

Find the facts you need — fast

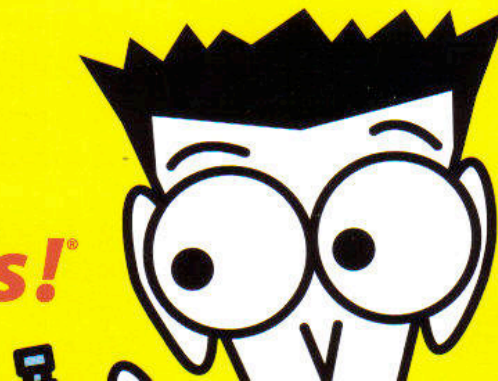
Graduate Studies

FOR
DUMMIES[®]

QUICK REFERENCE

2nd Edition

**A Quick
Reference
for the
Rest of Us!**



Talk at LUMS
Jan 4th 2008

Available online at
LUMSReview.com

Outline



- Why grad school
- Masters or PhD
- How to get there
- Funding

SCHOOL IS HELL
BUT
IT BEATS WORKING

SHOULD YOU GO
TO GRAD SCHOOL?
A WEE TEST

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I AM A COMPULSIVE NEUROTIC. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I LIKE MY IMAGINATION CRUSHED INTO DUST. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I ENJOY BEING A PROFESSOR'S SLAVE. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME IS USING JARGON AND CITING AUTHORITIES. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I FEEL A DEEP NEED TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF AVOIDING LIFE. |

Acknowledgements

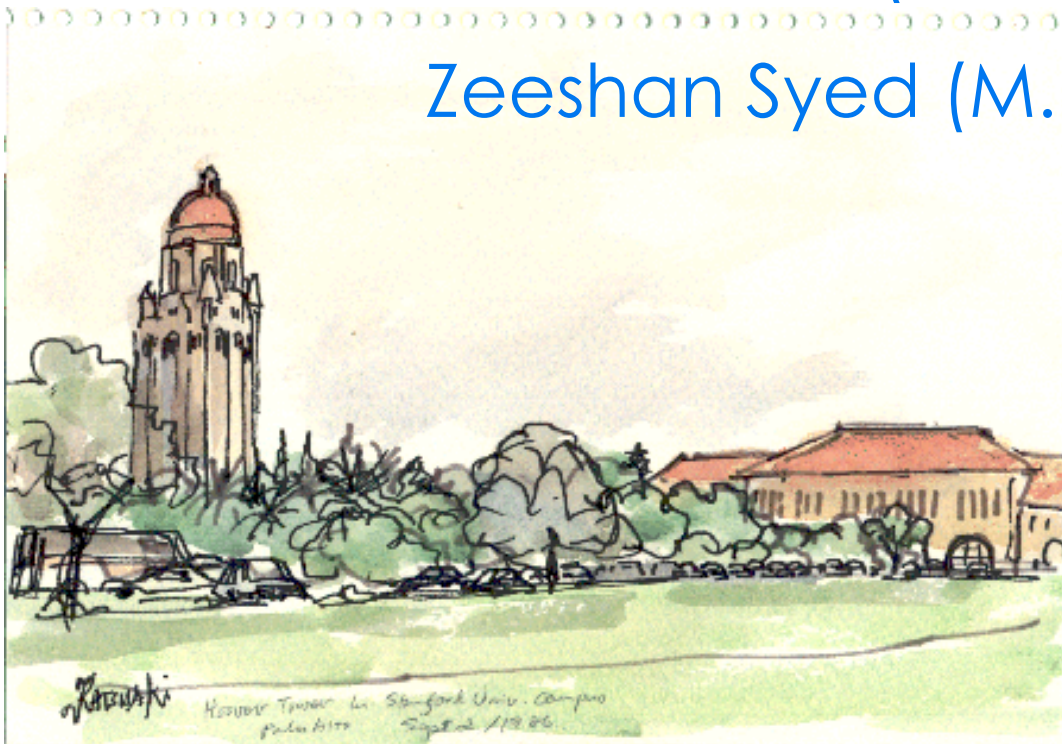


Some of the views expressed in this talk are influenced by discussions with the following people:

Prabal Dhutta (UC Berkeley)

Joe Polastre (UC Berkeley/Sentilla)

Zeeshan Syed (M.I.T)



