



# GRADUATE

## Admissions Guidebook

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## 1 Choosing Graduate School at Duquesne University

The graduate recruitment and admissions team put together this guide in order to provide you with an in-depth look at Duquesne University's graduate programs' application process. This guidebook will show you how to best prepare your application in order to present yourself as the most appealing candidate possible and show you ways to finance your graduate education.

## 2 About Graduate Education at Duquesne University

Nearly 3,500 graduate students from across the country and around the world are advancing their graduate education at Duquesne. Duquesne enjoys a rich tradition of academic excellence and strong career outcomes for our students. In fact, Duquesne is recognized as a top tier university by US News & World Report, is one of only seven U.S. Catholic universities with high research activity and is #16 among the nation's top small doctoral research universities.

Duquesne University offers many excellent graduate programs designed to prepare you for a successful career. For a list of our current graduate programs, visit our [Degrees & Programs directory](#) page.

## 3 Research-Based Academia: Duquesne University Holds R2 Status

To earn the classification of R2 status from the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education (CCIHE), Duquesne University had to meet rigorous standards. CCIHE evaluates universities that offer doctoral programs and analyzes their commitment to research based on

data provided by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The CCIHE then gives each a designation an R1 or R2. To qualify for these two top levels, they must have been awarded at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees and had at least \$5 million in total research expenditures.

R1 universities have "very high research activity." At those institutions, most faculty members focus heavily on research. Therefore, they often rely on their assistants to teach their courses. The R2 classification means that the university engages in "high research activity." At R2 institutions like Duquesne University, faculty members are deeply engaged in original research, teach their own courses, and often involve their students in their research projects.

The R2 classification ensures Duquesne University students that they are learning and researching at an institution that values and invests in research and is learning from faculty who have current and relevant experience in the field. The top professors often seek out research universities, knowing that their innovative approaches, methodologies, and insights will have institutional support. Finally, with the R2 classification, Duquesne University adds a respected voice to the world's most pressing societal issues and exerts influence in the fields of study at the university.

## 4 What Does Duquesne University Look For in a Candidate?

Duquesne University has a holistic admissions and applicant review process. Admission requirements vary by program, with some waiving standardized test requirements. Duquesne graduate students join a peer-learning network including students continuing from their undergraduate degrees, professionals

seeking new skills for their current role or a career change, and military service members and veterans.

## 5 Before You Begin Your Application

Starting an application may seem like the obvious first step, but there are actually a few things you should do before you apply.

First, review the admissions requirements for your program of interest. You will want to see if there are any program-specific requirements that need to be included with your application. This might include things like a personal statement or essay, or a specific number of letters of recommendation. It is important to know exactly what should be included in your application as you will not be able to submit it without the required documents.

Second, you'll want to be sure you have completed all the necessary additional documentation needed for admission into the program.

- You will want to check to see what exams and prerequisite courses for your program of interest. Be sure you know what entrance exam might be required such as the GRE or GMAT. If you have taken the required exam, then you will need to request your test scores be sent to Duquesne electronically and then confirm they have been received. You will also want to request official transcripts from all of your degree-granting universities.
- You will also need to focus on gathering your letters of recommendation. How many are required? Are there requirements as to whom the letters should come from?

If not, then it is generally a good rule of thumb to have one or two letters from a former professor or academic advisor who can speak to your overall academic performance. A letter from a former or current supervisor who can speak about your work ethic can be helpful.

Third, most graduate programs require a statement of purpose – also known as a letter of intent, or personal statement. This letter will contain personal information that highlights why you want to attend this university and what makes you a qualified candidate. This should make a clear case for why you want to pursue study in a particular program, why you are a good fit for the program, and what you plan to do once you have achieved the degree.

## 6 Statement of Purpose

### Standard Formatting

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There are a few different ways that you can draft a proper Statement of Purpose, but you can't go wrong if you follow these formatting guidelines:

Two pages in length unless the application requirements say otherwise and:

- 12-point font
- Times New Roman
- Format MS Word or PDF document

In the upper left-hand corner:

- Full Name
- Current Address
- Current Phone Number.

Following that information, include the date as well as the name, school, and address of the person to whom you are sending the letter.

## Body of the Letter

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The letter should begin with a few personal details, which will foreshadow the remainder of the letter. Often a specific program of interest will prompt you with a question or topic that must be addressed somewhere in your essay. This is where you discuss why you chose this career path or field of study and how it relates to you. Following that section, highlight your recent work and accomplishments as it pertains to your career path. This might include information on what inspires you, what motivates you, or what keeps you interested in this field. This should align with the type of coursework, teaching, and research being offered at the program to which you are applying. Lastly, concisely explain your career goals and how this university and program will help you achieve them. Be specific, clear, and concise. This is your chance to show an admissions professional why you should be accepted to their school and program.

