

GAAAP presents:

Pathway to Graduate School Tool Kit



Everything a
graduate school
candidate needs
for success!



SRRRC



STUDENT RECRUITMENT
& RETENTION CENTER

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CHOOSING a master's, professional or a doctorate degree?

The PhD, or doctor of philosophy degree, prepares you for a career in research and teaching, in business, in government, or the nonprofit sector. By talking to professors in your chosen field and consulting career resources, you can gain a better understanding of the career possibilities open to you.

Master's degree programs provide specialized preparation in a field of study. Some master's degrees are designed as an intermediate step toward the PhD. In many fields, however, students enter the PhD program directly after completing a bachelor's degree.

A "terminal" master's degree is the highest professional degree awarded in some fields—for example, the Master of Business Administration, Master of Architecture, or Master of Fine Arts. Some professions require a master's degree in order to work in that field. Master's students can usually expect to pay at least a part of their graduate education expenses.

Once you have an idea about what area of study and what kind of degree you want to pursue, you can begin exploring graduate programs. You might discover new options when you learn about graduate programs and the degrees they offer.

Learning about graduate programs

Your professors can give you an insider's perspective on programs: Which programs are on the cutting edge in your chosen field? Where are the best research facilities in your chosen field? From which programs are the most promising young scholars in your field graduating?

There are also many web sites that can help you identify prospective programs in your chosen field. National rankings can offer some information about prestige and recognition, but be cautious when using this information. The prestige of a particular university may not be a good indicator of the quality of your chosen graduate program or specialization. National professional organizations in your discipline (e.g., the American Psychological Association or the American Chemical Society) may offer helpful hints in identifying programs and learning about the graduate admissions process in your field.

General program locators and rankings

BrainTrack: College and University Directory braintrack.com/us-colleges-by-state

This web site lists all U.S. universities organized by state. It includes basic information and links to each institution.

PhDs.org phds.org/rankings

The ranking system at PhDs.org allows the user to run customized rankings based on the 1995 survey data collected by the National Research Council. This site allows the user to indicate the importance of a variety of factors and rank programs according to those criteria. The site includes articles about applying to graduate school. (Be aware that the survey data is now some 15 years old and a new survey is presently under way.)

GradSchools.com gradschools.com

GradSchools.com offers many articles about graduate education and tips about the graduate admissions process. The site includes a search function for identifying graduate programs by discipline.

GradPortal.org gradportal.org

GradPortal.org provides application and funding information for prospective graduate students. It includes a program search feature that allows the user to identify programs by field of study and geographic location.

Diverse Issues in Higher Education diverseeducation.com/top100/top100listing.html

Diverse Issues in Higher Education ranks graduate programs in each discipline by minority student participation.

SELECTING a graduate program

When identifying prospective graduate programs, bear in mind that where you earn your degree can have a great impact on the direction of your future career. Aim high—do not underestimate your competitiveness. Applying can be expensive, so become familiar with the entrance requirements such as minimum test scores, GPA, and curricular requirements of your prospective programs to make sure that your choices are ambitious, but also realistic.

It is important to align your interests with faculty interests when making graduate school choices. Review the research areas of the faculty. Are there professors who are doing research in areas that interest you? Do the courses and specializations offered fit with your interests and career goals? You increase the likelihood of being offered a research or teaching assistantship if your interests match those of professors and/or courses in the graduate program.

You might also consider the status of the professors. It is advisable to choose programs that have associate and full professors in your area of interest. If the only professors in your area are assistant professors or professors emerita (retired), they may not remain for the duration of your program. You need professors in your specialized area of study to supervise your research and thesis, and their research will influence the direction and development of your own scholarship. Senior professors are likely to have more resources such as laboratories and grants to support their students. In addition, your professors will serve an important role as you make the transition to your career.

Applying to graduate school—for free!

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation is offering a FreeApp program for prospective graduate students applying to CIC institutions. By using the CIC FreeApp, you can request an application fee waiver (an average of \$55 per application) and apply to any of our participating colleges at no cost. For more information, visit: cic.net/FreeApp.