Why Grad School



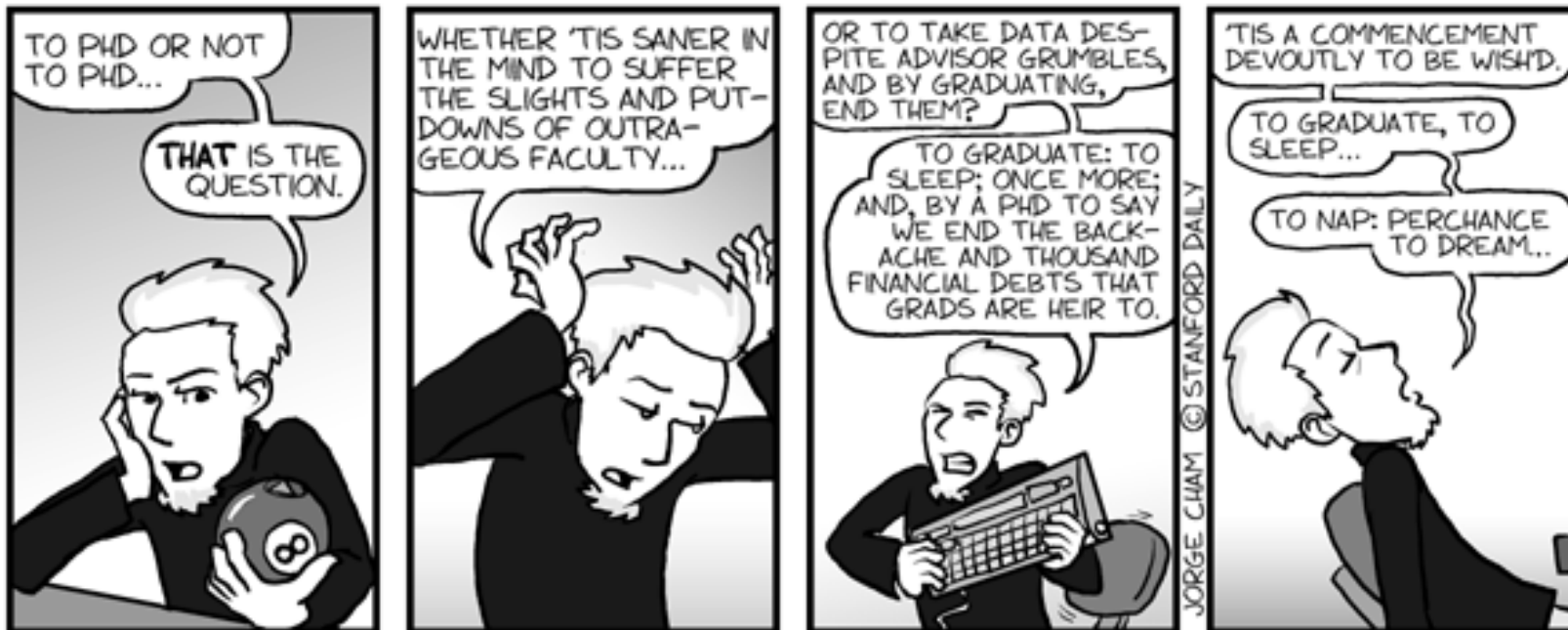
- Job opportunities
- International exposure
- Personal growth
- Real life sucks!
- When should you go

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Masters or PhD



phd.stanford.edu

Masters or PhD – Quick Overview



PhD vs. Masters

“Academic” life vs. “Normal” life

30k USD lucky vs. 60k USD unlucky

Research vs. Courses



Masters or PhD - Details



Masters

- Arrange funds
- Relatively easier
- Professors don't care
- Quick route to jobs
- Earn more in the short run
- Don't care about research
- Industry is the only option

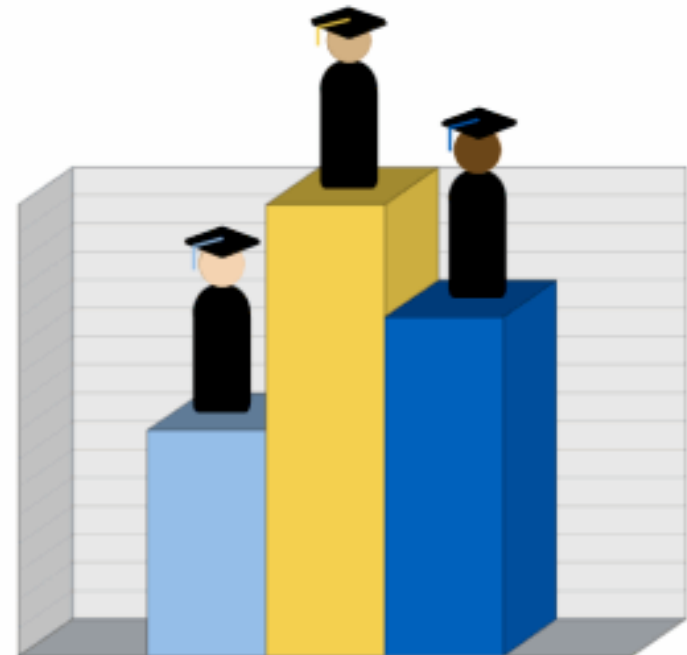
PhD

- Always funded
- Harder to get into
- Professors matter
- Long journey!
- Earn less in the short run
- Research Matters
- Could go to Industry or Academia

