

# Graduate School Search

**Research graduate programs in your field of interest.** A few places to begin your search:

- **Peterson's.com**: This is a good tool for exploratory searching. Scroll down the home page to 'Find a Grad School' and **type in your field of interest** (e.g. criminal justice, civil engineering) **or click on 'Get Matched.'** Once you find programs in your area of study, go to each program's web page.
- **Google Advanced Search**: **Type in the name of a degree program** (e.g. Master's Degree in Forensic Psychology or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) **in the "all these words" box; type .edu in the "site or domain" box.** This will bring up search results for graduate programs in your field of study.
- Check out the websites of **professional/scholarly associations** in your field of study. Consider joining as a student member (cheaper membership fees and scholarship perks!). Some examples include:

## **Healthcare and Public Health**

American Physical Therapy Association  
American Academy of Physician Assistants  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Public Health Association  
Association of University Programs in Health Administration  
National Student Nurses Association  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

## **Law Enforcement & Legal Studies**

American Criminal Justice Association  
International Association for Identification  
National Criminal Intelligence Resource Center  
American Bar Association  
Law School Admissions Council

## **Veterinary Medicine**

American Veterinary Medical Association  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

## **Engineering**

American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Society for Engineering Education  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers  
Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers  
National Society of Professional Engineers  
Society of Women Engineers

## **Human Services, Psychology, Social Work**

American Psychological Association  
National Organization for Human Services  
National Association of Social Workers

## **Management and Finance**

Academy of Management  
Financial Management Association International  
The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

**Once you locate a few programs, do some research and answer the following questions:**

- Program Name/Area of Study:
- Where is the program located? Can you see yourself living there?
- What are the program's admission requirements (i.e. application, college GPA, GRE scores, resume, statement of purpose, faculty recommendations)? How does the program evaluate applicants?
- Does the program offer funding/financial assistance? If so, what types of funding are offered (i.e. tuition waivers, fellowships, scholarships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships)?
- Browse through the program's faculty profiles. Can you see yourself working with one or more faculty members in this program?
- Does the program web page offer graduate student profiles? If so, does it highlight student experiences?
- Does the web page provide employment information for graduates of the program?
- If you are working, will your employer sponsor or pay for graduate courses at this institution?

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## Graduate School Search

### Schedule an appointment with your faculty advisor. Ask the following questions:

- Why did you decide to pursue a master's degree or a PhD?
- Did you work full-time while pursuing graduate study? If so, did your employer help fund your studies?
- Did you pursue graduate work immediately after college? Why or why not?
- What did you find most rewarding and challenging about your graduate work?
- What advice can you offer a student who is considering graduate study?

### When you're ready, craft an email to graduate advisors in your programs of interest. Example email:

Dear:

I am a **[class year]** at SUNY Canton, majoring in **[name of major(s)]**. After researching graduate programs in my field, my search has led me to **[name of university and graduate program]**.

My plan is to pursue graduate study in **[field of study]**, with a focus on **[area of interest]**. During my time at SUNY Canton, I have had the opportunity to **[work/intern/conduct research/shadow]** in this field.

I look forward to corresponding with you about my graduate school plans. I have explored your department's graduate school website in detail, and it seems like an excellent fit for me because of its emphasis on **[internships, research, etc. opportunities for graduate students]**, but I still have a few specific questions about **[internships available, research opportunities available, the job placement rate for graduates in the program, whether the department is accepting graduate students, etc.]**.

I understand you are very busy, and I appreciate any time you can give. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
SUNY Canton, Class of **[year]**

# Graduate School Planning Timeline

## First Year – Junior Year

- Explore your career options. Talk to your faculty advisors and Career Services staff. Explore your career interests using **FOCUS 2 Career**, the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** and **O-Net**. Do you need a graduate degree (master's degree, JD, DVM, DPT, PhD, etc.) to achieve your career goals in a particular field? Will a graduate degree give you more flexibility/opportunities for advancement in your profession?
- Focus on your grades, take challenging courses, and build experience for your resume. Most grad programs have a **minimum 3.0 GPA admission standard** and look for **high achieving, well-rounded students**.

