

# SHOULD I GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Better yet—*when* should I go to graduate school?

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# Critical Questions

- Do I need a graduate degree?
- Will I stay in school or work?
- Do I work for a while and return to school?
- Will I complete an MS or PhD?
- Should I complete an MS and then a PhD?
- How do I pay for graduate school?
- Why would I pursue a PhD? I don't want to be a faculty member.
- How early do you begin to plan for graduate school?
- What should I know about graduate admissions?

# Why a graduate degree?

- If you want to advance and do more challenging work, then a graduate degree will be important.
- Higher salaries are associated with positions that require advanced degrees.
- If you want to start at a higher level and advance more quickly, then a graduate degree will be important.
- Making a decision can be either short term or for the long term.
- How long will you enjoy your first position?

# Interesting facts to consider:

- PhD's generally do not cost you anything.
- You generally pay for the MS degree.
- 60% of the PhD students in US engineering schools are international students.
- At Northwestern our PhD and MS application pools are respectively 70% and 85% international students. It can be even more out-of-balance at other universities.
- PhD applications have been dropping.
- We simply need more US students going to graduate school.
- What is involved in graduate admissions?

# The Graduate Admissions Process

- Online applications
- GRE scores (general exam but may be subject test)
- Letters of recommendation (2-3)
- Statement of purpose, personal statement, or maybe even essay questions
- Resume or CV
- Transcripts (unofficial) are uploaded with application
- Evaluation of research experience, especially for PhD admissions
- Interviews are usually not part of engineering graduate admissions
- Graduate admissions is usually centered on fall admissions, but not necessarily
- Application fees are \$50 to \$100 (fee waivers?)

# What are ASEE Profiles?

- It is my favorite website for graduate admissions.
- ASEE is the American Society for Engineering Education.
- Each year each engineering school submits an 85-page questionnaire that has great information. It is free and open to the world!
- Here is the shortcut URL:

<http://profiles.asee.org/>

- You can also use US News and World Report rankings
- Ask faculty members about strong programs in your field.

# The Big Picture

- **This is bigger than Northwestern. There is a national need that we should solve together and in turn help the United States have a better educated and more diverse STEM work force. I want young people to achieve their educational dreams!**

# Questions?

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