## Conclusion

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The final portion of your letter should be a conclusion that wraps up the theme of your letter. This is where you want to leave a lasting impression while also summarizing your letter. Reiterate your interest, thank them for their time and consideration, and then – PROOFREAD! Read your paper aloud to see how it sounds and to catch any spelling or grammatical errors that you may have made. Additionally, spell-check the document and ask a trusted colleague to read it before you submit it.

## 7 Ready to Apply

After you have completed the previous steps, you are finally ready to begin filling out your application! As you progress through the application, you will be prompted with the

required information needed. Once your application is submitted, you will see our next steps page which will guide you through the attachment of required documents and deliver a checklist for you to see when the required documents are on file and complete.

## 8 Reviewal Process

Once you have submitted your application and all the needed documents have been uploaded and sent to Duquesne University, your application will be forwarded to the admissions committee for review and admissions consideration. Some admissions committees meet regularly, others will meet once or twice a year. This is dependent on the program.

## 9 Getting Notified

If you are accepted into a Duquesne University graduate program, you will be notified via email. You may also receive communication via email, mail, or phone directly from the graduate program. You will then receive a follow-up email outlining the next steps in the admission process.

Unfortunately, we can't accept every applicant, and those who don't get accepted will be notified via email. While this may be disappointing, we encourage you to think about how you can improve your application and try again or, in some cases, consider alternate programs.

## Final Steps

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The final steps in the admissions process begin with preparing for your courses. To be able to receive a schedule, Duquesne University requires a non-refundable enrollment deposit. This deposit varies on cost per program. Your enrollment deposit will be credited directly to

your tuition. For more information on how to fund your graduate degree, read on for more information.

## 10 Financing Graduate School at Duquesne University

### Understanding the Real Costs of Graduate School

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Congratulations on fueling your intellectual passion by investigating graduate school – particularly at Duquesne University. It's time for bigger goals!

Graduate school is an investment in you. Looking at the big picture will offer you the best vantage point for understanding the return on your graduate school investment. If you're considering grad school, you're probably trying to calculate the possible tuition for your selected program and what the various university fees may be. Along with the tuition investment, you should add in the return on investment of holding an advanced degree in today's job market so you can understand the real value of funding your degree.

### What's the Return on Investment from Earning a Graduate Degree?

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According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly earnings of bachelor's degree holders in 2020 was \$1,305 – while master's degree holders earned \$1,545 per week. In terms of annual salary, this is a difference of \$67,860 per year versus \$80,340 – nearly \$13,000 more for master's degree holders. Additionally, doctoral degrees earned \$1885.00 per week adding an additional \$17,680 per year.

Earning a graduate degree can lead to higher earnings and increase your job opportunities because of your increased knowledge. Besides the technical knowledge learned from the

courses and increased research, earning a graduate degree will also show potential employers your persistence, determination, and your ability to handle different challenges. Combining technical skills with soft skills shows you're dedicated to the field and can make you more competitive in the job field.

Some careers require that you earn an advanced degree, such as advanced nurse practitioners and teachers in some states. In addition, some fields have unspoken requirements. For example, top executives are not required to have a master's degree, but many companies, especially larger ones, look for candidates who have one.

One of the most overlooked benefits of pursuing a master's degree, and one of the most overlooked aspects of your career, is your professional network. The degree will teach you what to know, and making connections in your courses, and with alumni will help you with whom you know. While earning your degree, you'll meet like-minded people who are also looking to learn more about your field and industry. Making connections will help you find a job later on or help you find talented people for your company. Either way, your classmates and professors offer an excellent opportunity for you to build your professional network.

### Earnings Climb High with Advanced Degrees

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Securing an advanced degree will open up more opportunities as you seek a financially rewarding career path. While your salary may increase in small increments initially, over a lifetime you will see significant financial benefits.

The U.S. Census Bureau noted, in a recent report, that a college master's degree is worth an average of \$1.5 million more in lifetime earnings than a high school diploma. Those with a bachelor's degree will earn \$2.1 million, and people with a

master's degree will earn \$2.5 million. The report titled "The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings" reveals that over an adult's working life, high school graduates can expect, on average, to earn \$1.2 million. While those with a bachelor's degree will earn \$2.1 million, and people with a master's degree will earn \$2.5 million.

