



# Preparing for Graduate School Timeline and Checklist

*Want to go to graduate school, but don't know how?  
Follow this timeline with tips to help you from  
application to enrollment!*

*Most deadlines for the Fall's entering class are during your senior year between January and March. However, some schools follow a different schedule, and it is important to check with your prospective programs for exact deadlines.*

*Junior Year (15-24 months before starting grad school)*

*(If you didn't realize until your senior year that you want to go to graduate school, don't worry, it isn't too late! The process listed below will be more condensed with it all happening during your senior year. It might seem like a lot, but you can do it!)*

- Think about your career goals and decide whether graduate study is right for you.
- Begin researching graduate and professional schools in your field of interest. Start with a broad search so as not to overlook any great programs.
- Request information from potential graduate programs such as catalogues and application materials.
- Evaluate and compare the graduate programs you've researched and narrow your choices.
- Attend CSUN's Graduate & Professional School Fair in the fall (usually in Oct. or Nov.).
- Grades Matter! Work on raising your GPA or maintaining a high GPA.
- Build professional relationships with professors who can write you excellent recommendations.
- Start studying and registering early for any required admissions exams to have the flexibility of retaking an exam if need be. If you would like some help studying, you may want to enroll in a test prep course.
- When registering for your fall (senior year) courses, consider taking a graduate-level course. This can give you a competitive edge and demonstrate your abilities as a student to the admissions committee.
- Attend information sessions for programs you are considering.

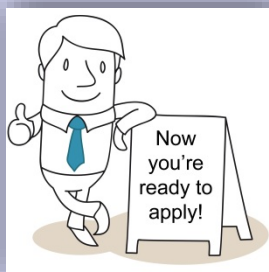


## *Summer between Junior & Senior Year (12-15 months before starting grad school)*

- Participate in a summer internship related to your field of study.
  - *(refer to internship page in pathways)*
- Visit the campuses that you are most interested in.
- Start to work on your personal statement.
- Be aware of the application deadlines / admission requirements for your prospective programs, and create your own personalized timeline.
- If you haven't done so already, register and study for the required admission exam.
- Attend Information Sessions for programs you are considering.
- Review and complete the below check list for "Fall – Senior Year (9-11 months before starting grad school)" if you have any applications due before or during the month of January.



## *Fall - Senior Year (8-12 months before starting grad school)*



- For some admissions exams this is the last chance to take or re-take exams before your application is due.
  - Work hard in your classes to help secure high grades.
  - Request official transcripts from the campus registrar.
  - Finish your Personal Statement
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- Request letters of recommendation from your professors and supervisors who know you well. Make sure to provide a draft of your personal statement and any additional information the writer might need such as resume or teaching philosophy.
  - Know that some schools require you to apply to both the prospective school and the program's specific department separately. This means you might need to go through two different application processes for one program. Research this ahead to avoid these unexpected surprises.
  - Submit your completed applications as early as possible.
  - Contact the graduate schools you applied to and verify that they received all the requested application materials before their deadlines.
  - Start to research options for additional financial aid, work study, and internships.

*Spring - Senior Year (3-8 months before starting grad school)*

- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as early as possible. Priority filing deadline is between January 1 and March 2.
- Schedule and prepare for interviews. You will need to research each of your prospective programs to see if they require or offer interviews.
- Wait to hear from your prospective schools.  
The waiting can be the hardest part.  
Try to be patient and think positively.
- You will start to hear back from schools and will either be accepted, waitlisted or denied admission to a school.
- If you are waitlisted, consider taking action. This is your chance to request campus interview or feedback if offered, ask for further letters of recommendation, or write a letter re-emphasizing your interest and mentioning new relevant experience and accomplishments.
- If you've been accepted to more than one program. Evaluate and compare the different programs.
- Once you've decided on a graduate school, respond accordingly to the programs you were accepted to or waitlisted.
- Send thank you notes to professors, counselors, and anyone else who helped you with this process.

