

# Grad School Prep

AT A GLANCE

MORAVIAN  
UNIVERSITY

Center for Career  
& Civic Engagement



The search for the perfect graduate school may seem intimidating at first. To make the search less stressful, **follow this timeline** that breaks down the graduate school search for you. Even though your timing may be different, these are recommended steps to keep in mind as you move through your search. These steps are recommended starting at the end of your junior year; however, it is never too early to start.

## Before Your Senior Year: DO YOUR RESEARCH!!!

### □ Decide what type of graduate program you would like to pursue.

- Remember that attending graduate school should lead you toward your ultimate career goal, not just to avoid getting a job.
- What are you looking for in your graduate school? Look at a school's curriculum, location, values, prices, and more. Check out each school's website to learn more.
- Access [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com) and [www.universities.com](http://www.universities.com) for more information.
- Make a list of your top 5 schools and what you like most about them.

### □ Research the programs admission requirements. Every program is different:

- Most schools require a 3.0 GPA and a minimum score on one of the graduate school admissions tests.
- Often schools will take into consideration letters of recommendation, personal essay(s), and an interview.
- Learn what standardized tests you need to study for and sign-up. Some schools may not require those standardized tests, so do your research.

### □ Email or call the colleges/universities of interest and ask them to send you information about the program, the college, financial aid, and assistantships that you may not have found on the website.

- Ask to speak with a current student enrolled in the program or a faculty member.
- Ask questions about a program's research, fellowship, or assistantship opportunities (this is a great way to fund your graduate education).

### □ GOAL: Try and narrow your list to your top 5 schools.

## GRADUATE SEARCH ONLINE RESOURCES

If you do not know where to start, check out College Choice to help you choose the right college. Search by selecting a degree, select a category of study, and a subject within the field. By doing these three steps you will get a wide variety of colleges that match your interest and future career goals.

<https://www.collegechoice.net/>

## August: GET A FEEL FOR THE SCHOOLS

- ❑ **After narrowing down your list to the top 5 schools, begin to look at when they have open houses or information sessions.**

- Research open houses and informational sessions at your top five schools. Attend Grad School Fairs at your home institution.

- ❑ **GOAL: Contact admission representatives to set up tours.**

## September: TAKE YOUR GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEST

- ❑ **Determine if you will be required to take a graduate school admissions test.**

- There are several common exams including: GRE (general test), LSAT (for law school), MCAT (for medical school), GMAT (for business school).
- Purchase a study guide from any bookstore and begin to prepare to take the exam. There are also test preparation courses that teach testing strategies and are available for a substantial fee.
- **Kaplan Test Prep:** <https://www.kaptest.com/>

- ❑ **GRE website:** [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre)

- ❑ **Information for test takers with disabilities:** [www.ets.org/gre/disabilities](http://www.ets.org/gre/disabilities)

- ❑ **Free and low-cost, Official Test Prep Materials:** [www.ets.org/gre/prepare](http://www.ets.org/gre/prepare)

- ❑ **Sign up to take any required graduate admissions tests.** Keep in mind it will take approximately six weeks for your scores to be sent to the graduate schools. You want colleges to have those test results before they begin reviewing your graduate applications.

- ❑ **GOAL: Pass your graduate school admissions test.**



HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR YOUR GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST YET?

GRE website: [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre) 

## October: GATHER YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

- ❑ Typically, the cost of graduate school applications range from \$50 to \$100. *(often non-refundable)*
  - ❑ Graduate schools usually ask candidates to gather three letters of recommendation.
    - Ask faculty members and previous supervisors if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation for graduate school admission. Be sure to ask for recommendations well before the submission deadline.
    - Remember to give each recommender a copy of your current resume to use as a guide when writing your letter of recommendation.
    - Your recommenders may be asked to submit a recommendation letter through an external link or website. Let your recommenders know to expect an external email and check in to be sure it is received. (Don't let your recommendation request get caught in a spam folder!)
- DON'T FORGET TO THANK  
your recommenders!***
- ❑ Take standardized test(s). If you do not pass, you must wait one month until you may take the test again.
  - ❑ Begin establishing a first draft of your personal statement.
  - ❑ Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended.
    - If fall term grades are expected, then indicate on the transcript request form to mail "after current term grades."
    - Ask the Registrar's Office if the current term grades can be sent in time to meet the graduate school application deadline.
    - When accepted to a graduate program, you will likely have to send another copy of your undergraduate transcript to show your degree conferred once you graduate.
  - ❑ Attend the Graduate School Fair and Graduate School Prep Workshop offered by your Center for Career and Civic Engagement.

❑ **GOAL: Gather all the material for each college application and draft your personal statement.**

## November: COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATIONS

- ❑ Complete the applications, and be certain to follow the instructions exactly.
- ❑ Some graduate schools require applicants to write a personal statement or send a resume as part of the application process. You can ask a faculty member or someone from the Center for Career and Civic Engagement to help you with both of these documents. Remember to have a first draft completed before going to ask for help.

❑ **GOAL: Finalize your personal statement and make a meeting with a professional staff member at the Center for Career and Civic Engagement to review your statement.**

# Late December / Early January: FINALIZE & SUBMIT APPLICATIONS

- Submit all of your graduate school applications no later than January 15th**  
(unless the deadline is earlier than that date)

- This will put you in line for the best assistantships, fellowships and/or financial aid packages.
- You can certainly apply later, but you may lessen your chances for receiving some form of financial assistance.
- Many graduate schools send out acceptance letters as early as March for a fall start date.

- GOAL: Submit your graduate school applications!**

## January - March: CREATE YOUR GAME PLANS

- If you do get accepted into graduate schools:**

- Decide by April 15th what graduate school you would like to attend.
  - Make sure this is the school for you!
  - Make sure you know the deadline for acceptance.
  - Make sure you are aware of the policies for accepting offers of financial assistance.
- The majority of graduate/pre-professional schools have an **April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline** on accepting or declining attendance into their programs.

- If you do not get accepted into graduate schools:**

- It is always a good idea to have a "Plan B", so begin exploring the world of work. That way if graduate school is not an option for you at this time, you will have already begun a preliminary job search.
- Let the institutions know ASAP that you do not plan on attending. This will free up a seat for someone else who is trying to get into the program.

- GOAL: Create your game plan for after graduation.**

### Note on paying for Graduate School:

- There are many opportunities that can assist students in paying for their graduate school. These include but are not limited to:**

- Graduate Assistantships
- Financial Aid
- Scholarships
- Teaching Assistantships
- Fellowships

- Even though all schools have different approaches, make sure to do your research and see how the school can help finance your education**

- Graduate Guide Resource:** <https://graduateguide.com/resource-category/graduate-financial-aid/>