Finding a Graduate Degree Program Right for You

	Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4	Program 5
Directions: As you consider graduate degree programs, use a check-list like this to record what you learn. Going down each column, place a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to record your impressions about each factor (row). Extra rows are provided to add other factors of interest. ***Tip:*** Beyond Web site information, be sure to call programs of interest to talk with faculty, students & alumni. Trust your mentor's advice, too.					
Institutional Factors					
Size and demographics of student body					
Institutional culture and climate; governance					
Accreditation					
Institutional control (public/private; profit/nonprofit)					
ADA accessible and well maintained buildings					
Library collections, computer labs & other resources					
Partnerships with business and industry					
Alumni engagement and financial support					
Relationship with community & state government					
Proximity to major transportation options (bus, air, rail)					
Tuition and fees (also check residency requirement)					
Student health insurance					
On campus graduate student housing & child care options					
Department and Degree Program Factors					
Degrees & minors; course of study; class availability; online courses					
Admission criteria & program selectiveness					
Application process; required entrance exam(s); deadlines					
Degree completion requirements; time-to-degree completion					
Size, demographics of department (students & faculty)					
Department culture and climate; collegiality					
Research labs; centers; practicum clinics; performance venues					
Opportunity for collaborative & interdisciplinary study					
Accreditation; rankings and ratings from credible sources					
ADA accessible laboratories, equipment and other resources					
Job placement rate of degree program's graduates					
Funding for student conference travel and assistantships					
Graduate student groups; peer-to-peer mentoring & support					

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Faculty Considerations

	Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4	Program 5
Faculty research/creative interests, scholarship and reputation					
Interdisciplinary or collaborative work (on & off campus)					
Faculty-student engagement and support					
Mentoring: students publish, present & write grants with faculty					
Faculty office hours (availability for questions & assistance)					
Teaching evaluations by students					
Awarded grants and nature of grant-funded work					
Nature of educational outreach and /or service activities					
Demonstrated leadership at the university and national levels					

Campus Ancillary Services

	Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4	Program 5
Support services such as writing labs, computer labs					
Career Services (CV/resume help, job search advice, career fairs)					
Professional Development (PD plans, skills seminars, etc.)					
Enrichment (art, performance, speakers)					
Diverse student groups (e.g., minorities, veterans, LBGTQI)					
Cultural & language support for international students					
Student recreation facilities & extramural sports					

Community Factors

	Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4	Program 5
Cost of living					
Housing options					
Healthcare facilities					
Quality of schools and day care (if needed)					
Places of worship					
Community safety					
Commuter transportation options (bike, car, bus, light rail)					
Grocery store/pharmacy walking distance of campus					

Analysis: Did I view all factors with a critical eye? Are my impressions objective? Was comparable information available from all institutions? Which institutions and programs seem the best "fit" with my interests and needs? Why? Should I rule out any institution, or do I need additional information? Am I interested enough in any of these programs to make a site visit?