



## Timeline for Graduate School Application

This timeline is intended to help you in your planning. You will want to adapt this to your personal situation. Generally, it is recommended that you begin preparing to apply at least a year before you enter a graduate program. Most graduate schools start in the fall with application deadlines occurring in January and February of that year.

For individual guidance, please talk to your professors and visit the Office of Career Services.

### **April – August before Senior Year – Research and Decide**

- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs and talk with faculty members and/or make an appointment to talk with a career counselor at 304-766-3250.
- Decide on a program of study that matches your career goals and personal circumstance.
- Identify appropriate schools. Use Peterson's Guide to Graduate Programs. ([www.petersons.com/](http://www.petersons.com/)) and or other similar sites. If you are looking for programs outside the U.S., you might want to start your research with the Study Abroad Programs resource. ([www.studyabroad.com/](http://www.studyabroad.com/)). Make sure you pay attention to application deadlines and fees for each of your schools of choice.
- Check out websites of schools you have selected; contact both the Admissions office as well as the specific department which has your program of study to obtain relevant literature.
- Sign up for the entrance exam that is required for your program of choice. Some of the exams are as follows: GRE – [www.gre.org/](http://www.gre.org/) GMAT- [www.gmac.com/](http://www.gmac.com/) and LSAT – [www.lsac.org/](http://www.lsac.org/). For test prep information see Kaplan Test Prep – [www.kaptest.com/](http://www.kaptest.com/) .
- Please note that some professional programs use a clearinghouse for applications such as law and medicine so you will need to gather the information required by that clearinghouse.
- Talk with institutions about financial aid, graduate assistantships and fellowships.
- Schedule a time to talk with Department Chairs of the schools of choice about the program and specialties and areas of research of faculty members.

### **August - October – Prepare Application Materials**

- Secure application materials.
- Begin writing a rough draft of your application essay and get feedback from faculty members and/or a career counselor. Visit the writing center for additional assistance.
- Prepare and take entrance exams.
- Seek letters of recommendations; make sure you ask potential recommenders if they would be willing to write one on your behalf.

### **November – January – Finalize and Submit Application**

- Finalize your application essay/personal statement.
- Send thank you notes to people that wrote you recommendation letters.
- Order transcripts from all of your post-secondary institutions.
- Complete application forms.
- Complete the FAFSA and Financial Aid Profile, if required.
- Submit all materials and application fees.

**February - March – Explore Options**

- Plan a visit to schools on your final list. Meet with faculty and current students. These visits can help you in the decision making process and may increase your chances of being admitted into the program.

**April – May – Decision Time**

- You should start to receive admission offers around April.
- Assess your financial aid package. If it doesn't quite meet your needs, look into alternative loans.
- Make a decision and notify other schools that accepted you of your decision.