

GRAD SCHOOL TIMELINE

DECIDE AT LEAST A YEAR IN ADVANCE: Graduate degrees provide access to many careers and allow students to gain post-baccalaureate knowledge about a specific discipline, specialization or industry. For example, teachers in New York must complete a Master's degree to become professionally certified; social workers must earn an MSW to practice; medical professionals must get licensed; academic faculty achieve access to tenure-track teaching through PhDs in their discipline. Other industries may encourage earning graduate degrees in order to advance. Not everyone goes to grad school immediately following undergrad or even full-time. You have options. Planning is key.

SPRING OF JUNIOR YEAR/EARLY FALL SENIOR YEAR: Your decision should be based on your career goals and the graduate school options available to you. Explore those options. Research programs online directly and talk to academic faculty and Career Services staff about possibilities.

- Is the program and/or institution accredited? For many professions that lead to credentialing or licensing, that is key.
- What do program graduates do? (If alumni positions don't interest you that may not be the school for you)
- What is the size, location, etc. of the school?
- What are the current research interests of the institution's faculty?
- Are assistantships, fellowships, and/or scholarships available?
- How are the majority of classes taught? Online or in-person? Hands-on or lecture?
- Any other questions important to YOU.

REQUIREMENTS: Know program *requirements* and know *prerequisites*. If hours of observation are required, be sure to complete them. If specific courses are required, do not apply until you have taken them. When in doubt, contact graduate admissions.

SUMMER OR EARLY FALL SENIOR YEAR:

TESTING: GREs, MCATs, LSATs, GMATs, and MATs are entrance tests that may be required by graduate schools. Although you cannot study for these tests *per se*, you can improve your ability to take them by understanding the types of questions. Some students find online study guides very helpful. It is recommended that you take your GREs in the summer before or early fall of your senior year. For education graduate programs, especially in NYS, the EdTPA or ATS-W may be accepted. Test information is available in Career Services.

NOVEMBER TO JANUARY SENIOR YEAR (OR EARLIER for programs in medicine/dentistry/PT/OT):

APPLICATIONS: The application process takes TIME. Typically applications involve the following:

- An online application. NOTE: Some programs have an application system specific to the institution, and other disciplines may have systems that reach multiple institutions, such as speech graduate programs (CSDCAS), occupational therapy (OTCAS), physical therapy (PTCAS), or medical doctor programs (AMCAS). Additionally, some of these professional programs will require supplemental application materials, e.g. a writing sample.
- A resume or CV. (*Remember that Career Services offers drop-in document review hours.)
- A personal statement or statement of interest personalized for each institution.*
- Letters of recommendation (faculty or professional).
- Pre-requisite forms.
- Transcripts from all institutions.
- Application fee.

COSTS: Applying can be expensive. Official transcripts, application fees and graduate testing fees can add up. Evaluate your schools to be certain that you meet the requirements. If you do so, your time and money will be well spent. If you are eligible (with high financial need status), some of the required tests (GREs, etc.) have waivers and some schools can waive application fees as well.

DEADLINES: Graduate admissions websites generally note application deadlines. They vary by discipline and school. Some schools have "rolling admissions" which means that they accept applications until the class is full. But remember, admissions personnel tell us they often consider early applications more favorably, simply because they have more time for review. Be timely.

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