## Junior Year – Summer before Senior Year

- Study for grad school admissions tests and take practice exams. It's a good idea to take these exams (i.e. GRE, GMAT, LSAT) in the summer before your senior year. Once the fall semester begins, you'll be busy with classes and graduate school applications. Taking admissions tests in the summer will make life easier. Check out the following resources:
  - Educational Testing Services:** [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre): download the **PowerPrep** software for free practice tests.
  - Magoosh.com** – free flashcards, study guides, and downloadable smart phone apps
  - Majortests.com** – free verbal and quantitative reasoning prep
  - Freerice.com** – a unique way to practice vocabulary
  - LSAT Test prep/sample questions** – from the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)

**\*\*Talk to SUNY Canton's Financial Aid Office to see if you qualify for a GRE fee reduction waiver.**

- Research graduate program options. Visit the web sites of different programs. Depending on your field of interest, consider creating accounts on the following sites:
  - Princeton Review**
  - Law School Admissions Council**
  - Peterson's Graduate Schools**
  - Pathways to Science**
- Research graduate fellowships and other forms of financial aid:
  - Cornell University Fellowship Database**
  - Grad School Heaven**
  - UCLA Graduate Fellowship Search**
  - National GEM Consortium Fellowships**
  - National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship**
  - SUNY Graduate Opportunity Program (\*\*for EOP students\*\*)**

## Senior Year: September – October

- Email graduate admissions representatives and faculty in your programs of interest. In your email, be sure to ask specific questions about the program.
- Don't put all of your eggs into one basket/one dream school. Be strategic – narrow your graduate school list to **6-8 programs**. Compile application information and requirements for each program in a binder or Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.
- Make an appointment with Career Services to revise your **resume/CV** and draft your **personal statement/statement of professional goals** (guidelines will vary depending on the program).
- Complete your FAFSA Financial Aid form in early October!
- Talk to your faculty about writing letters of recommendation. Ask faculty who know you well and who will say good things about you! You'll need at least 3 letters. Send them finalized copies of your resume/CV and personal statement and provide specific program information and deadlines.

# Graduate School Planning Timeline

## Senior Year: November

- If necessary, re-take graduate admissions tests (i.e. GRE, GMAT, LSAT) no later than Thanksgiving break. \*Note: Test scores are only good for a limited period of time. For instance, GRE and LSAT scores are valid for 5 years.
- Complete application forms and request transcripts from the Registrar's Office.
- Give your recommenders early deadlines and provide them with the specific name of the university, program and department, as well as mailing information. Some programs will email forms directly to your recommenders.
- Find out if programs offer application fee waivers for students with financial needs (EOP and CSTEP students should check on this!)
- Be sure to have your advisors and/or Career Services staff review your applications before you submit them.

## Senior Year: December-January

- **Ideal goal:** submit your applications before the winter break. Why? Many application deadlines are early December to mid-January (and sometimes earlier, especially for medical and vet. programs!). ***The earlier you submit, the better your chances for graduate funding opportunities.***
- Once your applications are submitted, touch base with graduate department administrators at each school to ensure they've received your application, test scores, transcripts, recommendations, and other required documents.

## Senior Year: Spring Semester

- Check your email and snail mail! Admissions notifications and financial aid/funding packages will begin to arrive.
- Talk to your advisor and Career Services staff. Decide which program is the best fit for you.
- Consider location, cost, time to complete program, etc. when making your decision.
- Research housing, transportation, and the cost of living in the area in which your grad program is located. Check out this **Cost of Living Calculator** from Bankrate.com.
- Once you commit to a program, let other programs know that you'll be declining their offers. Be professional!

## Other items to consider:

- If you don't receive funding through a scholarship, fellowship or graduate assistantship, is it worth taking out student loans to pay for graduate school? Consider this very carefully, especially if you already have undergraduate student loans/debt.
- If you are already in the workforce or don't want to pursue graduate school full-time, would your employer be willing to fund some of your graduate studies? For example, employees of the Associated Colleges (SUNY Canton, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson University) can apply for tuition benefits if taking graduate courses at one of these colleges. Ask your employer if they would be willing to provide support for your graduate studies and invest in your professional development.
- Don't pursue graduate school simply because you want to delay working/are unsure of what to do. It's a huge personal and financial commitment! It's okay to spend some time in the work force and gain professional experience. Make an appointment with Career Services if you need help exploring your options.

**Please, note: This document is meant to provide a general overview of the timeline for applying to graduate programs. It is important to do your own research and note specific deadlines and application details for each graduate program of interest.**

**Source: Purdue University Timeline for Applying to Graduate School.**

<https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/documents/admissions/prospective/timeline-for-web.pdf>