

Episode 63 – Bonus Episode! Suspended and Discontinued Graduate Programs for 2026-27

Welcome to this special bonus episode of Grad-post! I'm your host, Brian S. Mitchell, and I'd like to give a shout out to my friends and colleagues at the CGS Summer Workshop in Chicago this week. I thought I'd update on a topic that might be of interest to you while simultaneously looking back at the past year while looking ahead to the start of a new academic year in just a few weeks. A number of graduate degree programs have either been discontinued or have suspended admissions for 2026-27, and I have some statistics for you.

Before I launch into the numbers, let me preface the conversation by saying that graduate programs are launched, terminated, and suspended for a variety of reasons, and that this programmatic churn is neither new nor necessarily unwanted. Disciplines evolve as does the workplace for trainees, so it's natural that faculty will voluntarily self-evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and implement updates and changes. For example, The Ohio State University went through a systematic, faculty-driven [review of all their doctoral programs in 2008](#), and like most institutions has implemented a system of periodic review since that time. But some change is forced upon the faculty. At my former institution, I was responsible for overseeing the phase out of [fully one third of our doctoral programs](#) as the result of financial exigency, followed by the opening of [six new interdisciplinary PhD programs](#) some twenty years ago. Regardless of the reasons, such upheaval is difficult and stressful, especially for the graduate students enrolled in the programs or those who had planned to enroll.

There are additional forces at play this year, however, as I outlined in previous episodes, like reduced or terminated federal research funding in STEM and the health sciences, the planned phase out of federal funding in the arts and humanities, immigration policy changes that will impact international graduate student enrollments, and now changes to federal loan limits and repayment plans for graduate and professional students. I predicted that these factors will have negative consequences for graduate program enrollments and degree production, so let's see what's happening in the early stages of these changes.

My most recent AI-initiated search using Claude – supplemented with my own searches - pulled up over 65 master's and doctoral programs that have announced either suspended admissions or discontinuation of graduate programs for the 2026-27 academic year. Most of those programs are doctoral programs, and most are pausing admissions as opposed to completely closing the program. Notable university-wide pauses include 13 programs at the University of Chicago, mostly in the division of arts and humanities; eight programs at Michigan State University, again mostly in arts and letters; five programs at George Washington University; six programs at Boston University that are a continuation of suspended admissions from 2025; six programs at Brown University; seven at the University of Washington; four master's programs at East Carolina University; and selected programs at places like Harvard, the University of California system, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Cornell, Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, just to sample the map. The humanities and social sciences are being hit particularly hard, with history and anthropology taking the brunt of pauses to admissions.

I really think 66 programs I found is an underestimate, though. Many institutions and programs suspend admissions without making formal announcements, and master's programs get much less press

coverage than do doctoral programs. Suspension of master's programs at smaller colleges, for example, may go completely unnoticed outside the immediate area. It's also likely that some programs that suspended admissions for Fall 2026 enrollment have since reinstated admissions for the 2027-28 cycle which will begin later this year, so that they did not come up in my search as of just last month. Just out of curiosity, I compared my list against what [students were reporting on Reddit](#) and it appears pretty comparable, at least for doctoral programs.

So as not to come across overly negative about these changes, there are also new programs being added for the 2026-27 academic year. I highlighted [five of these programs in Episode 55](#), and also ran an AI-generated list that I cross-checked and confirmed on my own. There are about 13 new graduate programs that were readily accessible, mostly at the master's level and mostly in technical fields like quantum science and artificial intelligence. Again, there are probably more that simply didn't get picked up in the web-based search. On that note and as a research aside, I found that Claude did a much better job at finding new and discontinued programs than ChatGPT. The format of the results was much better, too. I wasn't using the latest and greatest versions of either algorithm, so take that for what it is worth – free.

AI only finds what's findable. I'd like to keep this list updated as a service to the community, so if you are a university official with access to graduate admissions information and know of any proposed changes or additions to this list, please let me know. You know how to find me.

Thank you for joining me today. I hope you enjoy the Summer Workshop if you are attending. I miss ya'll! Look for the first official episode of Season 4 in early September. Enjoy the rest of your summer and make every degree – both temperature and academic - count!

Links

<https://www-chronicle-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/article/ohio-state-gets-jump-on-doctoral-evaluations/>
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