

# Masters or PhD

## Masters (MA)

- 2-3 years
- Many jobs only require an MA
- Can continue into a 4-5 year PhD after
- Jump onto really cool research projects

## Doctorate (PhD)

- 5-6 years
- Room to change focus/directions of projects
- Multiple projects (usually 3)
- Required for employment as a professor
- Opportunities to explore and design your own research project

# Paying for Grad School

STEM degrees are paid for by **employment** through the university:

- Teacher's Assistant (TA) – teach undergraduates, generally 50% teaching load
- Research Assistant (RA) – paid to do research, either your own or your advisors

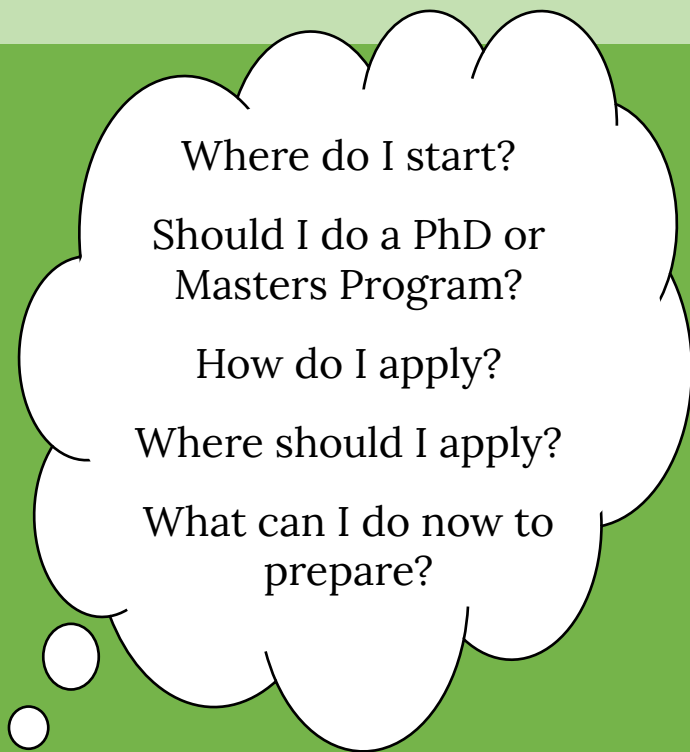
## Fellowships:

- GRFP – NSF fellowship that you can apply to twice, once as an undergraduate and once as a graduate student
- NASA Fellowship – apply as a graduate student enrolled in a program

Ask Advisors about funding and expectations for funding. Research requires money, so less money means less research time.

• • • •  
CREATED BY CC AIPG

# CONSIDERING GRAD SCHOOL?



**More info**

## Application Timeline

Graduate School applications take over a full year.

Doing a small amount of preparation while in undergrad serves you in the long run - even if you apply a year or two after your graduation date

## Summer Before

Find potential advisors:

- What do they research and does this interest you?
- What is their mentorship style?
- Are they accessible to their grad students or tied up in other commitments?
- Where do their graduate students go after they get a degree?
- How experienced are they advising?

Many professors have personal websites that present their previous and ongoing research

## Fall Before

Applying:

- Check if schools require the GRE, many do not
- Look into Fee Waivers
- Apply for the **GRFP** – see p. 6
- Ask Professors for Letters of Recommendation *at least* 3 weeks before the due date

## In College

- Senior Thesis or Project
- External summer research or internship
- Consider Calc 2, Chem 2, and/or Physics 2
- Go to a conference like AGU or GSA to meet potential advisors
- Try to explore different avenues of interests – understanding what aspects of an activity interest you will help inform your decisions

## E-mailing Advisors:

- Clearly state the degree you want to pursue
- Show that you've read and understand their research
- Express why their work interests you
- Be respectful and formally address them
- Be succinct!
- Be patient, professors receive a high volume of emails and may take a few weeks to reply

## Winter Before

Visits:

- Talk to current Graduate Students - how do they like their advisor? Would you want to work with them in the future?
- Look for a good "fit" - it's important that you like the workplace atmosphere and location, you may be spending the next 3-7 years here