

Applying for graduate school can be daunting and stressful. This general timeline is designed to help make the application process more manageable and to act as a guide throughout the entire application process. Remember to adjust your work to match where you are in the process of applications and deadlines.

12 Months Before Deadline: Research & Organization

- ❑ Research graduate programs and find the programs that are the best fit for you.
- ❑ Consider the following criteria when researching graduate schools:
 - Specific programs offered
 - Faculty teaching within the program
 - Program length
 - Cost/Financial assistance
 - Research opportunities
 - Teaching opportunities
 - Location and online options
 - Campus culture
- ❑ Get organized early. Save all notes and research in a digital or physical system for quick access.

9 Months Before Deadline: Write a CV, Resume & Personal Statement

- ❑ Understand the genres of curriculum vitae (CVs) and personal statements:
 - CVs are similar to resumes, but they are generally longer and more academically focused. They provide a more comprehensive listing or overview of your relevant work to date, including presentations, publications, research, awards, etc.
 - Personal statements are application essays that typically provide admissions committees insight into who you are as an individual, your reasons for pursuing additional education, and how you might be a good fit for a program.
- ❑ Tailor each CV, resume and/or personal statement to each program
- ❑ Show why you would be the best fit for a program and what sets you apart from other applicants.

8 Months Before Deadline: Prep for Exams

- ❑ Identify if an exam is required for your application (e.g., GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, or DAT).
- ❑ Keep the price of tests in mind. Save up or look into financial assistance if needed. Some universities will help subsidize the costs of tests if you apply and qualify.
- ❑ Create a study plan and stick to it. Consider working through a prep book or prep course.
- ❑ Since some test scores last multiple years, you may choose to take exams just after graduating from an undergraduate program.
- ❑ Testing locations may fill up quickly, so schedule exams well in advance of desired testing dates.

5 Months Before Deadline: Take Graduate Exams

- ❑ Take any needed exams. Know that many tests also allow you to test more than once.
- ❑ Send your exam scores to your selected schools and programs.

3 Months Before Deadline: Ask for Letters of Recommendation

- ❑ Ask for letters of recommendation from professors, advisors, or employers. Depending on your relationship with the person you are asking, you may want to ask for a recommendation in person, reintroduce yourself, or explain why you chose them as a recommender.
- ❑ Choose recommenders who can speak to your unique skills and experiences. Having a variety of recommenders can provide a more well-rounded view of you as a person and applicant.
- ❑ Remind recommenders of your qualifications and experience. Consider including specifics about what you hope recommenders might emphasize. As part of this process, you may also want to share the following with recommenders:
 - An updated CV or resume and/or your personal statement
 - Information about programs you are applying to
 - Deadlines and submission instructions for each letter

2 Months Before Deadline: Review & Revise

- ❑ Review application and essay instructions to ensure you are including all requested information and materials.
- ❑ Get feedback on your application from a professor, writing consultant, advisor, or trusted peer.
- ❑ Adjust your application(s) based off feedback and the application requirements.
- ❑ Revise and edit your application to make sure it is polished and ready to submit.

1 Month Before Deadline: Submit Applications

- ❑ Double and triple check deadlines, including accounting for differences in time zones.
- ❑ Make sure all your letters of recommendation have been submitted, and follow up as needed.
- ❑ Submit application materials well in advance of deadlines, so you can manage any technical issues and avoid unnecessary stress.

Select a Program

- ❑ Be patient, knowing that responses to applications may take several months.
- ❑ Review all compiled information while you wait, and weigh the pros and cons of each program.
- ❑ Organize what responses you receive, so you know which programs you have heard from.
- ❑ Review and learn from responses; even rejection letters can help you adapt for the future.
- ❑ Respond to any communication in a timely and appropriate manner, including confirming your acceptance into the program or school you plan to attend.
- ❑ Congratulate yourself on successfully completing the process of applying to graduate school!