

Applying to graduate school

Choosing to attend graduate school as part of your career path is a complex process. First, determine if graduate school is right for you at this time or in the future. Once you've determine the timeline, begin to research and choose the best program for your needs, and prepare to submit a strong graduate program application.

Is graduate school right for me?

Things to consider

- What type of graduate or professional program do you want to pursue?
- How do you envision that this program will help you progress in your professional goals?
- How do you envision that this program will help you progress in your personal or educational goals?
- When would you like to start a graduate program?
- What are the pros and cons of starting a graduate program right after finishing your undergraduate degree versus applying after obtaining professional experience?

I'm ready, now what?

Research a range of programs

- Review a list of schools and programs in your academic area. Use the Graduate School Comparison worksheet to identify aspects of each program that are a priority for you.
- What are five more schools that are still attractive, even though they are not your highest priority? What is appealing about these schools?
- Research and connect with professors who teach within the program. Does their research align with your passion of what you want to study?
- Does your program have a campus tour or an info session you can attend to ask questions and learn more about the institution and program?

Consider your strengths as an applicant

- What are your strongest assets as an applicant? Consider factors such as academics, previous employment, standardized tests, and extra-curricular involvement.
- What are your potential weaknesses as an applicant and how can you improve in these areas through the program?

Prepare your applications

- Identify when your applications are due and create a timeline to give yourself ample time to complete your application, schedule and complete standardized exams, and request letters of recommendation.
- When are you going to take your graduate admission exam for your chosen program? Some exams, can be taken any time, but there are some that are only offered at certain times during the year. (GRE, GMAT and LSAT).
- Plan to communicate with your recommenders two months before your applications are due. This allows you both to reconnect and discuss your plans for graduate school. It also provides them with plenty of time to write a quality letter.
- Make sure that you are looking through all the requirements for the application process. Graduate programs might have different steps and requirements ranging from essay questions, interviews, and a range of prerequisite courses.
- What costs are associated? Application fees, shipping costs, and travel expenses should be taken into consideration. Do you need to apply for scholarships or grants to off-set the cost of applying?

Helpful resources

US News Graduate School Rankings
[usnews.com/nest-graduate-schools](https://www.usnews.com/nest-graduate-schools)

Petersons Guide to Graduate Schools
[petersons.com/graduate-schools](https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid
fafsa.ed.gov

The Princeton Review Test Prep Courses
[princetonreview.com/partner/asu](https://www.princetonreview.com/partner/asu)

Graduate Admission Service
gograd@asu.edu

Graduate admission application timeline

Sophomore year

fall, spring and summer

- Meet with your academic advisor to discuss graduate school
- Explore areas of interest
- Research programs through the Princeton review
- Request faculty research listings

Junior year

fall and spring

- Gather information regarding specific admission requirements (letters of recommendation, required tests, acceptable scores, portfolio, etc.)
- Consider storing this information in the 'Grad school comparison worksheet' to easily compare and contrast institutions
- Search for sources of financial aid
- Read various faculty research publications and email key faculty to let them know of your interest
- Apply for junior summer research fellowships and campus mentor programs
- Take practice GRE/Subject GRE/GMAT/LSAT, etc.

Junior year

summer

- Take the General GRE/Subject GRE/GMAT/LSAT, etc.
- Request and review university application materials and inquire about required supporting documentation (transcripts, academic plans, letters of recommendation, etc.)
- Check on admission application deadlines
- Participate in summer research fellowships or study abroad begin working on essays and personal statements, if necessary
- Begin working on essays and personal statements, if necessary
- Obtain letters of recommendation, if necessary (try to get them before the fall semester)

Senior year

fall

- Complete online application
- Apply for departmental financial aid
- Continue correspondence with key faculty
- Check status of your application routinely on the university website to ensure your application is complete
- Contact current graduate students at the university through the ASU Mentor Network and LinkedIn

Senior year

spring

- Order an official copy of your final transcript (with degree awarded) for your personal file
- Fill out and submit a FAFSA: fafsa.gov
- Apply for external financial aid
- Schedule a campus visit
- Send thank you notes to recommenders and notify them of your enrollment in graduate school

