Graduate School FAQ

When should I get involved in research?

As early as possible. Even if you aren’t certain if you want to pursue research/graduate school getting involved early can be a good indicator as to if you enjoy and are interested in research. Additionally, being involved in research early gives you the opportunity to pursue multiple research experiences and maybe even get published!

What about summer research?

Summer research programs are available at most colleges, medical schools, and research institutions. Applications are usually due in February. You can pursue these at any time but most will require 2 letters of recommendation so keep that in mind. Informational interviews are a great way to get more information on different research opportunities that you might be interested in as well, consider talking to your professors or lab instructors on their experiences. The summer is a great time to try different kinds of research.

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

You will need 3 letters of recommendation to apply. Ideally at least 2 will come from professors who have supervised your research (independent research, NOT lab courses). It is appropriate to have one recommendation come from a course instructor; if you’ve taken graduate level course this would make a good recommendation but it should definitely come from a professor who taught a course in the field for which you are applying.

When do I have to decide where I am going?

Most programs will inform you soon after interviewing whether or not you will be admitted to the program. Usually you will then have until April to make a final decision on where to go so you do not need to make a decision when admission offers are made. (AKA go to ALL of your interviews!)

When should I start applying to graduate school?

Most applications will open in September. For this reason, have a good idea of where you would like to apply so that you can fill out basic info ASAP and request letters of recommendation. Your letters of rec may be the thing that takes the longest to get submitted. Requesting them ASAP will expedite the process. Some applications have more than one due date; the early consideration date and the final due date. If your application is received by the early date it may be considered before applications submitted later and you could be offered an interview before other students have even submitted their applications!
When should I apply to take the GRE?

GRE scores are good for 5 years so it is okay to take it at any time (technically). If you want to take a GRE prep course be sure to plan in time to take the exam. You will know your score (preliminary) as soon as you finish the test if you take the computerized test. You have to wait at least a month in between tests so if you want to have the opportunity to retake, plan accordingly.

Create an account online to find testing locations near you
http://www.ets.org/gre

When do interviews take place?

These can occur anytime from late January to early March. You will usually leave Thursday and return Saturday or Sunday. Think about the number of schools you are applying to because if you end up going on 8 interviews that could add up to missing the equivalent of 2 weeks of class!