



Career Development Center

Undergraduate Timeline for Graduate School

The following timeline (modified from the University of California publication, *Continue the Journey*) will help you stay on track while applying to graduate school and in ensure that you are doing all that you need to do to prepare:

Freshman Year (Self-Discovery)

- Talk to and visit your academic and career counselor. The Career Development Center has assessments to help you explore your interests and abilities.
- Develop long term study habits and skills.
- Explore campus resources available to students (e.g. tutoring services, writing centers) and get involved on campus.

Sophomore Year (Assessing Options)

- Establish some personal, life, and career goals. These may change over time as you do more research and live life. If you need help figuring these out, please talk to a career counselor or academic advisor.
- Begin to make contacts in your chosen career area.
- Identify potential mentoring relationships with professors or graduate students.
- Conduct independent research with a professor of your choice. You can often volunteer to help a professor that studies something of interest to you.
- Attend graduate and professional school fairs to gather materials and speak to graduate admissions representatives.
- Begin web searches on summer research internships and co-ops at various universities. Visit the Career Center at your university for more details.

Junior Year (Setting Your Goals)

- Strengthen your mentoring relationships. Discuss your interests with faculty and advisors.
- Research appropriate graduate programs. Contact the department(s) to which you are applying or visit their website for catalogues and publications. Visit campuses and departments when possible.
- Investigate appropriate entrance exam dates and fees. If possible, take the exam.
- Attend graduate and professional school fairs.
- Participate in a summer research internship, and/or work with faculty on a research project during the academic year.
- Maintain contact with faculty in whose courses you have done well. Visit them during office hours, or schedule an appointment to discuss applying to graduate school.

Senior Year (Making a choice)

- Register by the beginning of the semester to take the appropriate entrance exam. If you are eligible for financial aid, Fresno State may be able to grant you a GRE Fee Reduction Certificate. Visit the financial aid office to inquire about this.

- Continue to research graduate programs and discuss with mentors, family, significant others, etc.
- Request financial aid information. Check the deadlines on these requests because some schools have very early cut off dates.
- Talk to your potential references about writing you a letter of recommendations – you need to allow them plenty of time to write a good letter.
- Apply early!! Most universities offer electronic applications. Confirm application deadlines.
- Apply to a number of schools. This will take time and organization. Expect the application process to take as much time as one regular course.
- Research application fees and fee waiver options for the individual schools. Complete the application process (letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, transcripts).
- Contact the schools to ensure that your application is complete.

After Applying

- Complete the [FAFSA form](#) for financial aid
- Follow up on the status of your application.
- Visit prospective campuses.
- Talk to current students about their experiences.
- Write thank-you notes to people who helped you apply.

Graduates/ Taking a Year Off (or more)

- If you have taken time off, consider taking a course in your field or doing volunteer research to help you prepare.
- Stay in touch with your references. Work with your recommenders to develop up-to-date letters of reference (don't send out-of-date ones).
- In your personal statement, be sure to indicate what you've learned since you left the university.