

# GRADUATE SCHOOL



## WHEN SHOULD I START PLANNING?

The following are activities that will need to be completed; the timing is dependent on the application deadlines of the individual schools to which you are applying.

### SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR YEAR

- Get to know your faculty: the better they know you, the more effectively they can write letters of recommendation. Faculty may also suggest graduate programs for your consideration.
- Think about what you want from graduate study; it is more intense and focused than undergraduate study.
- Begin to research programs of interest and learn about admission requirements/deadlines. Some schools have “rolling admission” and evaluate/accept candidates as they apply rather than have a specific deadline.
- Some students may also want to take the required graduate exam at the end of their junior year.
- Gain the experience required or needed to set you apart from the other applicants, such as patient contact hours, shadowing, internships, research, etc.

### SENIOR YEAR

- Define your search and find out information about the school/program, applications for admission and financial aid as well as deadlines. Many schools utilize online formats for the application process. Deadlines vary by program/school but some could be prior to or early in your senior year. Register for necessary admission exam.
- Ask faculty/employers to write letters of recommendation; allow plenty of time in advance of the deadline.
- Arrange with the Registrar’s Office for official transcripts to be sent.
- Complete and submit/upload application materials.
- Verify the receipt of all admission materials (application, transcript, exam score, letters of recommendation, etc.)
- Visit the schools.
- Evaluate admission offers.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Application Form/Fee
- Personal Essay(s)
- Resume
- Audition/Portfolio (if applicable)
- Transcript
- Graduate exam scores
- Letters of Recommendation

## FIND MORE INFO AT:

- [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)
- [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)
- [www.csbsju.edu/xpd](http://www.csbsju.edu/xpd)
- Campus visits
- Graduate School Fairs
- CSB and SJU faculty
- Published rankings (U.S. News and World Report)
- Alumni of the schools you are considering
- Program/department at the school of interest

## CHOOSING A GRADUATE PROGRAM

- What is the emphasis of the program? How large is the department/program?
- Does the program offer the opportunities you want?
- What career areas do graduates of your department enter?
- What areas of research have the faculty focused on?
- What specializations exist within your general field of study?
- How long does it take to complete the program?
- What are the total costs?
- What sort of financial aid (graduate assistantships/scholarships, etc.) is available?
- Where is the school located and will it be a fit for you in terms of location, size, etc.?
- How rigorous is the program?

### CSB OFFICE

Academic Services Building  
320-363-5707

### XPD – EXPERIENCE & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[www.csbsju.edu/xpd](http://www.csbsju.edu/xpd)  
Open Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### SJU OFFICE

Mary Hall 10 and 25  
320-363-3236

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

View application materials at least one year prior to the beginning of the term in which you wish to enroll. Many programs admit for the fall term only. Applying to several schools is advised. Interviews, portfolios, and auditions may also be part of the process.

## ADMISSION TESTS

Do the programs to which you are applying require a graduate exam? If so, which one? Common exams include:

- GRE (Graduate Record Exam; [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org))
- MAT (Miller Analogy Test; [www.milleranalogies.com](http://www.milleranalogies.com))
- MCAT (Medical School Admission Test; [www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/](http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/))
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test; [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org))
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test; [www.gmac.com](http://www.gmac.com))
- DAT (Dental Aptitude Test; <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx> )
- PCAT (Pharmacy College Admission Test; [www.pcatweb.info](http://www.pcatweb.info))
- OAT (Optometry Admission Test; <http://www.opted.org> )

Prepare for your exams by reviewing study guides and taking practice tests. Plan to take the graduate exam in time to meet application deadlines.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Discuss your educational and career goals with the people who will write you letters of recommendation. Give them plenty of notice about application deadlines; check with them to ensure that the recommendations have been sent. Also follow up with the graduate schools to ensure recommendations have been received.

## PERSONAL ESSAYS - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Many graduate programs require a personal essay/statement. Check XPD's website for tips to help you create an effective statement. Most students will create and revise many drafts.

## FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid deadlines often precede admission deadlines. Award of aid is contingent upon acceptance. Check with the institution's financial aid office for procedures to apply for financial aid. Paying for graduate school may include some form of: fellowships/grants, teaching/research/graduate assistantship, and loans.

Some internet sites that may be of assistance:

- U.S. Dept. of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/finaid.html>
- FinAid: <http://www.finaid.org>
- FastWeb: <http://www.fastweb.com>
- Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com>
- Salliemae: <http://www.salliemae.com>

- Pay attention to length/word requirements
- Read it out loud to get a sense if it flows
- Answer the question prompts provided by the program
- Make sure there are no grammatical/spelling errors
- Make it personal; include specific examples
- Get it critiqued; utilize the Writing Center, XPD, and faculty advisors