

Graduate School Timeline

The following is adapted from an article written by Tamara Powell, a lecturer in Communication Studies at California State University, and featured on The Muse (<https://www.themuse.com/advice/applying-to-grad-school-your-monthbymonth-guide>)

JUNIOR YEAR

SPRING:

Schedule your entrance exams. You may want to take these exams in the spring of your junior year so you get them out of the way (and have time to retake them if necessary)

SENIOR YEAR

JULY/AUGUST

Most graduate schools look for well-rounded individuals with good grades and some relevant work experience on their resumes. Internships are an excellent way to gain some professional experience in your chosen field. In some fields, volunteer experiences are also helpful—provided they give you relevant experience and are not simply “envelope stuffing” exercises.

Study for and take Standardized Tests

August is the ideal time to take the standardized tests necessary for admissions because you'll have time to retake them in the fall if you're unhappy with your scores.

Start preparing in July (if not earlier). The Princeton Review and other standardized test prep organizations frequently offer classes for the LSAT, MCAT, GMAT, and GRE.

Test Prep – Links to common standardized tests

Kaplan

*GRE: Graduate Record Examination. What's a good GRE score?

GMAT – Business

*LSAT – Law

DAT – Dental

MCAT – Medical

NCLEX-RN – Nursing

OAT – Optometry

PCAT – Pharmacy

VCAT – Veterinary

Greensboro College offers both GRE and LSAT Test Preparation Programs. For more information, contact Suzanne Suddarth, Director of The Center for Innovation and Workforce Development at 336-272-7102, ext. 5760 or via email at suzanne.suddarth@greensboro.edu.

SEPTEMBER

Research Financial Aid. Moneygeek.com offers a Grad School Financial Aid Timeline..

Start by creating a budget, outlining how much money you'll need for tuition, housing, books, fees, and living expenses. Then, make a list of possible funding sources. Most degrees will cost you out of pocket, but some programs offer fellowships and scholarships or work-study opportunities. Learn what federal student aid is available to you, and also research field-specific grants or alumni scholarship opportunities you can apply for.

Select Schools to Apply To

Narrow down the programs you'd like to apply to. You don't have to visit each school at this point, but you should do extensive online research about prospective programs—scoping out things like curriculum, reputation, cost, faculty expertise, support services, and alumni networks. Also comb through their applications and necessary requirements.

- Greensboro College Piedmont Alternative Licensure Program
- Greensboro College Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- Greensboro College Master of Education in Birth-Kindergarten Education
- Greensboro College Master of Education in Elementary Education
- Greensboro College Master of Education in Special Education/General Curriculum or in Special Education/Adapted Curriculum
- Greensboro College Master of Arts in Theology, Ethics and Culture
- Peterson's Guide to Graduate Schools
- The Princeton Review
- Graduate Guide
- GradSchools.com
- DiscoverBusiness.us – Guide to Top Accredited Online MBA Programs and Resources
- Tech Focused MBA Guides
- Masters In Education
- Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service
- Art Therapy graduate programs
- U.S. News and World Report Graduate School Rankings





Write Essays

Each school you apply to will likely require one or more essays. Prepare an overarching personal statement, which can be modified for each school. Then, make a list of the other essay questions you'll need to answer for each program, and get started writing. Writer's block is pretty common when you're writing about yourself, so leave plenty of time for this process and for revisions (definitely have another pair of eyes, or more, read over your work).

Request Letters of Recommendation

Decide which faculty members, employers, or other people you will ask for letters of recommendation. Narrow down your list and send emails to request meetings with each person—whether it's in person or over the phone, you'll want to discuss your grad school plans and goals before they start writing. Be prepared to provide each recommender with a copy of your transcript, your statement of purpose, your resume or CV, and each program's recommendation form.

NOVEMBER

Order official transcripts from the Registrar's Office and request them to be sent to each program you are applying to. If you're still in college, you can request that your transcripts be held until fall semester grades are posted, particularly if you think they'll give your application a boost.

Begin Application Documents

Get Organized

Make a timeline of due dates and make sure that your earliest applications are ready. Create a folder (electronic or paper) for each school and make sure that you keep necessary materials for each program separate.



DECEMBER/JANUARY



Send in Applications: Proofread all of your admissions materials and make sure that you've filled out every last field on your application form. Send them off.

Confirm Receipt: Make sure that you receive a confirmation statement from each school within two weeks. Contact the admissions office if you do not receive an email, postcard, or letter assuring you they have your application.

FEBRUARY

Prepare for Admissions Interviews: Schools typically begin contacting students for interviews (if this is a part of their admissions process) about 2-4 weeks after application deadlines. At this point, rank the schools that have invited you and accept invitations in order of priority.

For each program you'll be interviewing with, set up a new folder with everything you'll need for your visit. Make a list of questions you have for faculty and staff, and prepare answers to questions you think they may ask. Make any necessary travel arrangements.

Secure Financial Aid or Develop a Funding Plan

Determine if you will receive any fellowship or scholarship money and from which departments. If you aren't offered funding through the school, start on your Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application by assembling required documents, such as bank statements, W-2s, investment records, and federal income tax returns. If you are married, in a domestic partnership, or a dependent you will also need your spouse's, partner's, or parents' tax return.

MARCH/APRIL

Visit Campuses: For each campus you visit, create an itinerary with the program coordinator. Meet with faculty, especially potential advisors or mentors, and ask thoughtful questions. Try to sit in on a few classes and meet with current students, too—anything that might help you picture yourself as a student there. Also plan to spend time checking out the surrounding city—your grad school experience goes far beyond the classroom, so make time to think about if you could live in this location.

Make a Decision

Everyone has a different approach for making important decisions, so stick to your method! Make pro/con lists or spreadsheets to calculate the weight of different factors. Go through your process, rank your schools, and make your decision!

