

Applying to Graduate School Timeline



Freshman-Sophomore Year

- Engage in career explorations activities to identify potential career paths and build your resume
- If you are pursuing areas like law or medicine, identify typical prerequisite courses needed for grad school

Junior Year: Fall

- Decide on the type of graduate program that is consistent with your career goals
- Create a list of your top 5-10 values and criteria and then identify 10-15 prospective grad schools that match your needs
- Contact each prospective grad school and request course catalogs, applications, financial aid info, etc
- Inquire about pre-requisite courses and minimum admissions requirements

Junior Year: Spring and Summer

- Determine which standardized tests are required for your program of interest; enroll in a test prep program if necessary
- Sign up for entrance exams required by your program of choice
- If the program uses a clearinghouse (law or medicine), begin gathering the information required by that clearinghouse
- Begin looking into financial aid options such as loans, scholarships, fellowships and graduate assistantships
- Identify letters of recommendation
- Start saving funds for application fees, campus visits, etc
- Update resume and begin writing a rough draft of your personal statement or essay

Senior Year: Fall

- Take entrance exams, if you haven't already done so
- Initiate an exploratory discussion with the department chair-person or a faculty member at your top choices
- Generate a final list of universities to which you want to apply
- Finalize versions of your personal statement and resume; have it proofed by 3 different people
- Order transcripts from all of your post-secondary institutions
- Give recommenders information about your reasons for attending graduate school, deadlines, etc.
- Complete application forms and mail them well before the deadline; make copies of each before sending
- Apply for grants, fellowships and assistantships
- Fill out the FAFSA as close to January 1st as possible to qualify for federal aid

Senior Year: Spring

- Prepare for possible interviews; conduct a mock interview at the Career Center
- Contact schools about scheduling visits
- Assess your financial aid package; if it doesn't meet your needs, apply for alternative options
- Make a decision and pay your deposit; call other programs to decline their offer or withdraw your application
- Write thank you letters

Once You are Accepted

- If you applied as an undergraduate, submit a final transcript as soon as your degree is conferred
- Get the required immunizations if necessary
- Finalize your financial aid
- Check all forms of communication, including your new university address, for updates and program requirements