Graduate School Checklist

It is important to start gathering information early in order to be able to complete your application on time. Most people should start the process a full year and a half before their anticipated date of matriculation. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. Application deadlines may range from August (before your senior year) for early decision programs of medical schools using the American Medical College Application services (AMCAS) to late spring or summer (after your senior year) for a few programs with rolling admissions. Most deadlines for the fall’s entering class are between January and March. You should in all cases plan to meet formal deadlines; beyond this, you should be aware of the fact that many schools with rolling admissions encourage and act upon early applications.

The checklist below represents an ideal timetable for most students:

**Junior Year, Fall and Spring**
- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs.
- Talk to your advisor and professors about interest and application requirements.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission tests.
- Investigate national scholarships.

**Junior Year, Summer**
- Take required graduate admission tests.
- Write for application materials
- Visit institutions of interest, if possible
- Write your application essay
- Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for national application or data assembly service most programs use

**Senior Year, Fall**
- Obtain letters of recommendation
- Take graduate admission tests if you have not already
- Send in completed applications.
- Register for Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GAPSFAS) or the Financial Aid Form (FAF), if required.

**Senior Year, Spring**
- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Visit institutions that accept you.
- Send a deposit to the institution of your choice.
- Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letter, informing them of your success.

You may not be able to adhere to this timetable if your application deadlines are very early, as is the case with medical schools, or if you decide to attend graduate school at the last minute. In any case, keep in mind the various application requirements and be sure to meet all deadlines. If deadlines are impossible to meet, call the institution to see if a late application will be considered.

Taken from Workman, E.R. (1987, Applying to graduate and professional schools, Peterson’s Guide.)