How many graduate applications should I submit?

There is no optimal number of programs to which you should apply. Many students apply to between five and eight programs. The number of applications you prepare depends on how many programs you are willing to consider, and in part how much it will cost you to apply. It is best to have a “dream” category—absolutely the best programs for you—as well as a set of “strong” programs to which you stand a fairly good chance of being admitted. Finally, you might include a “safe bet”—a program that is likely to admit you and you would be happy to attend if you are not admitted to your top choices. If you have a list of 10 or more institutions, a little more research about the programs and reflection on your research interests might help you narrow your choices. Not only is it costly to apply, but if you do not have clear reasons for your graduate program choices, this is likely to come through in your application and can lower your chances of being admitted.

Application expenses worksheet

Application fee	\$ _____
GRE general exam fee*	\$ _____
GRE subject exam fee**	\$ _____
Transcript fees	\$ _____
Postage fees	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Total expenses	\$ _____

* Include scores for four recipients

** Include scores for four recipients

FOLLOWING an application timetable

It is important to have a plan for completing the application requirements. Prepare a timetable with specific deadlines. The graduate admissions or funding deadlines may differ from the graduate program deadline. Be sure that you apply in time to receive full consideration for funding packages. This timetable is meant to be a suggested guideline. Do not trip if you are not able to follow it exactly.

The summer before you apply

- Begin to draft a personal statement of your academic and professional goals.
- Explore graduate programs. Become familiar with faculty interests, entrance requirements, and deadlines.
- Contact graduate programs that interest you and request information.
- Review for the GRE. Download FREE GRE PowerPrep software from the GRE web site, gre.org.
- Hint: Even if your prospective program does not require the GRE, national fellowships and other funding sources may request GRE scores.

September

- Share your personal statement with professors you know.
- Ask their advice about which graduate programs you might consider.
- Consult your campus writing center to review your statements.
- Narrow your graduate program choices.
- Register to take the GRE.

October

- Take the GRE.
- Revise your personal statement, tailoring it to your chosen graduate programs.
- Order transcripts.

November

- Download application forms and complete a draft. Review and edit your drafts.
- Submit completed application forms.
- Ask faculty for recommendations. Give them specific information about deadlines and follow up to ensure that they meet the deadline.

December

- Submit your applications.
- Note: Letters of admission are sent on a rolling basis beginning in February.

January

- Follow up to ensure that supporting documents were received.

February

- If possible, visit your prospective programs.

March

- Submit a FAFSA. Even if you expect to receive funding, it is good to have other options—just in case.

April 1

- You should receive admissions letters by this date.

April 15

- You must accept or decline offers of admission. Some programs may let you defer for a year once you accept.

WEEKLY TO DO LIST

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TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

NOTES

WEEKLY TO DO LIST

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CREATING a strong application

Now that you have identified some potential graduate programs, it is time to begin completing the applications. Admissions committees use your application to determine how well your experience and goals match the offerings and requirements of the program. This overview is intended to help you become familiar with the typical components of a graduate application so that you have the information you need to prepare first-rate applications.

Things to remember

- Plan ahead. Allow yourself plenty of time to gather the information you need and to review, revise, and edit.
- Seek help. Get feedback from your professors or others in your field of study. Your campus writing center can help you to craft a strong personal essay. The web sites noted on Tab 01 offer tips and advice on preparing graduate applications.
- Follow up. Make sure that you submit materials on time and follow up to verify that all supporting materials are received on time.

Helpful hint

When you provide your contact information, be sure that it is current and that you monitor your messages. The recorded messages on your voice mail should be professional and should reinforce the image that you want to present to the review committee. Avoid e-mail addresses and recorded messages that are offensive, “cute,” or otherwise unprofessional.

