

CENTER FOR STUDENT OPPORTUNITY







Grad School 101



It's best to start early if you're planning to apply to graduate school—it will increase your odds of being admitted. Here's a sample schedule for students hoping to enter grad school in the fall. This is a best-case scenario which leaves time to craft a great application, resolve unforeseen problems (a lost transcript, a delinquent recommender) and submit with time to spare!

- May:** Begin researching grad schools, find out if the schools you're interested in require/recommend the GRE or other entrance exam. If so, take a GRE practice test. Your GRE score will help you determine how much preparation you'll need for the real deal.
- June:** Sign up for a GRE test prep course (we recommend the in-person or online options). Register for the GRE general test if necessary.
- July:** Make a spreadsheet with the school, GRE requirement, tuition remission (yes or no), living (yes or no), grad assistantships (yes or no). Include application requirements (personal statements, applications, letters of recommendations, etc). Add a notes column in the spreadsheet as well. Request information from schools that interest you. Consider paying a visit to your alma mater to meet up with a few former professors. They can recommend good programs and may even help you make some connections.
- August:** Take the GRE general test. If you're not happy with your scores, sign up to take it again. Begin drafting your statement of purpose.
- September:** Register for the November GRE subject test (if necessary). Finalize your list of prospective schools, and familiarize yourself with the professors who share your research interests at each school. Contact your recommenders. Keep polishing your statement of purpose.
- October:** Request official transcripts from your undergraduate institution. Send your recommenders supplemental materials (like your resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools. Arrange a campus visit if you can.
- November:** Have someone in the field and a few smart (and honest) friends read over your personal statement. Take the GRE subject test; make sure that your scores will be sent directly to schools.
- December:** Complete and submit all grad applications, keeping copies of every section for your records. Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

Resources

-  **Search for a program** | gradschools.com
-  **Grad School Guide** | graduateguide.com
-  **Grad School Guide Book** | gograd.org/graduate-school-guide-book
-  **About the GRE** | ets.org/gre
-  **Student Grad PLUS Loan** | www.studentaid.gov
-  **Test Prep Tips** | mometrix.com/academy/graduate-and-professional-school/

