Graduate School Application Timeline

The following is a timeline of suggested activities to help you stay on track while researching and applying to graduate school. Please keep in mind application deadlines vary by field and the type of degree in which you are pursuing.

**JUNIOR YEAR (Year Prior To Applying)**

**September-December**
- Begin researching schools and programs of interest. Talk to faculty, alumni, and others who have done graduate work in your field of interest.
- Meet with faculty, career counselors, and your advisor to discuss programs and degree options.
- Develop and maintain relationships with people who could potentially serve as references.
- Expand your professional network through club activities, student chapters of professional organizations, family, faculty, and staff.
- Participate in research, work, and volunteer experiences in your field of interest.
- Visit Career Services to gain assistance while researching or applying to graduate school and writing your personal statement.

**January-August**
- Continue researching schools and programs and determine to the programs to which you will apply.
- Review program application deadlines and requirements.
- Visit institutions of interest, if possible, to meet with faculty, graduate students, and graduate school admissions professionals and attend open houses (if available) to determine if the schools and programs would be good fits.
- Budget for application fees (typically $50-$75 or more per school), official transcript fees ($10 per official UWRF transcript), and testing fees.
- Start preparing for and register to take required admissions tests (e.g. GRE, MAT, GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT). A good site for general information is www.ets.org.
- Watch the video found on the Career Services web site to learn how to best start writing your winning personal statement.
- Begin preparing a first draft of your personal statement.
- Develop contingency plans - what will you do if you are not accepted?

**SENIOR YEAR**

Applications become available in late summer or early fall. Check school websites and apply early; applying early may increase your chances of being admitted. Early application may be required to be considered for teaching, research, and graduate assistantships or fellowships. Some schools may have rolling admissions, so applications are evaluated as they are received. Check with your programs of interest to learn their admission policies. There are many steps involved in applying to graduate school so it may be helpful to establish an organizational system.
September
- Meet with faculty members in your current department to discuss your personal statement, possible programs/universities to consider, and potential fellowships and other funding sources.
- Finalize the number and list of schools to which you will apply.
- Begin completing applications.
- If not completed, finish preparing for and take admission test(s).
- Get organized. Create a file for each school you will apply to and keep all related application information in the appropriate file.
- Attend preview days/open houses hosted by your schools or programs.

October-November
- Identify and contact at least three people to write letters of recommendations; provide copies of your personal statement and resume to help them craft their letters.
- Finish writing your personal statements and sign up to participate in the Personal Statement Roundtable Review, hosted by Career Services. This is where you can have your personal statement reviewed by a professional and receive valuable feedback.
- Complete and submit applications for admission, assistantships, and fellowships. Be aware schools may require you to send materials to BOTH the graduate school and the program department.
- If not completed, take required admission tests.

December
- Confirm your letters of recommendation have been sent by deadlines. Meet with faculty members about recommendation letters. Be sure you ask if they feel comfortable writing a strong, positive letter for you. (Professors are ideal, but it’s okay if one of your letters is from an employer or advisor). Give your recommenders whatever forms they need to fill out (if any). Provide your letter-writer with helpful information about you, such as your resume, transcripts, and personal statement. Make sure to start this process early, as some writers take longer than others.
- Send thank you notes to recommendation writers.
- If not done, complete applications for admission, assistantships, and fellowships.
- Verify all application materials have been received by schools before application deadlines.

January-February
- Begin preparing for graduate school interviews if they are part of the process. Interviews will likely take place in January, February, or March.
- Participate in a mock interview with Career Services OR schedule a mock interview appointment with Career Services if an interview is part of the graduate school admission process.
- Complete the free application for Federal Student Aid, FAFSA. You are considered an independent student for financial aid purposes for graduate school.
- Finish and send in any remaining applications, verify all materials have been received before application deadlines.

March-April-May
- Follow-up with institutions from whom you have not heard.
- If you receive an offer of financial support (scholarship, fellowship, and/or assistantship) from a Council of Graduate Schools member, you have until April 15th to accept or decline the offer.
- Send thank you notes to interviewers.
- Contact your references, professors, and UWRF Career Services to let them know where you were accepted and where you plan to attend.
- Fill out the UWRF Career Services First Destination Survey.