**Top 10 Grad School Myths**

**MYTH # 1: *It is easier to go to grad school directly from your undergraduate studies***

Many students will naturally go to grad school immediately following their undergrad, because they are in studying mindset or are familiar with the university system. However, there are some professional programs at specific institutions (such as psychology or public policy) that require several years of work/volunteer experience. Some students find the financial stresses too overwhelming and will choose to save up before hitting the books again. Whatever the situation, there is never a ‘best time’ to start grad school, do what is best for you.

**MYTH # 2: *It is too expensive and I cannot afford it***

Unless you are fully funded, you will incur costs: tuition, housing, books, conference travel, food, etc. Depending on your university and degree, there may be opportunities to help fund your studies, such as Teaching Assistantships (TA), Research Assistantships (RA), stipends associated with your research, and scholarships or awards based on academic merit and/or financial needs. You will certainly not be a millionaire as a grad student, but it is possible to get enough money to cover your basic costs.

**MYTH # 3:** ***You cannot get full funding to do your graduate degree***

Some research based students particularly in sciences, engineering and medical sciences can receive a variety of funding sources amounting to $21 000/year which his manageable to live on. Students in other disciplines may have to rely entirely on external scholarships as not all supervisors are able to provide research stipends. Review the requirements and criteria thoroughly when considering major scholarships as they entail lengthy applications, which take time in preparing and applying for them.

**MYTH # 4: *I need to have a 4.0 GPA to be admitted***

**You do not need a 4.0 GPA to be admitted. Each program has a different requirement and many see your GPA as just one component of your application.**

**MYTH # 5: *Grad school will get me more money***

If this is your sole motivation for pursuing grad studies, you will be in for a big surprise. You need to do your homework: look at the job market to appreciate how a graduate degree will add (or occasionally hinder) your career of choice.

**MYTH # 6**: ***Unless you are 100% certain you know what you want to do, grad school is a gamble***

You can never be 100% certain that grad school is the right choice. However, you can do everything possible to ensure that you have properly thought about it: seek information from current students, review the course syllabus, understand the thesis requirements, and evaluate your financial situation.

**MYTH # 7: *You should go to the most prestigious university to which you are admitted***

You should go to the college that ‘fits’ you best. If it happens to be prestigious, that's fine. However, ‘fit’ has to do with how you feel when you are on campus (do you like your physical surroundings), how you learn (does the school offer practicum or exclusively class experience), and how the professors teach (are classes large or small and will you be overwhelmed). Moreover, your fit with the supervisor is critical for thesis students. If the university and you are not a good match, you will be unhappy regardless of the prestige.

**MYTH # 8: *Grad school is like a 9 to 5 job***

The hours spent on your degree are dependent on many factors. If you are working in a lab, it is not uncommon to have to work extended hours. If you are in the humanities, a brilliant idea may come to you at 11 pm. Grad school, especially when writing your thesis, requires flexibility and time management strategies. Each student, under the same supervisor, may have different hours, contingent on the type of project or study. It is important to speak with your supervisor to discuss expectations.

**MYTH # 9: *If I got top grades in undergraduate, I will get top grades in grad school***

Although there are many similarities between undergrads and graduates, there are also vast differences. As a Masters or PhD student, you are expected to independently undertake your research. You might only meet with your supervisor every few weeks. There are not as many midterms or exams as a graduate student, although the few that you may have account for a higher percentage than those in undergrad. The reality is that a student can have top grades and not be successful in a PhD. To ensure the greatest success, do your homework beforehand: research the program, and if possible, visit the department and speak with current students.

**MYTH # 10: *Applying to grad school is like applying to undergrad – fill out a form online and choose a program***

It takes weeks, if not months, to apply to grad school. A typical application involves many components: a personal statement or letter of intent, academic CV and letters of reference. Some may require you to have found a supervisor. Writing these documents and speaking with your references takes time. If you are unsure how to get started, book an appointment with an Academic Development Specialist via the Student Success Centre to help you through the process.