Grad School: Application Timeline

Follow this general timeline to keep yourself on track. Time frames are approximate: Check the deadlines for your schools of interest and adjust accordingly.

Junior Year (Fall)

Many graduate schools look at applicants’ grades from the last two years of undergraduate courses. If your GPA is an issue, it’s time to pull your grades up.

Junior Year (Spring)

Decide which fields interest you, then start looking for programs and schools that match your interests.

Schedule your entrance exams. If you weren’t happy with your scores or decided to give yourself more time to prepare, you can take your entrance exams in the fall. (Some exams offer multiple test dates in the fall, enabling you to retake your exams again if necessary.)

Fill out your applications. Take your time, read directions carefully, and check and re-check your applications to ensure they are complete and error-free. Have someone proofread your applications.

Senior Year (Mid-Term Break/January)

Submit your applications.

Senior Year (Spring)

This is when acceptance letters begin to arrive. If you have applied to and been accepted at multiple schools, you may want to pay another visit to your top choices. Talk about your plans with a trusted faculty member or a career counselor at your undergraduate institution.

Fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) if you plan to apply for financial aid. (You’ll need your prior year’s income tax return to complete this form.)

Once you make your decision, notify the school of your acceptance. As a courtesy, tell the other schools that you are declining their offers.

If you’ll be relocating for graduate school, start researching housing options in your new location. Can you afford to live alone, or will you need to find a roommate? Does the school offer assistance with housing or pairing graduate students as roommates? If so, call on those resources.

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.