Ranking



- All sorts of “rankings” are out there
- Depends on you, which one you want to believe
- US News rankings are pretty famous
- Department rankings are more important



Times Ranking



THE WORLD'S TOP 200 UNIVERSITIES

RANK	NAME	COUNTRY	PEER REVIEW SCORE	INT'L FACULTY SCORE	INT'L STUDENTS SCORE	FACULTY/STUDENT SCORE	CITATIONS/FACULTY SCORE	FINAL SCORE
	Max score		1000	100	100	400	400	1000.0
1	Harvard University	US	643	17	17	50	243	1000.0
2	University of California, Berkeley	US	665	6	7	7	169	880.2
3	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	US	484	13	18	28	221	788.9
4	California Institute of Technology	US	236	19	17	45	400	738.9
5	Oxford University	UK	560	57	18	30	45	731.8
6	Cambridge University	UK	541	65	19	31	46	725.4
7	Stanford University	US	420	9	13	28	197	688.0
8	Yale University	US	347	53	20	65	81	582.8
9	Princeton University	US	353	18	18	19	133	557.5
10	ETH Zurich	Switzerland	170	72	25	4	266	553.7
11	London School of Economics	UK	257	79	100	27	6	484.4
12	Tokyo University	Japan	371	3	3	30	60	482.0
13	University of Chicago	US	254	31	18	58	71	444.0
14	Imperial College London	UK	237	60	51	55	27	443.7
15	University of Texas at Austin	US	183	9	8	8	202	421.5
16	Australian National University	Australia	212	48	31	9	105	417.7
17	Beijing University	China	322	9	11	35	3	391.8
18	National University of Singapore	Singapore	266	35	46	10	18	385.9
19	Columbia University	US	213	10	18	56	75	384.1
20	University of California, San Francisco	US	21	5	0	39	300	376.5

Ivy League



Brown University
In deo speramus
("In God we hope")



Columbia University
In lumine Tuo videbimus
lumen
("In Thy light shall we see
the light")



Cornell University
"I would found an
institution where any
person can find
instruction in any study"



Dartmouth College
Vox clamantis in deserto
("A voice crying in the
wilderness")^[6]



Harvard University
Veritas
("Truth")



University of
Pennsylvania:
Leges sine moribus
vanae
("Laws without morals are
useless")^[7]



Princeton University
Dei sub numine viget
("Under God she
flourishes")



Yale University
אורים ותמים
Lux et veritas
("Light and truth")

US News Ranking: CS



Computer Science (Ph.D.)

Ranked in 2006*

Rank/School	Average assessment score (5.0 = highest)
1. Carnegie Mellon University (PA)	5.0
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	5.0
Stanford University (CA)	5.0
University of California–Berkeley	5.0
5. Cornell University (NY)	4.6
University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign	4.6
7. University of Washington	4.5
8. Princeton University (NJ)	4.4
9. University of Texas–Austin	4.3
University of Wisconsin–Madison	4.3

US News Ranking: Econ



Economics (Ph.D.)

Ranked in 2005*

Rank/School	Average assessment score (5.0 = highest)
1. Massachusetts Institute of Technology	5.0
University of Chicago	5.0
3. Harvard University (MA)	4.9
Princeton University (NJ)	4.9
Stanford University (CA)	4.9
University of California-Berkeley	4.9
7. Yale University (CT)	4.8
8. Northwestern University (IL)	4.6
9. University of Pennsylvania	4.5
10. University of California-San Diego	4.3

US News Ranking: Business



Top Business Schools ▶ [Click on a header](#)

Rank	Overall Score	Peer assessment score (5.0 highest)	Recruiter assessment score (5.0 highest)
Harvard University (MA)	100	4.8	4.6
Stanford University (CA)	99	4.8	4.5
University of Pennsylvania (Wharton)	97	4.8	4.6
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan)	95	4.8	4.4
Northwestern University (Kellogg) (IL)	93	4.7	4.4
University of Chicago	93	4.7	4.4
Dartmouth College (Tuck) (NH)	92	4.4	4.3
University of California-Berkeley (Haas)	91	4.6	4.2
Columbia University (NY)	87	4.4	4.2