The personal statement

The personal statement presents the core of your application. This is where you set yourself apart from other applicants and convince the committee that your experience and interests are a good fit for your prospective program. The graduate admissions committee also uses your personal statement to make funding decisions. If your areas of interest match up with funded research projects in the department, you are more likely to receive an assistantship offer.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

The Graduate Record Examination General Test is an assessment of general skills and is used by many programs as part of their basic admissions requirements. Some programs also require that you take the GRE subject test in your discipline. The GRE web site (gre.org) provides an overview of the test and free, downloadable software that can help you review.

The web site also provides information for students seeking a waiver of the GRE test fee. It is important that you understand the format of the test and that you practice taking it so that you have a sense for the areas in which you may need to refresh your skills. GRE practice books are

also available in your library and local bookstores.

Hint: You may find that the graduate programs you have identified do not require GRE test scores for admission. Some university and national fellowship programs, however, do use the GRE, so it may be in your interest to take the test anyway. It is a good idea to find out whether funding opportunities in your field require GRE test scores.

Letters of recommendation

You will be asked to provide letters of recommendation. Ask the faculty who know you best and who can comment positively on the quality of your work. Do not feel that you need to lighten the burden on faculty by spreading your requests to multiple faculty members. The reverse is true. They can easily modify a core letter for a number of schools. Letters from senior faculty in your prospective discipline carry more weight than those from faculty outside of your field or from faculty who are newer in their careers. It is helpful to meet with the faculty who are writing letters for you, so that they can get a clear understanding of your interests and your qualifications. You might provide them with a resume or outline of the courses you've taken; any research experience; or related activities, projects, or term papers you completed in their class. These items will give them something concrete to use in their letters.

Whom should I ask for letters of recommendation?

The best letter writers are those that know you well and can provide an evaluation of your ability to perform and succeed at the graduate level. Graduate and professional school admissions people tell us the following make the best letter writers:

- Someone who knows you well
- Someone with the title of "Professor"
- Someone who is a professor at the school granting your baccalaureate degree
- Someone who has earned the degree which you are seeking in your graduate work
- Someone with an advanced degree who has supervised you in a job or internship aligned with the graduate program you are pursuing (e.g., Public Health, Social Work, Business Administration, etc.)
- Someone who has academically evaluated you in an upper-division class
- Note: Letters from family friends, political figures, and the like are discouraged and, in fact, may be detrimental.

How do I approach potential letter writers?

First, make a list of professors and/or supervisors who will be your best advocates. Then, set up an appointment to discuss your request in person. Do not make the request via email. Be prepared to articulate your interest and reasons for attending graduate school.

Letters of recommendation are written strictly on a voluntary basis. The best approach is to ask potential letter writers if they are willing to write you a strong letter. If you sense reluctance or the answer is no, ask someone else.

When should I approach letter writers? What if I plan to take some time off before I go to graduate school?

Professors and supervisors are generally pleased to write on your behalf; however, they are usually involved in many activities. Faculty are especially busy during the months of November and December. Be considerate of your letter writers' time and approach them at least two months before you need the letter.

If you plan to take some time off before going to graduate school, don't wait until you want to apply to graduate school to ask for letters. Your professors could be on sabbatical, or you may not be fresh in their minds anymore. So, ask professors for a "general" letter of recommendation before you leave the university and place their letters in a safe place, like the University's Letter of Recommendation Service (check with your career center for details). When you are ready to apply to graduate school, contact professors again, and ask them to update your letters.

How can I go about getting good letters of recommendation?

Since your best letters will come from those who know you well, make an effort to get to know your professors and/or supervisors. A few ways you can do this are to speak up in class, select courses with small class sizes, take more than one class from a professor, do research for a professor, take on optional projects, and regularly attend office hours.

The best strategy you can use to get a good letter of recommendation, particularly if a professor hasn't known you long, is to provide your letter writer with ample information about you. This way, you will get a letter that includes concrete details about you, instead of a letter that contains only your grade, which is of limited value.

