



Timetable for Applying for Grad School

Schools vary in their application deadlines often depending on how competitive the program. (Common deadlines are often Jan. 15th, March 1st, or June 1st). However, some programs such as medical or veterinary medicine have deadlines much earlier. When in doubt, check the application deadline dates for the programs you are interested in. This timetable is approximate but offers steps that you need to think about, no later than the summer before your senior year. It is a good idea to start sooner if possible! Several schools have rolling admissions, meaning that applications are evaluated as they arrive instead of all at one time after the final deadline.

On-line resource: <https://www.gradschools.com/get-informed/applying-graduate-school>

May

- Begin researching grad schools. Take a GRE practice test. Your test GRE score will help you determine how much preparation you'll need.

June

- Sign up for a GRE test prep course (we recommend the in-person or online options). Register for the GRE general test.

Summer

- Write a draft statement of purpose/personal statement. (Check out Career Services library resources: "How to Write a Winning Personal Statement" or "Graduate Admissions Essays – What Works, What Doesn't, and Why".
- Start browsing through grad school websites and literature.

August-September

- Meet with faculty members that you know to discuss your personal statement and learn about possible programs.
- Begin to develop your personal timeline for the application process.
- Ask for letters of recommendation.
- Take the GRE general test. If you're not happy with your scores, sign up to take it again.
- Finalize your list of prospective schools, and familiarize yourself with the professors who share your research interests at each school. Contact your recommenders. Keep polishing your statement of purpose.

October

- Determine the schools to which you plan to apply and request application materials.
- Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools. Arrange a campus visit if you can.
- Finish your timeline based on each institution's deadline and financial aid deadlines.
- Complete your personal statement, adjusting it to meet each applications specific needs.
- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions.

November

- Complete application forms (First, do a draft on a photocopy of the form).
- Give your recommenders all the information that they will need to write recommendations for you for each of your application schools. (For example: a resume would be helpful).

December/January

- Mail applications, keeping copies of every section for your records. Even if deadlines are later, it is good to get the applications in early.
- Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

February

- Continue to make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools. Arrange a campus visit if you can. Take a look at the type of places you could live while in grad school. Are they in areas of town that you can afford? Will you have easy access to classes?
- Many schools send out the first wave of acceptance letters in mid-February, and the rejection of applications in March. This is not always the case, but it is a general rule of thumb.

Spring

- Continue to look for housing in the cities / towns where you applied for grad school.
- It is time to determine if you have the funding – either through scholarships, financial aid, or paying on your own – to complete grad school. Be knowledgeable what your financial needs are before getting swept up in the excitement of hearing back from the school(s).

March / April

- Still waiting to hear? This is not unusual. It is not unheard of to hear from a school on the deadline date.
- If you are applying for need based financial aid programs, you may have to file a copy of your federal income tax return.
- Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. For many schools, April 15 is Grad School Resolution day. Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15. (Council of Graduate Schools - <http://cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution>)