

# Graduate School Application Checklist

Below is a **sample** timeline if you plan to pursue graduate school immediately following your undergraduate work. This is not the only way to “do graduate school” and many individuals find that working for several years before graduate school may be the best way to clarify their graduate plans. The sample timeline below is a best-case scenario which leaves time to craft a great application, resolve unforeseen problems (a lost transcript, a delinquent recommender) and submit with time to spare. No matter when you’re planning to apply to graduate school, it’s best to start early—it will increase your odds of being admitted. Many graduate programs have rolling admissions, which means applications are evaluated as they arrive (rather than all at once after the final deadline).

## Junior Year – Spring

- Research programs and request information directly from each program:
  - Petersons: <http://www.petersons.com>
  - GradSchools.com: <http://www.gradschools.com/>
  - US News rankings: <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools>
  - Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com/>
- Aim for a minimum of 6 programs to which you will apply, depending on the degree:
  - 2 “reach” schools
  - 2 “strong possibility” schools
  - 2 “safe” schools
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate entrance exams, both general and subject test, as required by individual programs:
  - GRE: <http://www.ets.org/gre>
  - GMAT: <http://www.mba.com/us>
  - LSAT: <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lSAT/about-the-lsat/>
  - MCAT: <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/>
- Request and review an unofficial copy of your transcript, checking for any errors.
- Investigate national scholarships and grants and their deadlines:
  - Peterson’s Grad School Scholarship Search: <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/graduate-school-scholarships.aspx>
  - Fastweb Scholarships for First-Year Graduate Students: <http://scholarships.fastweb.com/y-first-year-graduate-students>
  - Scholarships.com Graduate Scholarships: <https://www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarships-by-grade-level/graduate-scholarships/>
  - APA Free Money for Education <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2011/09/cover-money.aspx>
  - Scholarships for Women: <http://www.scholarshipsforwomen.net/psychology/>
- Create preliminary list of people to ask for letters of recommendation and contact each person.

## Junior Year – Summer

- Take graduate entrance exams and submit results to your chosen schools.
- Request updated application materials from your chosen schools.
- Write your personal essay(s) and get it critiqued by a staff member in the Career Center, a faculty member and a friend or family member – someone who knows you well.

- Double-check application deadlines and rolling admissions policies at your chosen schools. (Many medical-related and law schools have separate national application processes as well.)
- Visit institutions you are most interested in (if possible).

### **Senior Year – Fall**

- Complete applications, personal essays, and other information requested by graduate programs.
- Make your own deadlines of 4-6 weeks earlier than the actual deadlines. (Keep copies of all materials.)
- Request official copies of your undergraduate transcripts from the registrar's office to be sent to graduate programs.
- Ask professors and employers to write letters of recommendation, making the process as easy as possible for them. Carefully follow instructions given by each graduate program.
- Confirm that grad school application materials, recommendations, and test scores have been received by the deadlines. Do this well before the actual deadlines, in case you need to resend information, track down letters of recommendation, etc.
- Note application deadlines for each program/school's graduate assistant/research assistant/fellowship positions. These are often different than the actual grad school application deadlines.
- Apply for national scholarships and grants, follow individual deadlines.

### **Senior Year – Winter**

- Complete the Federal Financial Aid form (FAFSA.gov) even if you don't think you'll qualify for federal aid.
- Relax and wait to hear from the school(s).

### **Senior Year – Spring**

- Visit institutions that accept you, and continue your decision process.
- Send a deposit to your institution of choice.
- Notify other institutions of your decision.
- Send thank you notes to your references/recommendations, informing them of your plans and your success!

Additional resources for exploring graduate school can be found on the [Graduate School](#) page on [www.up.edu/career](http://www.up.edu/career).