

## GRADUATE SCHOOL PLANNING TIMELINE

Applying to graduate school is a major project. Like any other project, it benefits from effective time-management, serious research, and the prudent allocation of resources (including financial resources). The application process requires skills in goal-setting and decision-making, and the need for periodic evaluation.

Every applicant should identify a range of program choices based on several levels of likelihood of acceptance, including a 'dream' school, several reasonable mid-range choices, and a few fallback schools.

### Before Junior Year

- Conduct basic research. Contact schools that you feel may be options. Review program requirements.
- Work on strengthening your gpa and on scheduling the courses recommended or required for admission.

### Junior Year – Fall or Spring

- Research areas of interest, institutions and programs.
- Get to know your professors better. Take advantage of their expertise.
- The better your key professors know you, the more effective their recommendation letters will be.
- Discuss application requirements with your academic advisor.
- Request information about graduate admission tests for your field, and register for the exam.
- Decide whether to take exams during the spring or summer of junior year, or fall of senior year.
- Create a schedule of time dedicated practicing for them – and stick to it.

### Junior Year – Summer

- Write for application materials, school catalogs and financial aid information.
- If possible, visit institutions of interest.
- Check on application deadlines; save money for application fees – they really add up.
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, veterinary, or law school you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service many programs use.

### Senior Year – Fall

- Create a chart to track the details and deadlines for each program.
- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Register for fall graduate admission tests.
- Apply for early for assistantships, fellowships, grants.
- Schedule your time prudently to prevent “grad school essay writing stress”!
- Mail completed applications. Ten days later, check to ensure receipt.
- Register for the Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service if required.
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation mailed, and check for receipt by your programs.
- Make plans to visit top choice institutions during winter break. Schedule meetings with faculty, students.

### Senior Year – Spring

- Check with institutions before the deadline to ensure your file is complete.
- Evaluate offers of admission based on several criteria, and make your decision.
- Send a deposit to secure your place at the program you plan to attend.
- Notify other institutions of your decision to accept an offer from the school you plan to attend.
- Send thank you follow-ups to those who wrote your recommendations, informing them of your success.
- Upon graduation, forward an updated transcript to the institution you will attend.