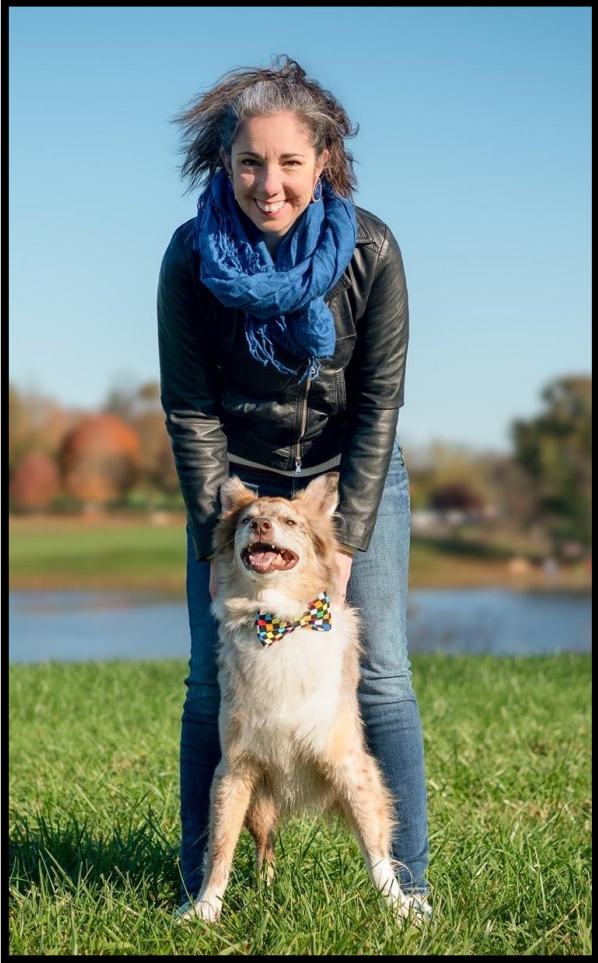


To go or not to go to grad school?

How to get there and what to do once you are there!

About me

Contact: s.bugden@uwinnipeg.ca



Degrees & Training:

- BA (Honours) Western University
- MEd. Western University
- PhD. Western University
- Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania

Research Interests:

- Child Development and Cognitive Neuroscience
- Numeracy development and Math learning difficulties

Professional Degree vs. Research Intensive Graduate Programs

- **Professional Programs:**

- Help prepare candidate for specific career paths (often required for certification). E.g., Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Medical School ...



- **Research Intensive Graduate Program:**

- in-depth training in a particular discipline to prepare researchers and teachers



What is grad school like?

- Graduate Programs 4 – 7 years to complete a PhD
 - (1-2 years for a M.A/M.Sc. & 3-5 years for a PhD)
 - Timing can depends on program (e.g., research or clinical program)
- Conduct independent research with faculty member
- Unlike undergrad – it is self directed
 - Attend few small discussed based classes

