

Grad School Checklist & Timeline

Considering Grad School?

- Career Goals:** Do you have defined career goals? Is grad school required to meet those goals?
- Experience:** Have you completed an internship or worked in your chosen field?
- Employability:** Does having a graduate degree affect employability in the occupation you desire?
- Preparation:** Have you met all of the prerequisites required (GPA, major, courses taken, etc.)? Are you ready for another 1-5 years of school, homework, deadlines, etc.?
- Cost:** Can you afford the academic and personal expenses of another degree, including deferring a full-time income for another 1-5 years?

Finding the Right Program

- Research**
 - Petersons.com
 - Gradschools.com
- Considerations**
 - Majors and concentrations available
 - Size of the school
 - Location of the school
 - Cost of the program
 - Assistantships or fellowships available
 - Duration of the program
 - Faculty:student ratio
 - Faculty background/expertise/research
 - Experiential learning opportunities
 - Placement rate of graduates

Applying to Grad School

- Application forms:** follow directions *exactly*
- Resume:** get your resume reviewed by multiple people
- Letters of recommendation**
 - Will need 2 to 3 letters
 - Ask faculty members, advisors, employers, etc.
 - Inform each writer about the specific grad school program
 - Give each writer your resume
 - Remind each writer of your experience with him/her
 - Give them ample time to write the letter
 - Give specific directions on where to send the letter
 - Confidential vs. Non-confidential
- Entrance exams**
 - GRE: www.ets.org/gre/
 - GMAT: www.mba.com/mba/thegmat
 - LSAT: lsac.org/LSAT/TheLSAT-menu.asp
 - MCAT: aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm
- Official Academic transcript(s)**
 - Request one from each institution you have attended (if required)
 - To request Ithaca College transcript use HomerConnect or contact Registrar's Office
- Personal statement/statement of purpose**
 - If no instructions are given, write about your career goals, how that program will help you meet those goals, your enthusiasm/interest in the field you have chosen, and why you're a good fit for their program
 - Have the essay reviewed by faculty, advisors, Career Services, etc.

Financing Grad School

- Fellowships, grants, and scholarships:** check <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/#graduate>
- Assistantships**
 - Work for the college in exchange for tuition assistance, room, board, and/or a stipend
 - Typically a separate application process for these
 - If you cannot find info on each college's website, inquire about assistantships through admissions
- Work study:** some colleges have work study funding for graduate students
- Loans**

Applying for Grad School Timeline

Junior Year, Fall and Spring:

- Try to define your career goals and determine if grad school is required or beneficial in helping to meet those goals
- Research interest areas, institutions, and degree programs
- Get to know your professors and advisor
 - They are a great source of career-related information
 - You may need to ask them for a letter of recommendation later
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission test
 - You may choose to take your exam during the spring of your junior year through the fall of your senior year
 - Note that some exams are only offered certain times each year
- Investigate scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, and grants
- Speak with alumni, faculty, parents, and friends about their graduate experiences

Summer before Senior Year:

- Request applications and financial aid materials
- Visit institutions of interest if possible
- Narrow your list of schools
- Check application deadlines and rolling admission policies
- Study sample test questions for the appropriate entrance exam, enroll in a test prep course if needed
- Register for a summer or fall graduate admission test
- Begin writing your application essay (personal statement)
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application, or data assembly service most programs use

Senior Year, Fall:

- Obtain letters of recommendation
- Take graduate admission test (*if you have not already done so*)
- Send in completed application(s)
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation mailed
- Confirm that graduate programs have received all application materials
- Apply for assistantships, fellowships, grants, etc.
- Register for Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GPSFAS) if required
- Consider visiting select institutions during winter break

Senior Year, Spring:

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete
- Keep track of acceptances, waiting list placements, and rejections
- Visit institutions that accept you (if you haven't already)
- Evaluate all offers of admission and financial aid before making final decision
- Send deposit to institution of your choice
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success
- Upon graduation, forward an updated transcript to the institution you will attend in the fall