

TIMETABLE FOR CHOOSING AND APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Use this timetable for an overview of the choices and actions that should occur as you consider graduate school decisions. Plan to recheck this timetable as each semester ends in order to make sure that you are progressing effectively in preparing for and applying to graduate schools.

JUNIOR YEAR

- ___ 1. With the help of your faculty advisor, select courses beyond the general college requirements that will enhance your graduate school preparations.
- ___ 2. Try to talk to and meet graduate students (could be friends or relatives). Ask them what graduate student life is like, what kind of study load you can expect in their various specialties, which professors can provide detailed information about graduate school, and which professors you should work with on research projects.
- ___ 3. Begin preparation and register for the appropriate graduate school entrance test. By taking these tests in the Spring of your Junior year, you will have the opportunity to retake the test if you are disappointed with your scores. However, keep in mind that some exam companies—such as GRE—use cumulative score reporting, so retaking the exam does not “erase” your first score; both scores will be reported along with the date each score was achieved.

BEGINNING OF SENIOR YEAR

- ___ 1. Check with the Registrar and your department advisor to confirm your eligibility for graduation.
- ___ 2. Arrange for conference (s) with faculty who know about graduate schools in your preferred specialty area. Begin the process of deciding on the basis of qualifications and goals, schools with interest you. Take your professors a copy of your transcript and C.V. so that they can recommend schools for which you may qualify.
- ___ 3. Request bulletins, brochures, assistantship information, financial aid forms, and department application forms from schools to which you might eventually apply. You may also wish to request information on housing availability.
- ___ 4. Begin to apply for scholarships, fellowships, etc. They can have unusual deadlines, depending upon which organization sponsors them, so stay on top of this step!
- ___ 5. Register for, and take (October or December at the latest), the entrance exams needed, if you have not done so previously or if you need to improve your scores. Remember, scores are not immediately available after you have taken the test. Plan ahead!
- ___ 6. With the help of Career Services, prepare a C.V. or qualifications statement to supplement your application for acceptance and assistantships.
- ___ 7. Request a student copy of your transcript from each undergraduate institution that you have attended. Check for errors since any changes may take many weeks; if you wait until the application deadline to do this, you may either miss the deadline or be forced to submit an incomplete or erroneous transcript. Merely obtaining a transcript may take weeks because colleges are sometimes swamped with transcript requests just when you need yours! Again, plan ahead.

- ___8. Make sure that you will have enough money in December to pay for all necessary application fees and transcripts. Depending on the number of schools you apply to, this amount could easily exceed a few hundred dollars.

NOVEMBER OF SENIOR YEAR

- ___1. Narrow down your list of possible schools. Check the application deadline for each school. Post these deadlines on your "Application Record Sheet" where you will see them frequently.
- ___2. Graduate schools generally require from three to five letters of recommendation. Remember to ask professors and work supervisors early for these letters.
- ___3. Begin working on your personal statements and other essay questions.
- ___4. Request that your entrance test score results be sent to all schools to which you have applied, if you have not done so previously.

DECEMBER OF SENIOR YEAR

- ___1. Prepare final copies of application materials. Include a photocopy of your entrance test results if you have them. Everything should be mailed at least one week before the deadline. Be sure to include the necessary fees with your applications.
- ___2. Request from the Registrar's Office that your undergraduate transcript (s) be sent to all the institutions to which you have applied.

JANUARY-APRIL OF SENIOR YEAR

- ___1. Prior to the deadline, call to verify that your application material, references, transcripts, etc., were received.
- ___2. If you receive copies of any test results after your applications have been submitted, send a copy to each school.
- ___3. Consider the options available and make your decision.