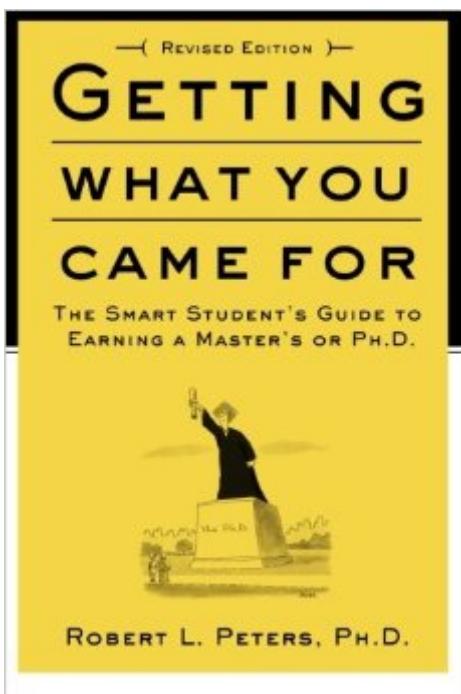


The book was found

Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide To Earning An M.A. Or A Ph.D.



Synopsis

Is graduate school right for you? Should you get a master's or a Ph.D.? How can you choose the best possible school? This classic guide helps students answer these vital questions and much more. It will also help graduate students finish in less time, for less money, and with less trouble. Based on interviews with career counselors, graduate students, and professors, *Getting What You Came For* is packed with real-life experiences. It has all the advice a student will need not only to survive but to thrive in graduate school, including: instructions on applying to school and for financial aid; how to excel on qualifying exams; how to manage academic politicsâ •including hostile professors; and how to write and defend a top-notch thesis. Most important, it shows you how to land a job when you graduate.

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Customer Reviews

As a college professor, I am always on the lookout for a good source to help undergraduates who are contemplating getting a Ph.D. as well as to help graduate students succeed in their Ph.D. program. This book is one of the best in this genre I have come across. Although the author is a biologist, it is clear he has done his homework on other disciplines, and his advice is useful for graduate students in any field. One of the most impressive features of the book is its comprehensive coverage. From improving one's credentials to get into a graduate program to getting a job once you have the Ph.D., Peters has detailed, entertaining advice for all the steps one encounters along the way. Liberally sprinkled through the book are anecdotes from students in a variety of fields that will leave most of us thankful that we did not have the Ph.D. advisors these poor hapless souls did.

Indeed, there were only two aspects I wish the book would have covered but it did not. First, there is no mention of handling coursework in a graduate program. This is probably because coursework and course grades are of much lower priority in graduate school than it is for the undergraduate degree, but I think Peters could have made this point and encouraged readers not to fall into the trap of spending more time on coursework than is warranted. Second, I wish Peters had devoted more space to talking about getting academic jobs. College-level teaching is still the single most popular career goal for Ph.D.'s, and there are aspects of getting an academic job that are different than applying for jobs in the private sector. I wish he had written a separate chapter on academic jobs. In a related vein, there was only one piece of advice that Peters give that I flat-out disagreed with, and that was his comment that teaching wastes time and that Ph.D. students should avoid teaching as much as possible. This is true for many Ph.D. students, but it is definitely NOT true for Ph.D. students desiring teaching jobs at 4-year, liberal arts colleges. Those jobs will want to see ample teaching experience, not just as a teaching assistant but also as sole instructor of a course. A student who does not have considerable teaching experience will not be competitive for those jobs, and because there are more of those jobs available than tenure track lines at research universities, taking Peters' advice on that score could be ultimately self-defeating. However, those are the only negative comments I would make on an otherwise excellent book. I recommend it highly for anybody even contemplating going on beyond an undergraduate degree, and I plan to give copies of it to all my incoming graduate students.

I bought this book in 1997 before starting a masters program. I had a JD and thought that getting a masters would be a piece of cake. Was I wrong! However, at least with Dr. Peters' book in hand, I knew what to look out for, what to concentrate on, and what not to spend my time worrying over. Like an idiot, I tossed the book when I finished my masters program because I thought I'd gotten 'what I came for.' Now I'm applying to Ph.D. programs and knew that this was the ONE book I had to have before starting on this journey. My thoughts were borne out when a respected professor friend recommended the book. When I said I'd not only read it, but had just bought my SECOND copy, I knew from his face that he knew I was serious. Getting What You Came For offers a great service. I thought I knew about academia, but again, the law school experience is not the graduate school experience. Because of Dr. Peters' advice, I made a point of getting out of my intellectual shell and worked on developing a true network of colleagues. Two years out of a rigorous masters program, I continue to be in contact with a large number of classmates and professors - professors who know me, are supporting me in my Ph.D. applications, and who have developed into real

friends. This book isn't supposed to be read in one sitting and not every section will be applicable to every reader. Some sections are more helpful once you're in school, as opposed to the applications process, some are more helpful to doctoral students. However, much of the book is applicable to most people. There are sections on issues relevant to minority, women, international, and mature students. Most guides assume the reader is a 28 year old white American male. If you don't fit this profile, your experience will be different. Dr. Peters addresses these differences well. If you are applying to doctoral programs, most of the book will apply to you. If you are in a program, you will return to Dr. Peters' book often for its advice on time management, thesis writing, dealing with faculty, and employment when it's all over. I recommend this book highly to anyone considering graduate school. If you are already in a school, you should still buy it - you will get helpful insights that you can use throughout your academic career.

Are you planning to go to graduate school? If you are, this is a necessary guide which gives you all the basics--from applying to graduation and beyond. One of the most important points is that you have to prepare for graduate school early. Don't wait until after you're accepted to choose your advisor. You shouldn't even apply until after you select your advisor. This point of advice saves a lot of heartache later on, because having a good relationship with your advisor is one of the single most important things in graduate school. If you have a suitable advisor, graduate school will go more smoothly. Another thing I like is that it doesn't try to sugarcoat the graduate school experience. It tells you exactly that graduate school is a rough experience and that out of all the people who enter graduate programs, only 8% go on to academic work. If you can't face these facts, then you probably aren't driven enough to succeed in a graduate program. If you're still burning for higher education and are willing to face the difficulties involved, you're ready for graduate school. Basically you should go in with both eyes open. I recommend picking up this guide to help you through your postgraduate life.

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