

Start early when applying to graduate school. Deadlines for programs tend to fall between January and March. Applying earlier will increase your chances of being admitted. Many programs have rolling admissions and applications are evaluated as they arrive rather than all at once. Spots can fill up quickly as the final deadline draws near.

Almost every graduate school applicant will receive at least one rejection. While disappointing, it's not quite the final act. Contact the program advisor and politely express your regret at not being admitted. Ask them if they can point out where your application was weak or give you some suggestions on how you might strengthen your candidacy in the future. This will help if you choose to re-apply the following year.

Below is a sample schedule for a student hoping to enter graduate school in the fall. *Be sure to modify this schedule to fit the specific school's deadlines.*

Fall Semester-May: (*more than one year before graduate school begins*)

- Research potential schools.
- Speak to professionals in the field who know about different programs.
- Consider the cost of attending different schools.
- Consider relocation and/or effects of school on my family and relationships.
- Take practice tests for MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, MAT, etc. Study guides are available for check-out at Career Services.

June:

- Register for the test at Career Services in our testing area at (435) 797-1004 or online. Registration links can be found at: www.usu.edu/career/html/testing

July:

- Request information from schools that interest you.
- Meet with several of your professors who can recommend good programs and help you make some connections.
- Take required entrance exams

August:

- Re-take required entrance exams if needed. This leaves you time to send the scores to the programs you are applying to.
- Begin writing your personal statement/letter of intent.

September:

- Finalize your list of prospective schools.
- Pick a professor or two from each school you are considering whose research interests mirror your own and familiarize yourself with their work if applicable.
- Contact your recommenders and ask if they will write letters of recommendation for you. Keep developing your personal statement.

October:

- Request official transcripts.
- Send your recommender supplemental materials (i.e., resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools.
- Arrange a campus visit, if possible, or follow-up to increase your chances of receiving an invitation for a visit from those programs that invite candidates.
- Talk to current students in the programs and meet with key professors
- Explore living areas around the campus.

November:

- Have someone in the field, a professor or advisor, and your Career Services Career Coach review and edit your personal statement. Leave time for rewriting and editing.
- Start your FAFSA form online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

December:

- Complete and submit all applications, keeping a copy of every section for your records.
- Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

January:

- Focus on financial aid—Finish your FAFSA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

April:

- Celebrate your acceptances.
- Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn't meet your financial needs.
- Report your success to your career coach.

Career Coaches' Favorite Sites:
gradschools.com
graduate-schools.petersons.com