

Applying to Graduate School Timeline

Freshman/Sophomore Year

- Begin to identify your career goals using the resources and staff of the Career Services Office as well as tutors and other staff on campus
- Develop relationships and seek experiences with faculty and other St. John's personnel who can help you define your interests and strengthen your application
- Record your accomplishments/experiences in a journal/portfolio and collect samples of your work for a graduate school portfolio. This will help in your preparation for admissions essay and interview, if required.

Junior Year (Fall)

- Establish criteria for identifying graduate programs and schools

Junior Year (Spring)

- Explore national scholarship and fellowship opportunities and research options for financial aid
- Register for and prepare for applicable admissions tests (GRE, LSAT, etc.)
- Start thinking about and asking tutors and others for support in writing recommendation letters. Supply a polished resume to your recommenders and give them at minimum a few weeks to complete (make sure you send thank you notes to these people!)

Junior /Senior Year (Summer)

- Take required admissions tests and have scores sent to appropriate institutions
- Gather information and research potential graduate schools to narrow down your application list. Create system by which you will track the application requirements and your progress
- Begin drafting personal statement(s) and admissions essay(s). Ask others for critique and feedback.
- Visit campuses and meet with current students and faculty

Senior Year (Fall)

- If you haven't already, or want to take them again for a better score, register and take graduate admissions tests
- Organize, prepare, and complete application packages. Review and collect recommendation letters, finish critique of admissions essays
- Request transcript from Registrar's Office
- Send in all application materials well before the deadlines. Many schools review applications on a rolling basis

Senior Year (Spring)

- Keep recommenders up to date on the status of your applications

- Visit all programs of acceptance and evaluate offers. Weigh your options carefully and choose your program
- Thank those who helped and encouraged you throughout the process and let them know where you are headed next

Questions to Consider When Evaluating Graduate Programs

What research have faculty members published recently? Compare professors' interests to your own.

How many faculty members does the department have? Does the department's reputation depend heavily on one or two professors?

What characteristics distinguish this program from others in the field?

What is the relative importance of admissions test scores, undergraduate grades, recommendations, internships, and research? Is this a safety, mid-range, or reach school for me?

Does the department prefer applicants immediately out of undergraduate programs or do they prefer some work experience?

What types of financial aid are offered (research/teaching assistantships, fellowships, grants, scholarships)? How much money is available? What is the criterion used for choosing recipients?

Where are their graduates employed? What is the completion rate, especially for doctoral programs?