



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
Jackson College of
Graduate Studies



10 TIPS:

Strategies for Success in Graduate Studies

presented by the Jackson College of Graduate Studies
at the University of Central Oklahoma

Congratulations

on your decision to pursue a graduate degree in the Jackson College of Graduate Studies at the University of Central Oklahoma. It is a big decision that demonstrates your commitment to invest in yourself and your own professional development.

We've prepared some graduate study tips and suggestions to help guide those looking to advance their career, participate in a fully-online graduate program or prepare for a doctoral degree.

10 Tips

1 PREPARE FOR RIGOROUS LEARNING

Deciding to pursue a graduate degree involves a commitment to independent learning, thinking and writing. It also involves greater exploration and research in your chosen discipline and a strong desire to think more deeply, master your field at a higher level or make an original contribution to your discipline. While it's not necessary to know everything in your discipline before beginning your graduate education, you can prepare to maintain a rigorous focus on your discipline during graduate study.

2 BE A CRITICAL AND CURIOUS THINKER

Develop curiosity early by readily asking “why” or “why not” in looking at issues. Strive to constantly seek an “outside of the box” perspective; this prepares you for persistent inquiry. Plan to spend a great deal of time asking questions that may or may not be easily answered to help prompt critical thinking and spark curiosity. Your willingness to spend time mulling over concepts, approaches and theories is at the heart of graduate study.

3 COMMIT TO REGULAR CLASS ATTENDANCE

Commitments continue (or perhaps increase) the moment you decide to pursue graduate study. Friends will want to meet with you. Personal projects will need to be addressed. Professional assignments may emerge. Or, perhaps children will have major events. Each of these situations can interfere with your desire to be present in your graduate courses. Regular class attendance is the only way to ensure you receive firsthand information directly from your professor.

4 BE A GOOD COMMUNICATOR

As you prepare for graduate study, look for opportunities that help you develop your spoken and written skills as an effective communicator. Plan to increase your confidence and poise in message delivery. The bulk of your time in graduate study will be spent sharing, discussing, writing, interacting and speaking as you attend class, work on assignments and complete major projects. Communication is a key component of graduate school success.

5 SCHEDULE YOUR TIME WISELY

Whether writing assignments, researching a thesis or meeting with colleagues, success in graduate studies requires your time. Along with dedicating time to read, write, research or meet, you will need time to just think and reflect on what you have learned. Plan now to think differently about your use of time. Begin to schedule blocks of time in your weekly calendar that you are willing to commit to graduate study.

6 ENGAGE IN OPPORTUNITIES ON CAMPUS

At UCO, you will have several transformative learning opportunities. You can work alongside faculty and your peers to complete research or major projects. You can also secure a funded grant to engage in research, creative or scholarly activities. Along with advancing toward the completion of your degree, enrich your graduate experience through greater engagement in the UCO community.

7 PRIORITIZE YOUR COMMITMENTS

The work of graduate studies is challenging; it will need to be prioritized among the breadth of your life commitments. For best outcomes, create a plan on how you will prioritize graduate study, work and family life. Talk to your loved ones, friends, and family ahead of time about your new time commitments for graduate study. This will help you build a supportive community when your priorities shift.

8 STAY CONNECTED

Contact your professors, advisors and the Graduate College regularly to ensure you have up-to-date information related to your class sequence, deficiencies, degree program requirements and Graduate Catalog policy. You will find your graduate program advisor and the Graduate College staff to be especially helpful and informative in assisting you with your degree progression.

9 GET INVOLVED WITH ALUMNI

Get involved with alumni, especially recent graduates from your discipline or degree program. Former students can provide suggestions that can support you through your coursework and career exploration. Along with sharing your passion for a common discipline, alumni can help build connections and a strong network, which is crucial for your success during and after graduate school.

10 CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR PROFESSION

There are many opportunities available to make contributions within your chosen discipline. Seek advice from others on how best to give back. And, when opportunities present themselves, take advantage of the chance to serve and to lead through service. Through presenting at national conferences or serving as a local, regional or national officer, graduate students are expected to give back to their disciplines as active shapers of their respective professions.

For a variety of reasons, professionals like you have chosen to complete graduate study in their respective areas of interest at UCO. The Jackson College of Graduate Studies invites your application to be among them. You can do it! And, we are here to help. Reach out to a member of our admissions team today for assistance in taking the next step.