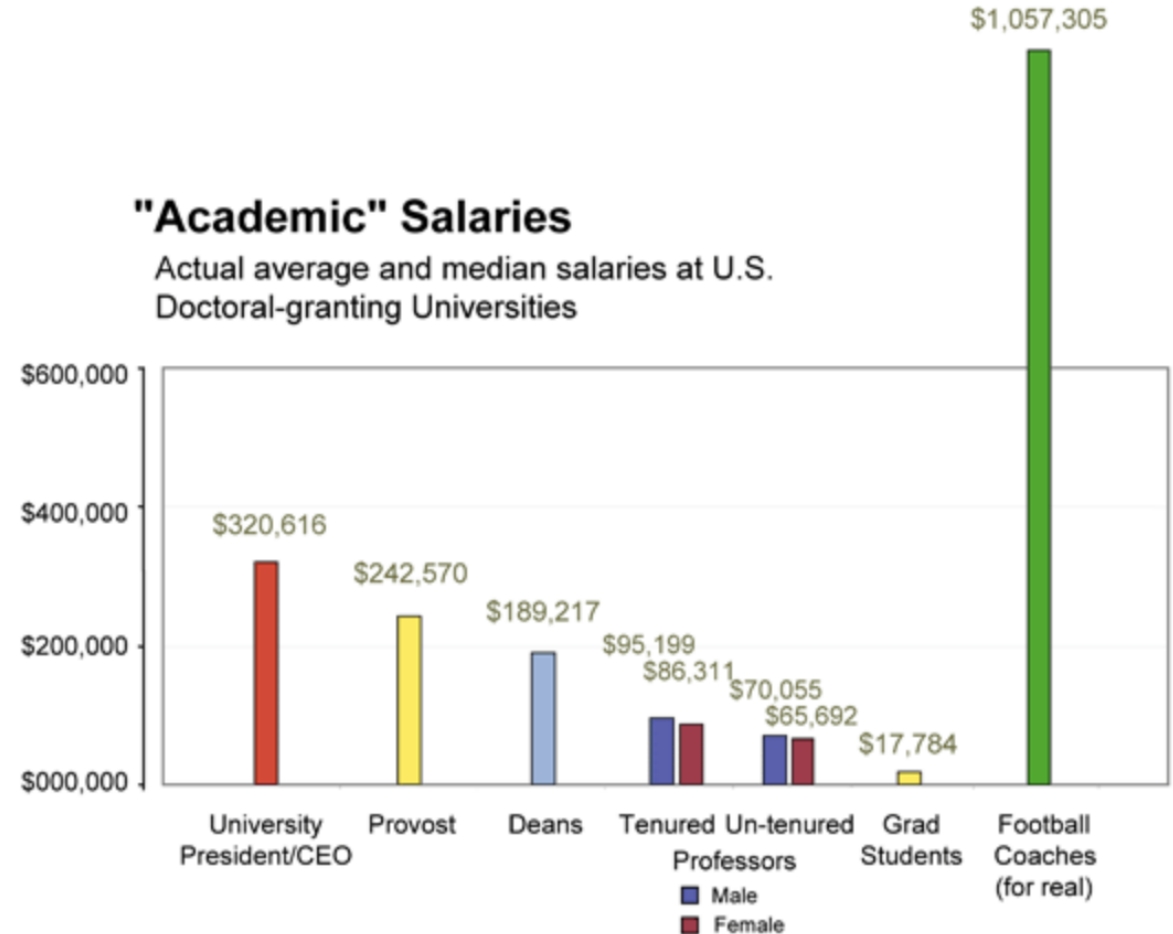


Is grad school for me?

- What are your big picture career goals?
- Do you love school? and do well?
- Do you have a natural curiosity to understand why?

"Academic" Salaries

Actual average and median salaries at U.S. Doctoral-granting Universities





JORGE CHAM © 2003

www.phdcomics.com

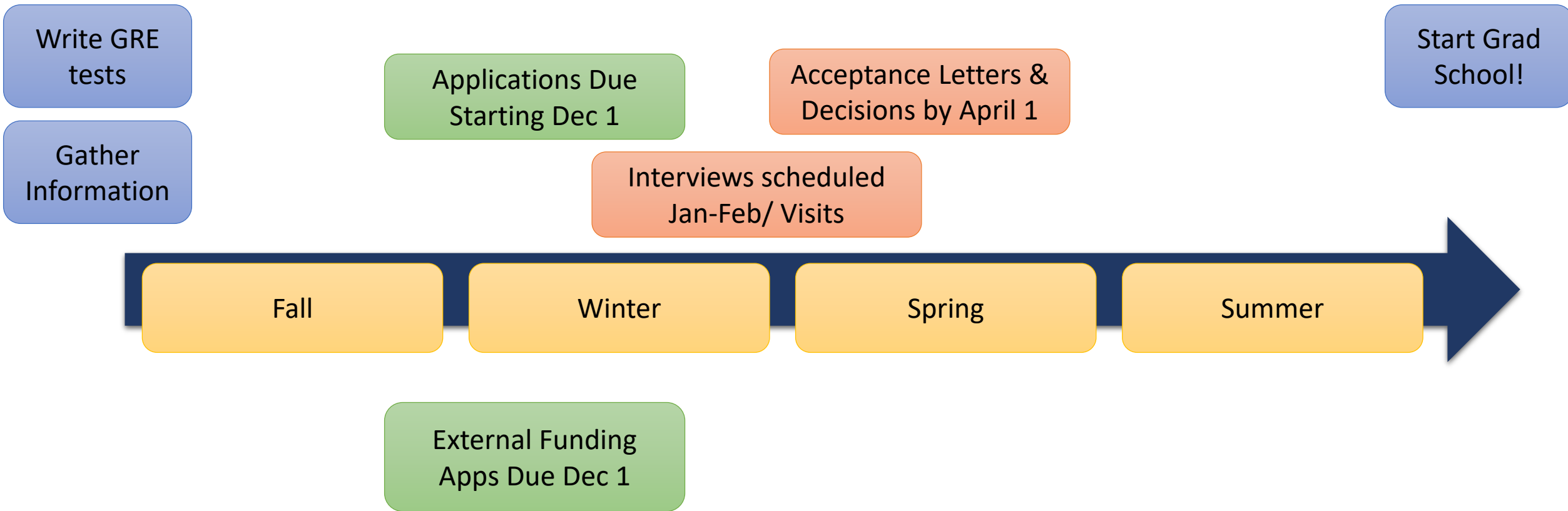
How much does applying to grad school cost?

- Application Fee ~\$100/application
- GRE General Test: \$205 USD
 - Subject Specific Test: \$150 USD
- Transcripts \$14/transcript request + additional fees for courier service (if required)
- University of Winnipeg has an application fee bursary program
 - (<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/graduate-and-professional-studies-expenses-bursary.html>)

Apply to a variety of schools!



Application Timing and Process



Preparing Components of Grad School Application:

- **Graduate Record Examination Scores (GRES)** – (some programs)
- **Curriculum Vitae** (some programs)
- Transcripts
- Application Form
- **Letters of Reference**
- **Statement of Interest**

Graduate Record Exams (GRES)

- GRE General Test
 - Verbal Reasoning
 - Quantitative Reasoning
 - Analytical Writing
- GRE Subject Specific Test (Psychology)
 - Content from Intro to Psychology courses
- Take tests in summer before applying to grad school!

