



Graduate School Application Timeline

Fall is graduate admissions time. It is important to know what action steps to take before that time and during your fall semester. By your junior year, you should be on your way to clarifying your future career goals and starting to make post-graduate plans. It is important to seek advice from your faculty advisor(s), other faculty members and staff at the Center for Career Development regarding various graduate programs in your field of study and how to best approach to applying to graduate school.

JUNIOR YEAR

- Research and review options for graduate programs in your field using faculty, career center staff, on-line sources, and guidebooks.
- Prioritize your interests, geographic location, and what type of degree you want to obtain. Determine costs involved in various programs and whether you will need financial assistance.
- Narrow your choices, review their application process and note their deadlines for application.
- Consider the standardized test required for each program, when and where they are given, and associated costs.

SUMMER (prior to your senior year)

- Study for several weeks, or months in many cases, prior to taking the entrance exam. Buy or check out from your local library or the WC Career Development library a test preparation book (i.e. Princeton Review, ETS, KAPLAN, Barron's). If possible, register for prep classes or set up a study regiment for you to study several hours a day. Take as many practice tests as possible.
- Begin preparing a statement of purpose/personal statement. This statement gives you the opportunity to tell the faculty in the program you are applying to why you are the right candidate for their program. Look at the particular requirements for each program.
- Research graduate fellowships, scholarships and assistantships to which you can apply so that you can prepare applications in time for early fall. The earlier you apply the more likely you will receive financial assistance; know the program's deadlines and apply well **before** that time.
- Make sure your undergraduate transcript is complete and accurate. Contact the Registrar's Office and request corrections if needed.

FALL SEMESTER (SENIOR YEAR)

- Decide who are going to be your recommenders. Formally request your recommendation either through writing or in person. Discuss your interests, strengths, and goals, review the school's requisites and deadlines. Notify your recommenders at least two weeks in advance of any application deadline to ensure the letters are mailed and processed in time. Let your advisor know that further confidential details are often required from the school.
- Polish your application essays and tailor your personal statement for each school as necessary. Utilize your resources such as professors and career services professional to give feedback on early drafts.
- Complete and submit applications with early deadlines or rolling admissions. Consider including in your list not only top colleges, but safety schools as well.
- Make sure you have completed your FAFSA form if you want to apply for need-based financial assistance. Merit-based financial awards are generally included in your letter of acceptance. The application for need-based aid may take longer to process.
- Request transcript at Registrar's office. Determine which programs need transcripts early (before fall grades are posted) and which would receive transcripts after fall grades are posted. Unofficial transcripts may suffice until official ones are available

SPRING SMESTER (SENIOR YEAR)

- You may begin to receive letters offering admission, a place on a waiting list, or politely denying your admission. Wait until you have heard from all programs before making you final decision.
- You may be invited to interviews at some of your schools. If an interview is optional, consider visiting to gain more information about the program and how well it meets your goals.
- If time permits, you may want to visit the schools that have offered admission, either to see them for the first time or to re-visit those that are on your very short list. If you do visit, plan ahead and make appointments with key individuals and prepare appropriate questions based on careful research.
- Generally, most students accept one of their offers by May 1st. By accepting an offer and paying a deposit, you are indicating that you have decided not to accept any other offers. Accepting more than one offer to keep your options open longer is not considered an ethical strategy.