

CSP Graduate School Option – Benefits of Graduate School & Next Steps

You have superb educational opportunities awaiting you via the Army's Career Satisfaction Program (CSP). When you elected the CSP ***Graduate School Option***, you were guaranteed the opportunity to attain a fully-funded graduate degree at the college or university of your choice while continuing your Army career. To take full advantage of this benefit, however, you need to fully understand it. This letter explains what you must do to ensure you can attend graduate school when the time is right.

Your first step should be to review the benefits of the CSP Graduate School Option. As you consider exercising your graduate school option, start by reviewing your CSP contract. Next, spend some time on the CSP website at www.career-satisfaction.army.mil, where you'll find the latest program information and requirements, as well as contact information for professionals who can answer your questions. Simply put, the CSP Graduate School Option is a great way to obtain a graduate degree – no other Army or private sector educational opportunity comes close. Your CSP contract *guarantees* you the chance to:

- a. Choose from among the best graduate schools in the country.
- b. Choose from *over 210* approved disciplines of study in which to earn your degree (the number of approved disciplines grows continuously, so if you don't see one that you're interested in, ask about it).
- c. Continue your Army career while attending graduate school. You receive full pay, BAH, BAS, medical and dental coverage, and your two years of study count toward retirement.
- d. Become a full-time member of your university community (you attend in civilian clothes).
- e. Get in the best shape of your life - maintain Army weight and fitness standards on *your* time.
- f. Exercise the transferability option under the Post 9/11 GI Bill and give these valuable college benefits to your family members (as you will already have a debt-free master's degree)
- g. Return to your branch with no "post-degree utilization tour" – compete for the jobs *you* want

If you plan to take advantage of your option you must prepare yourself for graduate school. While the Army will fund your graduate program, *the responsibility for gaining admission to a graduate program of study is yours*. Therefore, it's important that you begin the process early. I strongly recommend that you prepare for and take any graduate school pre-qualification exams (GMAT, GRE etc.) *at least one year prior* to the summer you would be entering graduate school. Doing so ensures your scores will be available to prospective academic institutions in their winter application window. If you've previously taken these exams, remember that scores remain valid for only 5 years from the test date.

Your final step is to coordinate with your Human Resources Command assignment officer. As you make plans to exercise your graduate school option, *make coordination of your efforts with your assignments officer a top priority*. He or she will help you to incorporate graduate school into your unique Army career path. They will also ensure assignment instructions and orders are issued on your behalf. They can't help you if you don't reach out to them, however. *Remember - be proactive*. Pick up the phone, send an email, and *make coordination early*. Failing to do so could delay your graduate school attendance.

Graduate school represents a tremendous leap in your personal development. It demonstrates a commitment to learning that will serve you well in your Army career and beyond. If you have any questions you can find contact information for several professionals who can answer your questions in the Points of Contact tab on the CSP website.