The number and the variety of industries that need leaders with an advanced business degree are vast: everything from finance to marketing to healthcare to cybersecurity. Additionally, some jobs even require a master's degree at the entry-level. Here is a snapshot of the career outlooks over the next 10 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for jobs requiring advanced degrees:

Career	Median Salary	Job Growth
Accountants	\$73,000	4%
Computer/Information Systems Manager	\$151,000	10%
Elementary, Middle & High School Principals	\$98,000	4%
Health Services Managers	\$134,000	32%
Nurse Anesthetists	\$117,000	45%
Financial Managers	\$134,000	15%

## Types of Financial Aid for Graduate School

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is typically the first step in applying for financial aid for grad school. This application from the U.S. Department of Education may determine if you are eligible for any federal programs to help fund your degree program. These programs include grants and loans from the federal government. Filling out the FAFSA form clearly and accurately may increase your chances of approval for federal grants and scholarships. Financial aid may be available to those who qualify.

## Fellowships and Assistantships

Graduate assistants typically perform a role at the school, such as a teaching position or a research position, and receive tuition as pay. Some assistant roles may also provide a living

stipend. These are sometimes called work-study programs.

A fellowship is a similar opportunity but without the work component. Fellowships may come from the school, or they may come from a foundation that has an interest in your field. Often the research from the grad program is a benefit that the organization gets for offering the fellowship.

All assistantship awards at Duquesne are determined by the individual graduate schools. You should contact the graduate program staff in the school to which you are applying to discuss qualifications and any additional questions related to these opportunities.

In addition, various departments around campus, such as [Student Life](#), offer select opportunities for assistantships. These

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opportunities may require a specific skill set to be eligible to apply. You can contact the different departments to discuss position qualifications and availability.

## Scholarships

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Similar to assistantships, scholarships are awarded by individual graduate schools and programs, not by the Financial Aid Office. Please get in touch with your intended program of study to explore what possibilities exist based on your specific situation. You can also follow this link from [gradschools.com](https://gradschools.com) for more information about graduate scholarships.

## Non-Need-Based Loans

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An Unsubsidized Stafford Loan is a non-need-based loan. Any eligible student can borrow from this loan program. You are charged interest when the loan is disbursed and until it is repaid in full. The maximum academic year loan limit for federal Stafford loans for graduate students is \$20,500 with a maximum lifetime limit of \$138,500. Graduate PLUS Loans are Unsubsidized Stafford Loans which are federal, low-interest loans that the government guarantees. Grad PLUS loans can be used to pay for the total cost of education less any aid you have been awarded.

## Employment

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Students may apply for any part-time position that is posted on the regular employment website for Duquesne University on the [Human Resources website](#). Students should follow the links for Support Staff or Professional and Managerial Staff and follow the instructions to apply for the position. Additional employment postings can be found on the [graduate landing page](#).

## Employee Tuition Reimbursement

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Your company may have tuition payment opportunities for you. Talk to your company's human resource department to find out additional information on advanced degree support. Most (92%) of U.S. employers offer educational benefits, according to a survey from the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBP). According to HRDive.com, the most common include:

- Tuition assistance/reimbursement (63%)
- Inhouse training seminars (61%)
- Attendance at educational conferences (51%)
- Continuing education courses (50%)
- Coverage for licensing courses and exams (44%)
- Personal development courses (35%)
- 529 college savings plans (10%)

## Outside Scholarships

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Sites that promote free scholarship lists/services vary in terms of quality. Remember that you should never pay money or supply credit card information in order to obtain scholarship advice. Barring that, it can't hurt to try some free scholarship searches and evaluate different offerings.

- [The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid](#)
- [FastWeb](#)
- [WiredScholar \(Sallie Mae\)](#)

## Special Financial Opportunities

Duquesne University is offering a 25% tuition award toward select graduate degrees. This award is limited to specific programs; please refer to the [special financial opportunities](#) page to learn more about eligibility and view a complete list of the included academic programs.

## Duquesne Monthly Payment Plan

The University offers five and 12-month payment plans through Nelnet, a third-party vendor, which is administered through the Duquesne Student Accounts Office. To enroll, visit [Student Accounts](#).

## Federal Work-Study

Students who qualify may apply for [federal work-study](#) positions on campus. Graduate students are not automatically reviewed and must request work-study via email to the Office of Financial Aid at [faoffice@duq.edu](mailto:faoffice@duq.edu).

## Find Funding for Graduate School at Duquesne University – Connect With Us

As you consider the key questions regarding how to fund your academic and career goals, it is important to collect the facts about financial opportunities. Also, remember that the return on your personal and intellectual investment may be measured not only monetarily but also personally and professionally.

With a graduate degree, you will sharpen your skills and deepen your understanding in your field, which will situate you for a purposeful life ahead. It is important to realize the parameters of becoming a graduate student. Know what budget will work for you, understand how the graduate program is mutually beneficial for your employer or for your career expectations, fill out applications in a clear and timely manner, and reach out to trained admissions counselors who can help you chart a path to a successful graduate school experience.

**WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

[gradadmissions@duq.edu](mailto:gradadmissions@duq.edu) | 412.396.6219