You can help your letter writers write enlightening letters by giving each of them a portfolio comprised of:

A cover note that includes:

- Information on how to get in touch with you in case they need to reach you
- What you would like emphasized in each letter
- A list of schools to which you are applying, and due dates, with the earliest due date at the top
- Any other information that is relevant
- Open and close your note with thanks and acknowledgement that the letter writer's time is valuable and that this letter is important to your professional future.
- Your unofficial transcripts (note courses you took with them)
- A draft of your statement of purpose
- A copy of your best work in the course (with instructor comments on it), lab evaluations, projects, etc.
- Your resume & Stamped and addressed envelopes to send letters and forms directly to the Career Center Letter Service or schools of your choice.

DEFINING Personal Statement vs. Statement of Purpose

What's the Difference? Is there one?

As you work to complete your graduate school applications, your program will likely ask for a personal statement, a statement of purpose, or even both. The program might give you detailed instructions on what should be included in the statement or leave you to figure it out on your own with an enigmatic 'Include a Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose'.

If you are applying to multiple graduate programs, you might be wondering if you can use the same general content regardless of whether the program asks for a 'personal statement' or a 'statement of purpose'. The good news is there is significant crossover between the two, but there are subtle differences. Shaping the essay the right way can greatly enhance the essay's effectiveness by providing the admissions officers with the information that they want to know about you.

Here are some hints on how to submit the right essay to your graduate program:

1. Program only asks for a personal statement.

A personal statement gives you more leeway than a statement of purpose. However, this can also be more challenging in that you need to show your readiness for a graduate program both in terms of skills and character. The majority of the essay needs to be about your passion for your chosen field and why you have chosen to apply to a particular program. If you have space left over in the essay, you may want to write about an experience not directly related to your field, such as volunteer service. Even so, end the passage with a clear statement about how that experience has better prepared you for graduate studies.

2. Program only asks for a statement of purpose.

A statement of purpose should have a sharper focus than a personal statement. It should show that you have a strong sense of *purpose* in applying to the program. In your statement of purpose, place the emphasis on all of the reasons that you are applying to graduate school. You may want to write about experiences directly related to the graduate program and go into detail about why you are choosing a specific program. Information about particular classes, professors whose work you admire or whose work aligns with your own research goals, and other factors like location of the school or internship opportunities should be included. Avoid writing about anything not directly related to the program.

3. Program asks for both a personal statement and a statement of purpose.

Seeing the request for both a 'personal statement' and a 'statement of purpose' can instill dread in the hearts of applicants. If this is the case, write your statement of purpose first to write about your research skills and experience, internships, and reasons for choosing the program. In your personal statement, you can go more into detail about the path you took to choosing your field, significant experiences not directly related to your field, and other aspects of your life that demonstrate your character and potential.

Know what they're really asking for.

Different schools have different prompts. Nonetheless, they're all asking for the same four pieces of information:

- What you want to study at graduate school?
- Why you want to study it?
- What experience you have in your field?
- What you plan to do with your degree once you have it?

Admissions committees look for candidates with clear, well-defined research interests that arise from experience. With that in mind, your statement should reveal that you care deeply about your chosen discipline and that you have the background to support your ideas and sentiments. It should also demonstrate that you're a diligent student who will remain committed for the long haul. Always answer the question asked of you. Being substantive and direct is much better than being creative or flashy.

Be selective.

Grad schools don't care that you make a great chicken casserole or play intramural bocce ball. They do care about those activities that speak to your suitability for graduate work. As a graduate student, you'll be called upon to do difficult coursework and research. You may have to teach undergraduate classes within your field and conceivably even design a course. And you'll have to get along with a diverse group of colleagues who will sometimes work very closely with you. Any experience in school, work, or your extracurricular life that speaks to those abilities is worth talking about.

Make your statement of purpose unique.

While it's important to be focused, there's no need to be boring. To distinguish your essay, add unique (yet relevant) information. One of the best ways to do this is to discuss, briefly, an idea in your field that turns you on intellectually. It's an effective essay-opener, and it lets you write about something besides yourself for a bit.

