

## Graduate School Application Tips

Whether you are applying to graduate school or a professional program like law or medical school, it is important to remember the most crucial tip – no two programs are the same. You must always call the admissions office or visit the website to get the specifics of what they want in the application process. If you fail to meet all of their criteria, you risk the chance of your application not being considered.

1. **Start early.** By your junior year you should attend the graduate school fair to gather information on what you need to do to apply. Start determining what programs best fit what you may want. Also visit the school's website and [gradschools.com](http://gradschools.com).
2. **Stay organized.** Graduate programs have different deadlines and requirements. Make sure you design a system and checklist for each program so that you do not miss deadlines or important documents.
3. **Stay close to your professors throughout your academic career.** The best recommendation letters and sometimes the only ones allowed are those from your faculty members. So speak up in class and let the professor know who you are! Volunteer to assist in a research project or visit them during their office hours. Just avoid seeming over eager – you want to impress your professors, not irritate them!
4. **Prepare for the entrance exams and keep your GPA strong.** Schools have a variety of entrance requirements but most use a formula that factors in both your GPA and entrance exam scores. Start early with some type of test preparation – whether self-study or a formal course. Apply to a variety of schools so that you will have: 1) a dream school, 2) a reach school, and 3) a safe school.
5. **Visit the campus if possible.** Just like choosing an undergraduate institution you want to make sure you really can see yourself there for the next phase of your education.
6. **Make an appointment with the Career Center** so you can get step-by-step assistance with everything from finding programs, completing applications, writing your personal statement, and practicing an admission interview. We are here to make the process much easier!

## Common Admission Tests

Graduate Record Examination (GRE): <http://www.ets.org/gre/>

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT): <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/>

Dental Admission Test (DAT): <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx/>

Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT): <http://www.pcatweb.info/>

Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT): <http://www.mba.com/>

Law School Admissions Test (LSAT): <http://www.lsac.org/>

## Personal Statement Tips

The personal statement is often a determining admissions factor, so make sure that you give the writing your best. This is your introduction to the admissions committee and maybe also the only time they get to see you as a person and not just a standardized test score number. Here are a few tips:

- **Be sincere.** Genuinely reflect why you want to enter graduate or professional study. Don't write for the committee by trying to include what you think sounds good or what they want to hear.
- **Let the committee in.** Your personal statement is just that – personal. So it should be unique and truly tell why you are working so hard to be admitted. If you have a tear jerker story that is relevant to why you want to study, tell it. If you had a revelation on a spring day your junior year that you wanted to go to law school, write about it. If you are fascinated with one area of study that a professor is researching, talk about why you want to be involved in that line of research.
- **Seek critique.** You want to make sure what you are trying to convey in your statement is actually being clearly understood. Take it to a professor, bring it to us in the Career Center, or let your friends and family read it. Take all the opinions in and revise. Reread again before submitting.

## Your Monthly To-Do List

Month	Task
May (before senior year)	Research potential schools and take a practice admission test to determine how much test prep you will need.
June	If you want to sign up for an entrance exam test prep course – now is the time to do so!
July	Contact schools that interest you to get information about their programs.
August	Take the required entrance exam so that you can retake it if you don't like your scores. Also start writing the statement of purpose.
September	Determine where you will apply and find professors that have research interests similar to yours in these programs. Contact your recommendation letter writers and keep working on perfecting your statement of purpose.
October	Request official transcripts from your undergraduate institution. Supply your recommenders with supplemental materials (like your resume, personal statement, etc.) so they can write the best recommendation letter for you. Make plans to go on campus visits if possible.
November	Have a few people read over your personal statement. You should ask people in the field, career center staff, and honest friends and family.
December	Complete and submit all applications, keeping two copies of every section for your records. Verify that your recommendations have been sent.
January	Learn about all your financial aid options. Check into graduate assistantships, private loans, grants, and fellowships. Don't forget to complete the FAFSA online too!
February & March	Everything has been submitted so now all you can do is wait. Don't stress while you wait – instead relax and enjoy that everything has been submitted!
April & May	Celebrate your acceptances!