

GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE (when applying for fall semester)

Undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore Years:

- Explore various careers and academic interests. Depending upon what interests you have, research the requirements for graduate school early. This is especially true for highly competitive programs, psychology, medical school, law school and/or pre-professional health careers.

During Junior Year:

- Consider your academic interest areas. Talk with faculty, advisors and professionals about graduate programs in your field.
- Identify and read professional journals in the field. Learn as much as you can about the current research and trends. Identify the leading researchers and institutions for your field of interest. Identify where these experts in your interest area instruct and review that program for consideration in graduate school.
- Research what admission test is the most common for the graduate program you want to enter and investigate preparation programs.
- Begin the process of researching graduate programs. Some resources for this include: www.gradschools.com www.princetonreview.com or www.petersons.com

Summer After Junior Year:

- Develop your personal criteria important to you in making a decision on a graduate program
- Some helpful information to develop this criteria can be found on [Making The Decision](#)
- Investigate scholarship, assistantship and financial aid options
- Request program information and application from schools of interest
- Information to request from schools about their program
 - Acceptance rates
 - Test scores and GPA ranges for students accepted to the program
 - Placement rates for graduates
 - Typical employers of graduates
- Identify SLU alumni currently enrolled or recent graduates from programs of interest and contact them to find out more about the program
- Start preparation to take the admissions exam
- Register for the required admission exam. Scores must be sent directly to the schools from the exam organization
- Begin writing your personal statement which needs to be modified for each school. The following resources are helpful
 - Donald Asher's Graduate Admissions Essays
 - How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate School and Professional School by Richard J. Stelzer
 - Perfect Personal Statements: Law, Business, Medical, Graduate School by Mark Alan Stewart
 - Statement of Purpose.com <http://www.statementofpurpose.com>

Senior Year:

September:

- Finalize list of schools to apply. It is recommended that you apply to 5 or 6; however, for highly selective programs applying to 10 schools is not uncommon
- Take appropriate graduate admission exams, if you have not already done so
- Begin asking faculty members for letters of recommendation. Send a brief note asking professors for their assistance. Usually you will need at least 3 letters of recommendations, but be sure to check the requirements in the application materials you receive from the schools
- Continue revising your personal statements
- Start researching options for financial assistance such as scholarships, fellowships and/or assistantships
- Based on the information received from the schools, develop a personal timeline for the application process
 - Check on application deadlines and rolling or early admissions policies, as well as financial aid, scholarship and assistantship deadlines
 - Read the applications thoroughly and prepare any other materials requested
- For medical, dental and law school, register with the appropriate application and data assembly service ([LSDAS](#), [AMCAS](#)). These services collect your materials and forward them to your schools.

October:

- Continue to gather, organize and complete application materials.
- Take graduate admissions exams, if have not done so already.
- Complete personal statements, adjusting each to meet each program's requested criteria.
 - Go to the SLU Writing Center for additional assistance with constructing your personal statement. <http://www.slu.edu/x13305.xml>
 - Ask a faculty member to review your personal statement.
- Order official transcripts from all post secondary institutions even those from which you did not earn a degree. The transcript must be sent directly from the school attended to the school you are applying to or the data assembly service. These need to be sent to each school you apply to. Some schools charge a fee to send an official transcript
- Provide your faculty and supervisors who are providing letters of recommendations with all the materials they need to complete the letters
 - Provide these individuals with a deadline 2 weeks prior to when you plan to have your application materials complete.
 - Send them the appropriate form, the latest version of your personal statement, resume and stamped and addressed envelopes.
- Contact schools to schedule visits during the fall semester. See "Interviews & Campus Visits" in Graduate School Application Process
- If unable to afford a visit, request from the department current and recent graduates you can talk to about the program. Also, contact faculty with questions about the program. Not only will you get your questions answered but you will also make yourself known to those making a decision about your admission to the program.
- Research the professors in the programs you are applying to and learn about their areas of expertise. Read journal articles they have written about their research.
- Start completing the applications. Many are on-line and some will be paper. For paper applications, it is a good idea to make a copy to fill in the information and then transfer this information to the application you plan to send.

November:

- It is advisable to send applications in by Thanksgiving Break or shortly thereafter. Some programs have early deadlines such as December while others have deadlines in January or February. Be sure check when your applications are due.
- Keep complete copies of all the application materials you have sent.

December:

- Follow-up with the programs to which you have applied, to verify receipt of all the application materials. You are responsible for verifications of your application materials being received. Typically, schools do not track down your missing application materials.

January:

- Get serious about the application process for financial aid. Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA online – to qualify for financial aid you need to complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1st as possible. Look into private loans and any alternative sources of funding available.

April:

- Typically you will find out in March where you have been accepted.
- Compare the financial aid packages offered to you.
- Once you have made your decision, notify other institutions you have applied to so they can remove your name from their process.
- Send thank you notes to those who wrote recommendation letters letting them know of your future plans.
- If you have not already, make a trip to the school you consider your top choice.