Remember, the idea you choose to talk about can tell an admissions committee a lot about you. And it demonstrates your interest in your field, rather than just describing it.

Ask for feedback.

Be sure to show your statement of purpose to someone you respect, preferably the professors who are writing your recommendations, and get some feedback on the content before you send it in. Have someone else proofread your essay for spelling and grammar. A fresh set of eyes often picks up something you missed.

Finally, don't just reuse the same statement of purpose for each school to which you apply. You can recycle the same information, but make sure you change the presentation to fit each school's individual program.

WRITING the personal statement

A graduate admissions committee looks for students who are well-matched to the areas emphasized in the program. The personal statement is your opportunity to demonstrate how your goals and interests align with the courses, faculty, and research areas offered by your prospective program.

A strong statement will:

- show the admissions committee that you have an idea about what you want to study and why you believe it is important;
- demonstrate that you are familiar with the program and that you have sound reasons for applying;
- reflect your intellectual curiosity, motivation, and persistence, or the earnestness of your academic pursuits;
- assure the committee that you will be successful in the program.

An effective personal statement is persuasive; it is intended to convince the admissions committee that you are the right choice for their program. Yet, it is important that you remain true to yourself when preparing your essay. Matching up well with a program does not just mean you are “measuring up” to admission standards; it also means deciding that the program meets your needs and interests. It is a two-way street. That is why it is so important that your statement reflects not only your best writing but your true intellectual interests.

Consider your motivations for pursuing a graduate education:

- What are the experiences that have brought you to this point in your life?
- Why are you thinking about graduate school?
- What do you hope to contribute as a student or as a graduate in your field?

In order to demonstrate why you are a good match, you need to have an understanding about your prospective program. You might consider the following questions:

- Which faculty are conducting research in areas related to your interests?
- What is it about their work that is meaningful, interesting, or appealing to you?
- Does the program offer specialized training or course sequences that fit with your goals?
- Are there specialized research centers or facilities that support the areas of investigation you wish to pursue?

Additional questions you might ask yourself:

- What is special, distinctive, or impressive about you or your life experiences? What sets you apart from the crowd?
- What have you learned about your field that sparked your interest and convinced you that you are well suited to contribute to this field?

- Were you inspired by any classes, readings, seminars, research, or internship experiences related to your field? Have you had conversations with people already in the field that helped shape your interest?
- Do you possess special skills or work experience that enhance your likelihood of success?
- Are there any gaps in your academic record that you should explain?

Crafting the essay

The opening paragraph Your lead paragraph is generally the most important. It introduces your main ideas and sets a framework for the rest of your essay. Often it is easiest to write this paragraph last, when you have worked out what you want to say.

Tell a story

Your statement should tell a story with concrete details about your life. Describe the events that led you to your professional or educational aspirations. Which experiences helped shape your values?

Be clear

Your essay should provide specific details instead of relying on broad generalizations. For example, rather than stating “my research internship provided valuable experience,” a more interesting and persuasive statement would describe the specific skills and insights you acquired: “By transcribing interview protocols and coding the data, I gained a deeper understanding of how teenaged mothers make attributions.”

Helpful hints

- Visit your campus writing center for help. They can assist you with brainstorming your ideas, proofreading, style, and grammar.
- Ask your professors and advisors to review drafts of your statement.
- Consult writing and grammar aids. Do not rely solely on the spelling and grammar checks in your word processing software.
- Plan ahead so that you have plenty of time to review, rewrite, and edit your essays.

FUNDING graduate education

Most full-time, full-year graduate students receive some form of financial aid, usually in the form of graduate assistantships, fellowships, or loans. Most PhD students are funded through teaching or research assistantships. Funding for master's students varies by field of study. Many students also rely on student loans to pay at least a portion of their educational expenses. Professional programs such as business, law, and medicine rarely fund their students.

When selecting graduate programs, ask:

- What proportion of students receive funding and how are they funded?
- What are the stipend levels and benefits provided by departmental assistantships? Is tuition waived with an assistantship or is the student responsible for the tuition costs?
- How long does the average student take to complete a PhD?

