PLANNING TIMELINE FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL:

FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORE YEARS
• Be active in career exploration activities such as volunteering and internships.
• Join and be active in student organizations.
• Attend the Career Fair in September and Thinking About Graduate School in October.
• Explore graduate school related websites.

JUNIOR YEAR, FALL SEMESTER
• Decide on the graduate program(s) that support your career goals.
• Develop a list of 5-10 values and criteria and identify 10-15 schools to match.
• Research and contact schools for application and other materials.
• Determine what standardized entrance test to take and contact the Academic Learning Center for information on preparatory classes.

JUNIOR YEAR, SPRING SEMESTER
• Identify potential reference writers.
• Develop budget for application fees and other expenses.
• Continue to research schools and programs.
• Visit schools and meet with faculty, if possible.

SENIOR YEAR, FALL SEMESTER
• Take entrance exam, if not already completed.
• Consult with faculty and others regarding your school choices and apply to 5-8 schools.
• Finalize your personal statement and be ready to customize it for each application.
• Contact your references and give them copies of your resume and personal statement.
• Mail your application before the deadline.

SENIOR YEAR, SPRING SEMESTER
• Complete FAFSA to apply for financial aid after January 1.
• Prepare for interview, if required.
• Assess offers, including financial aid.
• Make your decision and make your deposit to reserve your place.
• Write thank you letters to your reference writers.

TERMS TO KNOW:
• GRE: Graduate Record Exam. This exam is required for admission to many graduate programs around the country.
• LSAT: Law School Admissions Test.
• GMAT: Graduate Management Admissions Test for business program admission.
• MCAT: Medical College Admissions Test.
• LOR: Letter of Recommendation.
• DAT: Dental Admissions Test.
• OAT: Optometry Admissions Test.
• PCAT: Pharmacy College Admissions Test.
• VCAT: Veterinary College Admissions Test.
• Admissions Essay: Required component of most graduate school applications. Typically it is written in response to a prompt question.
• Distance Education or Distance learning: Allows taking classes and possibly earning a degree through the Internet.
• Assistantship: A form of financial assistance provided to graduate students through part-time academic employment. Assistants are paid a stipend in exchange for tasks they perform.
• Fellowship: Financial award that is given to graduate students based on academic and personal achievements. May or may not include a tuition waiver and is not paid for work performed.
• Thesis: Culminating document of a Master’s degree on the thesis plan. Requires collection of original data.
• Dissertation: Culminating document of a doctoral degree. Requires original research data. Generally several hundred pages in length.
• Research Paper: Culminating document of many non-thesis Master’s degrees. Typically not as long as a thesis and may not involve collection of original data.
• Admission interview: Opportunity for an applicant to discuss features of their application beyond their transcript, essays, and standardized test scores. Not all programs offer admission interviews.
• Award letter: A letter received by students who have applied for financial aid informing them of how much financial support they will receive.
• Tuition Assistance: May be in the form of a tuition scholarship, tuition waiver, or higher assistantship stipend, out of which the student pays tuition.