IS GRAD SCHOOL RIGHT FOR ME?
Timing and necessity of a graduate degree is unique to everyone. There are many professions that require a masters or PhD degree, while some view it as a bonus, or not necessary at all. When considering a graduate program, think about the end result. Is the degree you’ll obtain preparing you for a career of your choice? Is the cost, time, and energy required worth it? It’s important to research programs thoroughly and ask critical questions to help you make this decision.

COMMON REASONS NOT TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL
“I want to go to graduate school, but I don’t know what to study.”
“I just want a higher salary.”
“I am stalling because I don’t want to make a career decision.”
“Everyone else is applying to graduate school.”
“I don’t feel like I have any career options with a bachelor’s degree.”
“I’m not ready to be a ‘real adult yet’

STRONG REASONS FOR GRADUATE STUDY
“This degree is necessary for the job/career I’m pursuing” (i.e. doctor, lawyer, research, mental health counselor, etc.)
“I know I’m passionate about this field and want to develop new skills and learn more about my options.”
“An advanced degree will open up opportunities for positions I’m interested in.”

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION COMPONENTS
For more information on these components, check out our Graduate School Research Guide, Graduate School Visit Guide or talk with your faculty advisor.

☐ General Application
☐ Resume/CV
☐ Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose/Letter of Intent
☐ Test Scores (GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, etc.)
☐ Letters of Recommendation
☐ Secondary Applications, if applicable
☐ Transcripts (unofficial vs. official)
☐ Interview
How to Identify Programs (Resources)

Petersons
Peterson's comprehensive online search guide helps students discover their best fit educational program. Students can use this site to sort through their options, filter results, find program contacts, request information, and review application statistics. Peterson's also has a scholarship search function and a helpful blog full of articles and advice.

GradSchools.com
GradSchools.com has helped over 6.4 million students research graduate programs in the last year alone. If you're looking to pursue a graduate education, this site can help you find affordable academic programs amidst thousands of accredited graduate schools.

Princeton Review
Princeton Review focuses more on standardized test preparation and resources. You can also find articles and information on various degrees and explore schools.

Idealist.org
Idealist is known for connecting individuals to jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities and graduate programs that make an impact on the world. The search engine on Idealist is fast and easy to use. Students can narrow results based on location, area of study, average financial aid, number of students, and acceptance rate.

U.S. News Best Graduate Programs
U.S. News has comprehensive graduate program rankings for all disciplines. There are also great articles on finding, career paths, graduate school decision-making, and more. Remember to expand your list of programs outside of the top-ranked programs. These lists are not exhaustive of quality programs.

Networking and Outreach
One of the most helpful strategies when identifying programs is to reach out for Furman alumni, your professors and graduate program contacts. Think about how this process is similar to your undergraduate search. The best way to decide whether a program is right for you is to ask questions and experience it. For example, use LinkedIn to search for alumni in your field of interest and conduct a brief informational interview to learn more about their program, career journey, and application process. You can also request a list of alumni from the Alumni Office or the Mentoring Office. Ask a Career Advisor for more information.

Google Search
Google searches can also be helpful in finding programs, although sometimes more overwhelming. A specific keyword can make a huge difference. For example, if you're looking for full or partially funded PhD programs, search “fully funded” in Google. If you're looking for full or partially funded Masters programs, search “assistantships” in Google to find programs that match your criteria.