Graduate Assistantships

- Generally provide a monthly stipend, plus tuition and health care benefits
- Have a service requirement: teaching, research, or administrative duties
- Have a time commitment that depends on the appointment. Typically, full tuition requires a 20-hour per week commitment.
- Provide training, experience, and an opportunity to network in your field

Graduate fellowships

- Generally provide a monthly stipend, plus tuition and health care benefits
- Allow you more time to pursue your own academic and research priorities because they generally do not have a service requirement
- Build your resume and open the door to many future opportunities
- May come from your academic program, the graduate school/university, or external sources

Finding fellowships

Use the Web to search for fellowship opportunities. You can start by visiting the graduate school web sites of your prospective institutions. Also, inquire about fellowship opportunities at your campus career center office. In addition, use Internet search engines to find fellowship programs and professional societies in your field. Use key words such as "fellowship," "graduate," and words relating to your discipline or research interests.

Applying for fellowships

- Prepare a timetable of deadlines and a list of documents you will need to gather.
- Visit your writing center; ask your professors/advisors to review your applications.
- When you apply, ask for university/departmental awards. These may require additional applications.

Loans and outside work

- Complete a FAFSA. Student loan programs are available and most graduate students qualify.
- Inquire about other grants and student aid resources.
- Be cautious about planning to take on work outside of your program. Course load, lab time, teaching, and personal obligations leave little time for outside work.

Other funding tips

- Ask about assistantships available outside of your department. Inquire at campus units such as libraries, student affairs offices, and other services units. Also, search the university web sites for potential opportunities.
- Regularly seek out opportunities to apply for fellowships and grants.
- Be wise about managing your money now. This is one threat to success that you can control.

Reviewing the funding offer

- It is critical to understand your funding offer before you accept it.
- Assistantships and fellowships usually provide a stipend plus tuition, but make sure you understand the terms before accepting an offer.
- What fees are you expected to pay? Does your funding include health insurance coverage? Who pays the premium?

Budget worksheet

Anticipating your income sources and monthly expenses can help you plan for a successful graduate experience. You can find tuition and fee schedules on most university web sites, along with typical housing and cost-of-living expenses

Monthly expense worksheet

Tuition and fees	\$ _____
Books and supplies	\$ _____
Transportation <i>(bus/rail pass, gas, car payment, travel)</i>	\$ _____
Car insurance	\$ _____
Health insurance	\$ _____
Rent or mortgage	\$ _____
Food	\$ _____
Utilities (heat, water, electricity)	\$ _____
Telephone or cell phone	\$ _____
Snacks/dining out	\$ _____
Child care	\$ _____
Loans and credit card payments	\$ _____
Clothes	\$ _____
Entertainment	\$ _____
Savings	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Total expenses	\$ _____

SURVIVING graduate school:

10 Academic Survival Tips from the Crunk Feminist Collective

1. Be confident in your abilities.

If you feel like a fraud, you very likely are suffering from impostor syndrome, a chronic feeling of intellectual or personal inadequacy born of grandiose expectations about what it means to be competent. The academy itself creates grandiose expectations, given the general perception of academics as hyper-competent people. Secret: Everybody that's acting like they know, doesn't really know. So ask your question. It's probably not as stupid as you think. Now say this with me: "I'm smart enough, my work is important, and damn it, I'm gonna make it."

2. Be patient with yourself.

Be patient with your own process of intellectual growth. You will get there and it will all come together. You aren't supposed to know everything at the beginning. And you still won't know everything at the end (of coursework, exams, the dissertation, life...).

Getting the actual degree isn't about intellect. It is about sheer strength of will and dogged determination. "Damn it, I'm gonna walk out of here with that piece of paper if it's the last cotton pickin' thing I do." That kind of thinking helps you to keep going after you've just been asked to revise a chapter for the third time, your committee member has failed to submit a letter of recommendation on time, and you feel like blowing something or someone up.

