

If you are considering attending graduate school, you may want to ask yourself the following questions. Areas covered by the questions include: reasons for attending graduate school, qualifications, finances, academic quality, and future job prospects. If you are confused about whether or not to attend graduate school, or want to discuss any of the specifics regarding post-graduate work, feel free to talk with a Career Exploration Center counselor.

## 1. Should I enter graduate school straight out of college?

- Is my motivational level genuinely high or am I just postponing a decision about what to do next year?
- Have I found that I'm not yet tired of the academic world and really do feel ready for the tougher competition that graduate school can offer?
- Are my career goals set clearly enough that I don't need the benefit of work experience beforehand?
- Am I certain that I need an advanced degree to begin my career?

## 2. Do I qualify for admission?

- Will my GPA qualify me for admission to the graduate school of my choice?
- Are my admission test scores (GRE, GMAT, MCAT, etc.) suitable for the admission standards of a particular school?
- Can I satisfy all the educational prerequisites for a specific program?
- Can I satisfy a particular school's work experience prerequisites?
- Are my letters of recommendation strong?

## 3. Can I afford graduate school?

- Have I realistically computed the total cost?
- Can I defer loans if I pursue a grad degree?
- Have I checked out the possibility of employer-financed graduate education?
- If the only form of financial assistance is work as a teaching or research assistant, am I prepared to assume that responsibility?
- Am I willing to continue a student lifestyle?

## 4. Am I sure about the academic program and school I've chosen?

- Have I determined if I'm required a thesis, foreign language proficiency, comprehensive exams, internship experience, etc.?
- Do I know whether the program is research oriented or clinically oriented?
- Do I know whether my field requires a master's degree or a Ph.D.?
- Have I checked several independent sources to find out which graduate schools have the best academic reputations and placement records?

## 5. Do I have enough information about job prospects in the coming years for people with advanced degrees in my chosen field?

- Have I talked with recent graduates in my field and asked about their job-hunting experiences?
- Have I checked with the college's career office about its success in placing graduates with the degree I'm considering?
- Do I know of industry recruiters' or personnel directors' job forecast for the next several years?
- Have I researched labor market trends for different career fields?

# Graduate School Application Timetable

The following is a suggested outline for completing the steps required by most schools for admission to graduate study.

If you would like to discuss your application plans in more detail or have your graduate essay critiqued, please feel free to speak with a Career Exploration Center counselor, A115A Jester, 471-1217.

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## Junior Year - Fall and Spring

- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs
- Talk to advisers about application requirements
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission tests
- Request a student copy of your transcript and check for errors
- Investigate national scholarships and their deadlines
- Generate preliminary list for letters of recommendation

## Junior Year - Summer

- Take required admission tests
- Write for application materials
- Visit institutions you are most interested in, if possible
- Write your application essay and seek assistance, if needed
- Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service most programs use
- Save money for application fees

## Senior Year - Fall

- Obtain letters of recommendation
- Take graduate admissions tests, if you haven't already
- Send in completed applications.
- Always make sure to keep a copy of all materials for yourself

## Senior Year - Spring

- Check with all institutions to make sure your file is complete.
- Be sure to call well before the deadline, in case you are required to send another copy of a document.
- Visit institutions that accept you, and continue your research
- Send a deposit to your institution of choice
- Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision so they may admit students on their waiting list
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success

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You may not be able to adhere to this timetable if your application deadlines are very early, as is the case with medical schools, or if you decide to attend graduate school at the last minute. Don't panic! Keep in mind the various application requirements and try to meet all deadlines. If deadlines are impossible to meet, call the institution to see if a late application will be considered.