

From MIT's Career Site

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/gradschool/timeline.htm>

Junior Year

Starting early can only help.

- Start thinking of professors you could ask for letters of recommendation. These will play an important role in your completed application packet.
- Begin researching all the graduate programs in the field you would like to pursue. Get information from a lot of schools, even the ones to which you may not be initially drawn.

Summer between Junior and Senior Year

This is the time most students start getting serious about graduate school, so don't worry if you haven't done much yet. Begin or continue your researching of programs. You will want to receive up-to-date catalogues. Talk to students and faculty from programs you are interested in. As you start to compare programs, begin to weed out the schools that don't interest you.

- Send for applications from the schools you are looking at. Some schools not longer have paper applications--they are done strictly on-line.
- Begin researching scholarships and fellowships to help you pay for school.
- Get federal and institutional financial aid information.
- Sign up for and begin reviewing for the standardized test you will be taking (unless you are applying to medical school, then you will want to take this test earlier). Make sure to find out if GRE subject tests are required.
- Estimate expenses. This will help you work the expensive process of graduate school application into your fall semester budget.
- Make photocopies of the paper applications and begin to fill them out.

You will be very busy once you begin your fall semester courses. Try to get as much research done during the summer as possible so that you can concentrate on the programs that interest you most when your time is more limited. Also, it can be very helpful to get a jump-start on the applications when you have some down time.

Fall of Your Senior Year

September:

- Finalize your list of programs to which you will apply. Make note of all your application due dates and whether or not the school has rolling admissions. Then create a deadline for yourself to mail each of your completed applications.
- Put together a packet of information to give the people who you will ask to write you letters of recommendation. This may include a copy of your unofficial transcript, a very rough draft of your statement of purpose (to give your recommenders a better idea of what you are interested in studying and why), a list of schools to which you are applying.
- Prepare your resume.

October:

- Take the standardized test required for your program if you haven't already.
- Write your statement of purpose and have it reviewed by a faculty mentor or a writing coach at Olin.
- Request OFFICIAL transcripts. You want to make sure they are mailed from Olin to meet due dates.
- Complete financial aid and scholarship forms.
- Think about alternatives to graduate school.

November/December:

- Finalize all application packets.
- Contact your recommenders and kindly remind them of the deadlines for your application (if they have not already completed and mailed them). Make sure to send them a thank you letter after they mail your recommendations.
- Mail your application packets. (Spending the extra money on return receipt is a good idea so that you are guaranteed the school received your application.)
- Follow-up and make sure that each school has received your application packet and that it is complete. You want to do this at least

1 ½ weeks prior to the deadline so that you can resend anything that didn't make it to the school.

Graduate School Time Line: Spring of Senior Year

January/February/March:

- Prepare for any interviews you may have.
- Complete and mail your financial aid forms (both federal and institutional).

April/May:

- Try to visit the schools to which you have been accepted before committing to a program.
- Figure out your financial situation. This will help you decide where you will go to school.
- Accept and decline offers in writing and/or by phone as soon as you have made a decision. You don't want to lose your spot because you didn't accept and you don't want to hold a spot from somebody else if you have no intention of going to school there.
- Write a note to your recommenders letting them know where you will be next year!