

The Acronym **ABC's** of Graduate/Professional School

Academic Master's degrees

- **M.A.**=Master of Arts (includes traditional arts, sciences and humanities disciplines)
- **M.S.**=Master of Sciences (includes technical fields such as engineering and agriculture)

Assistantship

Assistantships are available at many grad schools with graduate programs, and can be teaching or research centered. In exchange for completing some work or research for the graduate program, you're offered free or reduced tuition as well as other possible benefits, such as health insurance and a monthly stipend.

- **GA**=Graduate Assistant (10-20 hours/week, typically pay full or partial tuition and stipend)
- **RA**=Resident Assistantship (room and board and a stipend in a college residence hall)
- **RA**=Research Assistantship (assist in ongoing research)
- **TA**=Teaching Assistant (teaching and assisting professor with office hours, ½ time)

Defense

Generally an oral presentation to a committee of people where you provide a summary of your thesis and the research results you obtained. An Examining Committee then presents you with questions and you must respond and defend your work.

Dissertation

Synonym for "Thesis." See definition below.

Fellowships

Fellowships are essentially scholarships or grants that are awarded to doctoral students in grad schools. Awards vary but could include enough money to cover the cost of everything, including tuition, housing, and food. Sometimes, they have strings attached, such as working on a very specific type of research, or publishing a set amount of articles in a specific field.

DAT

Dental Aptitude Test

GMAT

Graduate Management Admission Test, a standardized test require for admission to a graduate business school/MBA program

GRE

Graduate Record Examination, a standardized test usually required for admission to graduate schools

Internship

Work experience as part of a field of study/may be required as part of a graduate program

LSAT

Law School Admission Test, a standardized test required for admission to law school

MAT

Miller Analogies Test: high-level mental ability test requiring the solution of problems stated as analogies

MCAT

Medical College Admissions Test, a standardized test required for admissions to medical school

OAT

Optometry Admissions Test

Orals

These are essentially final exams for graduate school, which are common for doctoral degrees and sometimes required for master's-level programs. These comprehensive exams are presented verbally and usually graded by a small committee of professors who will require you to demonstrate your mastery of the concepts you've covered in your studies.

PCAT

Pharmacy College Admissions Test, a standardized test required for admissions to pharmacy school

Ph.D.

Doctor of Philosophy: an advanced degree, beyond the master's level, which requires further courses as well as several years of original research culminating in a dissertation

Practicum

A work experience or hands-on portion of a class offered in graduate schools

Professional graduate education

A graduate education that emphasizes learning the skills and knowledge necessary to practice a profession (i.e. attending medical school or studying social work)

Thesis

An original and significant contribution to research in your field (required in PhD programs and some master's programs)

VAT

Veterinary Aptitude Test