Timeline for Applying to Graduate School*

*Special Considerations for Application Deadlines

- You may need to adjust this timeline to meet various deadlines of the programs you apply to, so be sure to note each program's application deadline.

- If you find more than one deadline for your program of interest, use the earliest deadline to set your timeline; this is most often the one you must meet to be considered for fellowships and other financial assistance.

Summer Before Senior Year

- Think about your goals and whether or not graduate school is right for you.
- Write a draft of your personal statement.
- Research program options and requirements by browsing through guides to graduate programs (online and hard copy), university websites, and other resources.
- Research fellowships and other types of financial assistance. Consider government agencies, philanthropic organizations, the schools you apply to, and professional organizations or honor societies as potential sources of funding.
- Sign up for required standardized tests.

August – September

- Meet with faculty members in your current department to discuss your personal statement, possible programs/universities to consider, and potential fellowships and other funding sources.
- Determine the schools to which you will apply.
- Get organized. Create a file for each school you will apply to and keep all related application information in the appropriate file.
- Begin preparing for standardized tests.

October

- Take standardized tests and request that your scores be sent to the appropriate schools.
- Complete your personal statement.
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty; provide a copy of your personal statement and résumé/curriculum vitae to each professor.
- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions and request official copies be sent to the schools you are applying to.
November

- Complete application forms. (Do a draft first!)
- Mail applications (if not Web-based) one month in advance of the application deadline. Pay close attention to the instructions; all documents may not go to the same address.
- Give your recommenders the appropriate information needed to mail letters, if a hard copy is required, to each school to which you are applying. (Many institutions allow recommenders to submit letters and forms online.)
- Remind your recommenders of when your letters of recommendation must be received by (i.e., the application deadline of each program – consider telling them a deadline at least one to two weeks earlier than the actual deadline in case something falls through at the last minute).

December

- Make copies of all application pieces for your records.
- Check with schools to verify that your letters of recommendation, test scores, transcripts, and other required documents have arrived to complete your application by the deadline.

February

- Contact schools about setting up campus visits.

April

- Mail acceptance forms and, if required, deposits.
- Notify schools that you will not be attending after making your decision.
- Send thank you letters to the writers of your letters of recommendation. Be sure to let them know where you’re going to school.

Want to join Purdue’s prospective student mailing list to receive additional tips, deadline reminders, and funding information?
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