

## **Timetable for Applying to Graduate School\***

You should begin the application process no later than the summer before your senior year of college or at least a year before you plan to start graduate school. Many students who have had graduate school in mind for most of their undergraduate careers start much earlier. This timetable is approximate, but it offers an idea of the steps you must think about and, roughly, when you must complete each step. No generalized chart provides the specifics that you will need to meet your personal timeline.

As you refine your own timeline, then, carefully examine each application for deadlines. They may vary significantly. Keep your timeline updated and follow it.

### Summer

- Write a draft statement of purpose/personal statement.
- Start browsing through guides to graduate programs and college catalogs.

### August-September

- Meet with faculty members that you know to discuss your personal statement and learn about possible programs.
- Ask for letters of recommendation.
- Begin to develop your personal timeline for the application process.
- Sign up for required standardized tests.

### October

- Take standardized tests.
- Determine the schools to which you plan to apply, and request application materials.
- Finish your timeline based on each institution's deadline and financial aid deadlines.
- Complete your personal statement, adjusting it to meet each application's specific needs.
- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions (if fall term grades are expected, then check with staff in the registrar's office to see if a transcript including fall term grades can be sent in time to meet the deadlines of programs to which you are applying).
- Complete application forms (First, do a draft on a photocopy of the form).
- Give your recommenders all the information that they will need to write recommendations for you for each of your application schools.

### December/January

- Mail applications. Even if deadlines are later, it is good to get the applications in early.

### February

- Contact programs about the possibility of visiting. Make trips if possible.

### April

- If you are applying for need based financial aid programs, you may have to file a copy of your federal income tax return.

\*Taken from Council of Graduate Schools (cgs) Resources for Students website:  
<http://www.cgsnet.org/ResourcesForStudents/index.htm>.