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Not a resume!
- Sections of a CV:
 - Personal Information (Full name, Mailing address, Email address, Phone number)
 - Education (Name of school, Program, Degree achieved, Year began and anticipated date of graduation)
 - Publications
 - Honours and Awards
 - Presentations (poster & oral presentations)
 - Research Experience
 - Teaching Experiences

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Optional Sections:
 - Community Involvement
 - Skills & Qualifications
 - Part-time jobs/other volunteer experience (that doesn't fit in above research & teaching experience sections)
- Format: 1" margins, 12 fonts, Times or Arial
- Sections that are chronologically oriented, order by date (most recent first)

How to request letters of reference?

- Professors who **know you best**
- Usually require 2 (some programs might ask for 3 letters)
- How do you ask?
 - “Do you have the time to write a letter supporting my application to graduate school?”
 - Give them sufficient time to write a letter (earlier is better!!!!)
 - Provide them with information with the types of programs and places you are applying to
- Draw a road map for your letter writers:
 - Send them all the materials of your application (e.g., transcript, cv, and research interest)
 - Highlight DUE date / typically with the list of schools you are applying to
 - Extra details of activities you want highlighted or special circumstances for performance

Personal Statement/Statement of Interest:

- **Describe your research interest, experience, and how it relates to the research you would like to do - to reach your ultimate goal**
- Suggestion for formatting Statement:
 - Research Interests
 - Supporting Evidence (Skills, Experience and background)
 - Fit to department and faculty
- **Tips:**
 - Avoid being too specific
 - Avoid really general statements
 - Proofread very carefully, ask a friend, or mentor to review it
 - Don't wait until last minute to write it
 - Refer to your past experiences – esp pubs and presentations when describing your research
 - Tailor your research statement to each application or department you are applying to

What happens during a grad school interview?

- Opportunity for you to ask questions about the program and faculty mentorship style
 - You will not be quizzed about statistics
- You should familiarize yourself with the specific graduate program
- Know faculty research programs: read one or two of their recent papers
- Meet grad students and RAs in the lab – Ask them questions!
- Get to know the city, where students live, and the cost

Good mentorship is key to your success in graduate school

- A good mentor is encouraging, approachable, & provides constructive feedback
- Questions you can ask a potential mentor:
 - How regularly do you meet with your students? Does your research group hold regular lab meetings? Do you assign research projects or are there opportunities to design my own studies? Do you have a process for evaluating graduate student progress? How often does this occur?
- Problems between mentor/mentee relationships arise due to miscommunication
- General Guide for establishing a positive and productive relationship with your graduate school mentor:

http://www.jessicagrahn.com/uploads/6/0/8/5/6085172/managingyourmentor_undergrad.pdf

What types of questions should I ask other students?

- Is it possible to live comfortably on stipend?
- What areas are the best for grad students to live?
- What are the expectations and norms for completing milestones in grad program?
- How competitive or cooperative are students in the program?
- Is funding guaranteed while I am here? How long is it guaranteed?
- Are there opportunities to collaborate with other students on research projects?
- What is it like to work the advisor you are applying to work with? – how often do they meet with you? How available are they?
- Other lifestyle questions about city that are important to you

Graduate Program Funding

- Most graduate programs have funding (can range from 12K – 20K/year)
- External Funding can provide an additional top-up (15K - 20K/year)
- Faculty Members (who have funding) will often top up your stipend*
 - *something to consider when selecting potential faculty supervisors

Other sources of external funding

- **Canadian Tri-council Funding Fellowships** (\$17,500 for 12 months; max dur 1 yr):
 - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
 - Social, Personality, Developmental and Educational Psychology
 - Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
 - Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Cognitive processes involved in other areas
 - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
 - Health related research, e.g., clinical
 - https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp
 - Indigenous Student Supplement
 - https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/indigenous_scholars_pilot_initiative-initiative_pilote_universitaires_autochtones-eng.aspx
- **Provincial Funding Sources:**
 - Research Manitoba Masters' Studentship: 12K (up to \$17K)
 - Deadline Nov 14 --> consider applying
 - <https://researchmanitoba.ca/masters-studentships/>

What if...

- I do not meet the minimal requirements for graduate program that I really want to attend?
- I'm not sure whether grad school is the right fit for me?
- I do not have much research experience?
- I don't get in to school, but I really want to a PhD?

Resources:

- Advice for Writing a Research Statement (By Tara Kuther, 2019)
 - <https://www.thoughtco.com/faqs-for-writing-your-graduate-admissions-essay-1686135>
- Canadian Psychology Association Guide:
 - <https://cpa.ca/cpasite/UserFiles/Documents/students/Applying%20to%20Graduate%20School%20presentation%20notes.pdf>
- Tips and links put together by Dr. Jessica Grahn
 - <http://www.jessicagrahn.com/links.html>