Graduate School Timeline

There are various aspects you need to think about when applying to graduate school. Please schedule a Graduate School Preparation appointment [1] for assistance with any of these elements. Below is a timeline to help you in planning your graduate application process (please note, this is only a tentative timeline as you may choose to take time off after graduating with your bachelor's degree):

**Early considerations when preparing for graduate school**

- Join a student organization at UNC [2] that you are interested in. This will allow you to network with other students that share similar interests and could enhance your teamwork and communication abilities.
- Join the Handshake [3] platform and update your profile. This is where you can explore volunteer, internship, and/or full-time and part-time employment opportunities, along with register for career fairs and workshops!
- Identify 2 or 3 professors you may contact for recommendation letters and build professional relationships with them. LinkedIn is also helpful in building professional relationships!

**Junior Year (if not taking any gap years)**

- Research graduate programs and attend graduate school fairs. UCS has a Graduate & Professional School Info Fair every fall. Check our UCS Events [4] page for information about the fair along with any workshop opportunities.
- Determine if the programs you are interested in require an entrance exam (GRE/GMAT). Register for the exam and take practice tests. Begin creating your study strategy to prepare. Plan to take the exam early, as it takes time to have scores sent.
- View your unofficial transcript on ConnectCarolina and correct any discrepancies.

**Summer before the Fall Application Season**
• Write a rough first draft of your personal statement.
• Compile a draft of your resume.
• Narrow your list of schools and make an applications and funding deadline calendar.
• Contact admissions representatives at programs you are considering to make sure you have the preparation and application elements you need to apply as a competitive candidate.

**Fall Semester that you Apply**

• Revise and polish your personal statement with help from UCS and the Writing Center.
• Format and polish your resume; make an appointment with UCS for assistance with your resume.
• Request your letters of recommendation (at least a month in advance is suggested).
• Order official transcripts from the Registrar’s Office (some graduate programs will accept an unofficial transcript, so make sure to double check the application).
• Complete and submit all components of your applications.
• Inquire about financial aid opportunities including assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships.

**Spring after you've applied**

• If you have a scheduled interview and need help to prepare, you can schedule a 60-minute Graduate School Preparation appointment with UCS to do a mock interview.
• Talk to faculty and students to help you make your final decision.
• Visit prospective campuses if possible- sit in on classes, get a campus tour, look into housing and transportation options, etc. When talking with students, be sure to ask about their experiences in the program- has the program been rewarding, have there been challenges, have they had any mentorship in the program, etc.
• Contact the program’s admissions representative to determine if they have any data about the program- what jobs recent graduates have obtained, average salary of graduates, are career services offered, etc.
• After receiving acceptance from your best-fitting option, send in the required deposit; make sure to contact other schools to decline any additional acceptances.
• Be sure to send thank you e-mails to the people that helped you!

Source URL: https://careers.unc.edu/students/pre-professional-pre-graduate-
advising/pre-graduate/graduate-school-timeline

Links
[1] https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/schedule-appointment
[2] https://heellife.unc.edu/organizations
[3] https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/handshake