional Education

When you apply for graduate school or professional education, admission requirements may include results from standardized examinations.

Examples:

- **GRE** (Graduate Record Exam) for a variety of master’s and PhD programs. Some GRE’s are general, and others are discipline-specific
- **GMAT** (Graduate Management Admission Test) for business
- **MCAT** (Medical College Admission Test) for medicine
- **LSAT** (Law School Admissions Test) for law
- **DAT** (Dental Aptitude Test) for dentistry
- **OAT** (Optometry Admission Test) for optometry

One of the main reasons for standardized exams is that each university has varying standards and different grading scales. It is difficult to compare students across universities and so standardized exams attempt to make admissions processes fair.

**Process for writing standardized exams:**

- If the program you are applying to requires an exam, ascertain which one and find a schedule for the exam ASAP.
- Write the examination well in advance. It may be helpful to write the examination in the spring or summer before you submit your application for the program you wish to enter.
- Research your exam including cost, dates, locations, sections, timing, number of questions, content, subjects, scoring.
- Most examinations can be written in Edmonton.
- Read information on the exams and borrow or purchase practice tests.
- You may be able to purchase guide books and practice materials from the examination company’s website.
- As the format of these examinations is unlike other examinations, it is essential that you practice using sample questions before you write the tests.
- If you find that you need a classroom environment to learn, you could take one of the preparation courses offered locally.
  - These courses are no substitution, however, for practicing with workbooks and taking practice exams.
- Most results may be used for up to five years after you write the exam (check the examination websites to confirm how long the grades are valid): 
  - You may have the same results sent to any number of universities and departments that require them for admissions.
    - As you request that results be sent to institutions, remember to check to see if they actually received them. If not, contact the testing organization to ensure that the results are sent to the programs that you are applying to.
    - You may re-write the exam if you are not happy with the results.
    - Universities will access all scores and may average the results from two exams.
Resources:

- **The MacEwan University Library**
  - The library catalogue can be accessed from anywhere (at home or oncampus).
  - Students may put a hold on books online, so that they will be collected and waiting for them near the front desk.
  - Materials include information on how to register, how to prepare and sample standardized examinations.
  - There are various methods to search the catalogue, such as, entering the name of the test, study guides, preparation materials or the graduate school.

- **MacEwan students and alumni**
  - Try SAMU clubs or there may also be students that you know to form a study group.

- **MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning**

- **MacEwan University Student Success Services** has two videos on preparing for a standardized multiple-choice exams.
  - [https://macewanlife.macewan.ca](https://macewanlife.macewan.ca) - Writing Centre/ Quick Guides

- **Free Resources**:
  - Khan Academy
  - Lynda.com (Free with EPL membership) [https://www.epl.ca/resource/lynda-com/](https://www.epl.ca/resource/lynda-com/)
  - MCAT flashcards downloadable app: Magoosh
  - ThoughtCo.

- There are several private companies that offer courses in Edmonton.
Applications for graduate school or professional education may require an interview or, if you are in the performing arts, you may be asked to prepare an audition. Check each department website to find out what they want specifically for the interview or audition.

**Tips:**
- Websites or admission advisors from the department may provide sample questions in advance:
  - For auditions, the site may list examples of pieces you could present.
  - Use examples that are suggested and prepare accordingly.
  - Some programs, such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, for example, require a special type of interview, such as multi-mini interviews (MMI) or structured interviews.

- Practice. Practice. Practice. Use a mirror or record a video of yourself. Observe the following:
  - For interviews, are you answering the questions asked? Do you speak clearly? Do you make eye contact with the interviewer?
  - For auditions, are you addressing each component of what they may be looking for?
  - Prepare with different people who will give you constructive feedback.

- Websites or admission advisors may tell you who will be interviewing or observing:
  - If biographies of the interview team are on the department website, review them, so that you are somewhat acquainted with their interests and backgrounds ahead of time.

- Each program will have its own scheduling process: Check the website thoroughly to understand how to schedule your interview or audition.

- If possible, opt for an in-person interview or audition rather than mediated through technology, such as, telephone, Skype, or sending a USB or CD.

- Consult faculty and discipline advisors for preparation assistance. Ask if they are familiar with the institution and the department and whether they have any helpful tips.

- Some programs require an audition, portfolio of writing, a video (of a performance, or art work)- depending on the type of program you apply to.
  - Most websites are specific as to what they are looking for.
If you have questions, contact the graduate school admissions advisors in the department.

Resources:
- MacEwan University Library
- MacEwan University Career Development and Experiential Learning
- University libraries
- Public library
- gradschools.com
GATHER INFORMATION
(Fall and Winter Semester in Third Year, or 18-24 Months in Advance)
- Speak with MacEwan faculty, discipline advisors and Career Development and Experiential Learning advisors to learn more about options for further learning.
- Communicate with academics doing research that is of interest to you.
- Communicate with professionals who currently work in your field of interest to learn about their education and career track.
- Research options for further learning.
- Attend a Graduate School Fair at your University.
- Prepare questions to ask the graduate school.
- Contact a graduate advisor in the programs you are investigating to address your questions. Review the application process and components required. Research tuition and living costs.
- Research potential sources of financial assistance for your course of study.
- Check to see if you have all the undergraduate courses needed to meet admission requirements.

PREPARE
(Summer after Third Year of Undergraduate Study, or 16 Months in Advance)
- Register for standardized examinations (if they are required for admission). Prepare for standardized examinations (using practice exams is helpful).
- Write standardized examinations and arrange for results to be sent to graduate schools.
- Review requirements for applications for financial assistance and compile all required information.
- Contact faculty members in the department who may provide research opportunities or serve as advisors throughout your course of study.
- Contact potential referees to clarify the type of content they could include in a reference letter.

APPLY
(Fall Semester of Fourth Year, or One Year in Advance)
- Fill in and send application forms.
- Pay application fees.
- Apply for scholarships, bursaries and teaching assistantships.
- Make arrangements for transcripts to be sent.
- Ensure that referees have the information they need to meet the department’s expectations for letters (including deadline dates).
- Prepare, compose, edit and send statement of intent or statement of research.
- If required, prepare, develop and send CV, resumé, autobiography or portfolio. If required, make arrangements and prepare for interview or audition.
- Prepare and send financial information (if required).
ACCEPANTCE FOLLOW-UP

- If you receive a letter of acceptance, make a note of the date by which you need to accept the offer.
  - There are usually other candidates on the wait list, so the turnaround time might be tight
- Respond with a commitment to enroll.
- In addition to a letter that comes directly from the program, the university’s faculty of graduate studies usually sends a subsequent letter confirming admission.
- If you decide not to enter the program, contact the department to thank them for reviewing your application and inform them that you have chosen to pursue other options.
- If the institution is in another city, ask the university about finding housing and prepare to move.
- If you have been accepted into a distance or blended (distance/residency) program, discuss scheduling with the program.
- It’s a good idea to visit the campus in advance. Some programs have travel money for a campus visit for accepted students to tour the campus and facilities before the term begins. You can ask the program director if this is an option.