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Are you attending graduate school for all the right reasons? According to idealist.org, a graduate degree is necessary for four reasons. For seniors debating their next step, here is some food for thought to make sure you are making the right decision...for the right reason.

1. Necessary for your desired professional field

Not all professions require a master's degree for entry-level positions. This doesn't mean it would not be beneficial at some point, but may not be an immediate necessity. "In terms of one's concentration requiring that you go to graduate school, I believe that the more practical tracks, such as corporate and organizational and public relations probably have more jobs available with an undergraduate, while the more theoretical tracks don't," says Dr. Zamanou-Erickson, associate professor. This could be a financial plus for students following the corporate and organizational and public relations track, since a lot of employers will pay for their employees to go back to school. It is a win for everyone; a secure job and getting paid to go back to school.

2. Necessary to improve your career

In most careers, a master's degree is pertinent to land a top managerial position. Although a bachelor's degree may allow students to pursue starter positions, they will most likely not move forward unless they have a master's degree.

3. Necessary to increase your options and professional prospects

Though a bachelor's degree used to be sufficient for most desired careers, a master's degree is turning into the new bachelor's degree. By earning a master's degree you have more flexibility and are able to move into different sectors of the industry. Also, if you want to completely change your career path – it's that graduate degree that gives you that ability to move around more.

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4. Necessary to satisfy your intellectual curiosity and spark passion

“Sometimes people want to delay looking for a job because of anxiety or other feelings of insecurity maybe, and that's not a good reason for coming to graduate school, says Dr. Min Liu, associate professor. Graduate school should be looked at as an investment more than a requirement. In my opinion, graduate school is best if it is used to acquire more passion.

Hopefully you are going to graduate school to find the passion within to progress in your career, instead of going to postpone what awaits you in the “real world.” This way when you are graduating, you will have more excitement and motivation to start the career you have come to know and love.

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