3. Be your own best advocate. Prioritize your own professional needs/goals.

You have not because you ask not. You have to be willing to ask for what you need. You deserve transparency about the rules and procedures of your program, cordial treatment from faculty, staff and students, and a program that prepares you not only for the rigors of grad school but also for the job market (should you desire a career in academia). But folks won't hand it to you on a silver platter. You have to build relationships, ask questions, and make demands.

Figure out your writing process (the place [home, coffee shop, library], time [morning, afternoon, night], and conditions [background noise, total silence, cooler or warmer] under which you work best and try to create those conditions as frequently as possible during finals, qualifying exams, and dissertation.

Your self-advocacy will often be misperceived as aggression and anger, entitlement or selfishness. Don't apologize.

4. Be kind to yourself.

Reward yourself frequently. Most of us need positive affirmation of a job well done, but for long stretches, especially during exams, dissertation, and the job market, the rewards elude us; and often given the time crunch, once we conquer the mountain, there is little time to enjoy the view before it's time to trudge back down and start climbing the next one. All that hard

work in high stakes conditions for anti-climactic ends can take a toll on your psyche. So be kind to yourself. Figure out the things you really like and make sure to enjoy them as much as is possible and healthy.

5. Be proactive about self-care.

Figure out your non-negotiables. For me, sleep is non-negotiable. I must have it. I don't do all nighters. I also generally don't do weekends, so I adjust my schedule accordingly. What are your non-negotiables?

- Take advantage of on-campus therapy services.
- Cultivate a spirit-affirming practice. Grad school/the academy is a mind-body-spirit endeavor. So meditate, pray, exercise, do yoga, go to church, cook a good healthy meal. Do whatever you need to do to keep your mind, body, and spirit in balance.

6. Be a friend/comrade to others and let them do the same for you.

Build community with colleagues inside or outside your department.

Build community with non-students/non-academics. You need folks who live life outside the dungeon. They will affirm you and help you keep things in perspective.

7. Be willing to get CRUNK!

If the environment is hostile, it is most probably characterized by microaggressions of various sorts. Racial microaggressions –“brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color– are quite common for women of color, but microaggressions can be used in sexist, heterosexist, or ableist ways as well. A microaggressive environment demands resistance of various sorts. So do you and be you. Unapologetically. Keep a copy of Sister Audre near by so you can make sure you're channeling your legitimate anger productively, and then, get crunk if necessary.

8. Be better not bitter.

Fail forward. Being the overachievers that we are, we tend not to deal with failure well. It tends to become an indicator to us of our intelligence, worth, and competence. (See #1). But failure is a part of the process. Unless you are incredibly, exceptionally lucky, you will hit a snag in a course, while writing the proposal, on the dissertation, submitting a journal article or submitting a book.

Two tips: take the time to process, particularly for big issues like proposals, dissertation chapters or books. Cry, scream (not at your committee or editor), go to a kickboxing class. And then dust yourself off and try again. Look at the suggestions offered; determine their validity. Heed them or disregard them depending on your best judgment, and then proceed to the next step. And one more thing...don't let the resentment fester. It may be well-justified but it simply isn't productive. Just think of it as hazing, and for your own sake, let it go.

A lot of anger comes from bitterness at mentors who have not met our expectations. But all

mentors are not created equal. Some will build your confidence, some will give you hell, some will go above and beyond, but a mentor is there to illumine the process and give you tools to be successful, not to be your friend. So have multiple mentors; know the difference in function; and adjust your expectations accordingly.

9. Be tight. Bring your A-game.

10. Be a light. As you make your way, show the sisters and brothers behind you how it's done, so maybe they won't have as many dark days as you've had.

Back-to-School Beatitudes: 10 Academic Survival Tips. Crunk Feminist Collective. Web. July 21, 2015. <<http://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/2011/08/25/back-to-school-beatitudes-10-academic-survival-tips/>>





Congratulations!