

Example of a Timeline for Applying to Graduate School

June-July

- Study preparations for taking the GRE
- Register for the GRE General Test or Subject Specific Test
- Research specific areas of your field of interest

August

- Take the GRE General Test. If you are not satisfied with your scores, this gives you plenty of time to study some more and retake the test
- Continue preparing for Subject Specific Tests (if necessary)
- Begin your statement of purpose/letter of intent, which is a requirement for most graduate school applications
- Research specific schools that may suit you best in your specific interest
- Request further information from these schools
 - E-mail departments directly
- Consider catching up with old professors
 - They can provide good information about specific schools or programs
 - They can be great sources when it comes time for letters of recommendation
- Find out from professors if you can join or assist in research/lab teams or meetings

September

- Register for the November GRE Subject Test (if necessary).
- Continue preparing for the Subject Specific which are administered in paper/pencil three times a year: November, December, and April.
- Make contact with specific professors at the schools you think you may be interested in working with. You want them to remember you when your application lands on their desk!
 - Familiarize yourself with their work
 - Contact them; let them know of your interest in their work
 - Express any interest in potentially working with them
- Research any graduate assistantships, grants, or scholarships that the department or other sources may offer
- Continue polishing your statement of purpose/letter of intent

October

- Finalize your list of potential graduate schools
 - If possible, visit these schools of interest in person. It will leave a good impression with admissions faculty and gives you an opportunity to see if you like the *really* like the school.
- Continue to prepare for the Subject Specific Test (if you are taking one)
- Start filling out applications NOW!
 - Some schools will require you to complete the whole or partial application online
 - If a paper version is accessible, fill THAT out and send it in with your application packet. You cannot always trust that an electronic file has been sent correctly.
- Request official transcripts
 - PAY ATTENTION! Pay attention to where they should be sent. Some schools will require that an official transcript be sent to the department for selection purposes. Others may require official transcripts be sent to the graduate school.
- Prepare packets for your letter of recommendation writers. Include...
 - Statement of purpose/Letter of intent
 - Resume
 - Stamped and labeled envelopes addressed to the schools
 - Forms to be filled out by letter writers that specific schools require
 - Clarify which letters are to be sent out by the letter writer and which letters will be picked up by the student (to be mailed in with the application packet)
 - Check up on them regularly. Professors are busy. Don't let them forget about you!
- Get in touch with graduate students from your schools of interest. Get their take on what it is like. Admission committees may seek input from their current graduate students about prospective graduate students. It would be beneficial to have someone there put in a good word for you.

November

- Complete and finalize your personal statement/letter of intent
 - PROOFREAD!
 - HAVE SOMEONE PROOFREAD!
 - Personalize it to the different schools. Have the school name mentioned in your statement
- Take the GRE General Test and/or Subject Specific Test
 - Remember to have scores sent to all of the schools in which you are applying
- Make sure letters of recommendation have been sent and pick up any remaining ones

- Tie up any other loose ends.
- **NOTICE!!! IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO MAIL OUT YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKET AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE FORMAL DEADLINE. THIS GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK UP WITH THE SECRETARY TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED. IT ALSO GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO SEND IN ANY OUTSTANDING INFORMATION. DON'T LET ONE MISSING DOCUMENT RUIN YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING INTO THE SCHOOL OF YOUR DREAMS!**

December

- Complete and submit any remaining application packets
 - Keep two copies of every item for your records
 - Letter writers should have copies of your letter of recommendation

January...

- It's Financial Aid time!
 - Fill out the FAFSA online
 - Look into other sources of financial assistance

February until...

- The hard part is over with. Now it's time to try to relax and wait. It may be hard, but just try.

After months and months of waiting... YOU GET ACCEPTED!!!

- **Visit Career Services to...**
 - Get tips on how to have a successful interview
 - Practice your interviewing skills
 - Schedule a mock graduate school interview
- **Send thank you letter or card to your letter of recommendation writers**
 - Even if you DO NOT get accepted into a graduate school, you should do this! Leave a good impression of yourself.
 - You may need them to write a letter for you in the future