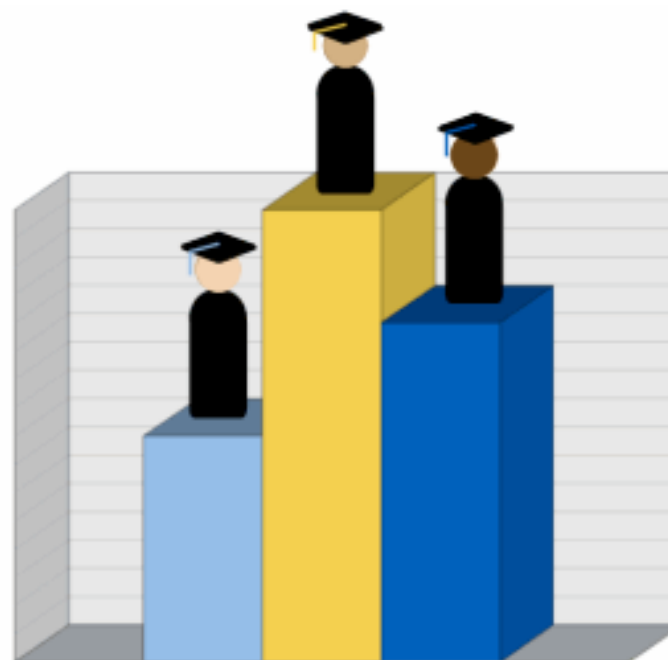


NRC Peer-Review Ranking

- Personally, I believe in this ranking for graduate programs

<http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/1995/40737-0920.html>

MIT	34 points
UC Berkeley	27 points
Princeton	19 points
Stanford	18 points
Harvard	18 points
Yale	17 points
U. Chicago	14 points
U. Michigan	10 points
Caltech	10 points
UC SD	8 points



*A peer-review ranking of doctoral programs compiled over years

*Survey by National Research Council (NRC)

How to get there

- Apply early
- Right mix of targets
- GRE, GPA
- Resume
- Research
- Rec. Letters



This talk does not cover:

- MBA admissions (significantly different)
- Admissions to non-US schools

How to get there: GPA, GRE



How important is GPA and GRE?

GPA, GRE cannot get you in,
but they can keep you out!

You have to be above the minimum GPA + GRE filter

After that the real game starts (especially for PhD)

A rule of thumb: Higher the GPA + GRE, the better – duh!





How to get there: Rec. Letters

- Rec. letters are very important
- Especially from well-known people
- Make sure your letter writer can establish his/her authority
- Letters should be believable
- Ask if they'd write a "strong" letter before getting them
- Request letters early (avoid peak letter writing time)
- Professors remember faces, not names



How to get there: SOP



Eddie Kohler
Statement of Purpose
University of Washington

This is my second try at my statement of purpose for you twits.

I like your grad school more than all the others because of the skillful use of LaTeX in your course catalog. I mean seriously, get a life!!!!!! Computer Modern is for the birds!!!! Hire a graphic designer!!!!!!

Computer science is good because it has two words and I like both of them. I also like "butt" and "futz" but you have no degree in futz butt. I can't go into chemical engineering because the other edward kohler jr is in that and there is a Pauli edward kohler jr exclusion principle. It's bad enough that we're both at MIT at the same time. Sometimes i get stomach cramps thinking about it.

The Coffeehouse is closed. You care.

Please accept me *right now* or I will write another statement of purpose.

love, ed

- Personalize for each school
- Make it interesting
- It is your writing sample
- Make it good
- Show your passion
- Make a personal connection
- Answer why grad school
- Answer what after school
- Answer why this school



How to get there: Research

- Not that important for Masters (but won't hurt!)
- Extremely important for PhD
- For PhD you **must** show research experience
- Proves that you know what you are getting into
- Prior publications are not necessary, but will boost app a lot
- Quality of papers is **much** more important than quantity
- Your prior papers/drafts serve as writing samples
- 1-2 samples are more than enough (they won't read more anyway)
- Make sure the research/writing samples are good!
- No publications are better than publications in “junk” conferences

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4449651.stm>

BBC NEWS

Prank fools US science conference

A collection of computer-generated gibberish in the form of an academic paper has been accepted at a scientific conference, to the delight of hoaxers.



How to get there: Funding

- Fulbright
- Erasmus Mundus
- HEC
- Graduate Assistantships



Fulbright Scholarship



Pros

- Everything is funded
- A lot of funds available
- Good placements (generally)
- Standard procedures (“proxy”)

Cons

- Need to come back to PK
- Less control over univ. applications
- Less suitable for PhD

EU vs. US



EU

- Recognition within EU
- Relatively easier
- No GRE
- Don't care about rankings
- Ad-hoc procedures

US

- International Recognition
- Harder to get into
- GRE
- Rankings matter
- Standard procedures

There is light at the end of the (long) tunnel !





Further Information

Muneeb Ali

<http://muneeb.org>

Thank You !

