



GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE

Graduate School Application Timeline

If you're a college student or a young professional wondering where your next steps lie, perhaps you're contemplating applying to graduate school. A master's or a PhD is a great option for further digging into your subject of interest and dedicating multiple years to discovering new things about different topics within the field. If you decide to pursue graduate school, you have to start preparing around seven months before applications are generally due. Use our application timeline to get started.

BEFORE YOU APPLY (MAY–AUGUST)

- Begin researching graduate programs. You have to decide whether you are applying for a Masters or a PhD. Make a balanced school list based on selectivity and average GPA and test scores of admitted students. Ask yourself whether you would attend a “safety” school or if you'd rather work.
- You should consider factors such as location, available resources and facilities, and faculty members when you make your grad school list.
- Start prepping for the [GMAT or the GRE](#). Generally, the GMAT is primarily accepted by business schools, and other graduate-level programs such as Masters of Science in Finance, Masters of Accountancy, and Masters of Marketing. Generally, most graduate programs accept the GRE. Some, for example Creative Masters (e.g. MFA) or PhDs in English, might be test optional.
- Plan to take the GRE or GMAT in August so that you can retake it a couple months later in the fall if necessary.

AS YOU APPLY (AUGUST–OCTOBER)

- Graduate programs often have a lot of required materials. Make sure you take notes on everything you need for different programs. Each program will typically vary in terms of the length of the statement of purpose, number of letters of recommendation, deadlines, and what other supplemental materials each program needs. Make a spreadsheet so that you can keep track of these things!
- Ask your professors or supervisors for recommendation letters based on the criteria that the programs have specified. Some programs might only want academic references while others might want a mix of academic and professional.
- Start working on your essays. Generally, all graduate programs will ask for a statement of purpose, where you outline your background, your goals, and what you hope to gain out of the program. Carefully research each school and program you're applying to so you can tailor your responses accordingly.

- Some programs may ask for a writing sample. Choose wisely.
- Request official transcripts from your undergraduate school. Send your recommenders supplemental materials (such as your resumé, statement of purpose, etc.) that they can use as a reference.
- Arrange campus visits if possible.

TIME OF DEADLINE (NOVEMBER– DECEMBER)

- As you finish up your essays, have a friend, supervisor, or teacher read them so that they can confirm that your personality and goals come through properly.
- Retake the GMAT in November if necessary.
- Almost all graduate school applications are due in December. Submit ahead of time in order to avoid any technical difficulties.

AFTER YOU APPLY (JANUARY–MAY)

- Depending on where you've applied, you might be contacted for an interview. Prepare beforehand, going over common questions you might encounter.
- You'll start hearing back from graduate programs towards the end of February all the way until late March. Make sure you keep your phone on as programs often call accepted students.
- If you've been placed on the waitlist, inquire whether there are any protocols you need to follow.
- If you've gotten into a program you're excited about, congrats! Submit your deposit before the deadline
- You made it, it's time to pursue your Masters or PhD!