

## LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL (August- September)

**Create a support system.** This is the advice we wish someone would have given us because finding this out on our own was difficult.

- Set up an appointment with your university’s counselling services if you do not already have a therapist or counselor. You may need help processing your emotions. This is big life stuff! Cry about it, be sad, be excited, be confused, be stressed, be happy. Please, don’t think you need to go at it alone. You don’t need to be having a break down to talk to a counsellor. Even if you feel silly, just go.
- Talk with other people who are also applying. It is so nice to vent and express your frustrations with your geo pals about this process. When this process ends, the celebration with your pals will be wonderful, especially since you went through this process together.
- Lean on your mentors. They will encourage you and help you think through things.

### What type of graduate program do you want to pursue?

- Think about the career path you thought about in the early summer. What does that look like? Also think about the resources you have, because that will help you determine which program is right for you.
- Do you want to do a traditional Masters or a professional Masters program?

Program type	Description	Career path	Cost to you
Traditional (thesis based) Masters	This program includes your own research project that is written as a thesis. Oftentimes, the thesis will be formatted to publish in a peer-reviewed journal.	-Academia -Industry -Policy - Government	Do not accept an offer if they do not cover tuition, health insurance, and provide a stipend. This stipend should cover most, if not all of your living expenses.
Professional Masters	This program varies by institution in length and course content. The program is geared to a specific profession such as: energy industry, climate policy, mining, etc.  Often, they have the same class-load as a traditional masters student, but they do not complete a thesis.  Instead, students complete a different deliverable. Depending on the program, the student may complete a valuable internship in the profession, or a different type of project like a capstone.	-Industry -Policy - Government	Professional Masters Programs are expensive.  Some Professional Masters Programs are geared towards those who are further in their career, and their company pays for their masters at this program.  If this is the path you want to take, make sure to look into the cost of the specific programs and see if it is affordable for you.

- Do you want to go straight to a PhD? Talk to your academic mentors to see if that is a wise choice, as your undergrad experience may not be enough to start a PhD right away, and that is OK! As students who did go straight into a PhD, we can say it was a HUGE learning curve that may not be for everyone.

### **Find an advisor for graduate school.**

The most important part of your graduate school experience is the advisor you have and the project(s) you work on. Yes, the institution is important, but finding the perfect fit with your advisor and project(s) is far more important for your advancement in your career and for your own wellbeing.

Academia is weird. There is no centralized place on university websites or department websites on the graduate student positions available. You have to reach out to potential advisors to ask them if they are looking for students. But how do you even find a potential advisor?

- Remember the list of aspects in geology that you made at the beginning of the summer? Read it again and refine it to fit your interests now. Remember those things as you begin the search.
- Reach out to your undergraduate mentors and let them know what field(s), topic(s), or scientific question(s) interest you. Ask them for suggestions on where to go/who to work with. Maybe they have colleagues that are looking for grad students. The geo world is small, so take advantage of that.
  - Do not rule out your mentors who do not specialize in the field you are pursuing. They are likely to have friends in many fields that they can help connect you with!
- Look at the Geological Society of America and American Geophysical Union catalogues of past conferences for talks/posters/abstracts that interest you. Make note of the authors and schools that are doing work in your area of interest. Look at the papers those people have published and search through their colleagues as well.
- Go on google scholar and do a simple search of your topic. If you see a paper that interests you, look into the author and co-authors programs.
- Have you always wanted to move to a certain state? Look up geology programs in that state and see if there are any advisors who would be exciting to work with! This may be your chance to get a 2-6 year snapshot of life in a different environment.
- Remember science twitter? Be sure to check it out to see if anyone posted positions online!

**WRITE DOWN** who you're interested in and what they are doing. There will be tons of people in the beginning! Write down each name, the university, the project, and maybe include a link to a paper or their website. Make an excel sheet to keep track of it all.

You will find that as you get deeper into your search, you will begin to get more and more excited about certain advisors, topics, and/or fields. Listen to your interest and follow those leads!

**Express interest.** We know. This is scary. How do you even begin to start the relationship with your potential advisor? Trust us, once you send the first email, it gets easier. Here are our tips on how to contact potential advisors!

- Start composing emails to prospective professors. (Note from Asmara: "During this process, I realized which professors I felt most excited about, and narrowed down my

search (crossed out people on the excel sheet).” You can use a template, but make sure to make each email personal and specific!

- Before you compose your email, scour the university website, department website, and search to see if your potential advisor has a website. Look for information about the work they do and if they have publicized open graduate student positions.
- Ask to set up a phone call/zoom call. Malisse highly recommends some kind of video call because it is so much easier to gauge a person when you can actually see them.
- Ask questions that are important to you! Ask about things you read about their projects/school, what projects they have in mind for you, what their work life balance is like, how they like to mentor. TAKE NOTES DURING THE CALL!! You won't remember later. Trust us. You think you will, but you won't. Take the notes.
  - Ask your mentors, friends that are in graduate school, etc. about what questions you should ask your potential advisor.
- If you are going to GSA and they are too, ask if they would be willing to grab coffee with you!
- Listen to your heart/gut. If someone gives you a weird vibe, trust that and move on. Do not ignore red flags. You know what's best for you.
- If someone doesn't email you back, wait a week and try again. If they don't respond after that, it's their loss. People are busy and emails can slip through the cracks, but do you really want an advisor who consistently takes forever to get back to you? No, no you do not.