

Dr. Meghan Brodie
Graduate School Planning

FALL of Junior Year:

1. Decide what degree you want to pursue and in what discipline.

SPRING of Junior Year:

1. Determine if you need to attend a program that offers one or more of the following: health insurance, a living stipend, teaching/research assistantships, partial or full scholarships/tuition waivers. Are you willing to go anywhere or are you bound by geography?
2. Research the universities that offer the degrees in your area of interest. Consult a book like *Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences* (or the Peterson's volume that corresponds to your proposed field of study). Check out the websites and faculty for each program. Make sure there are permanent faculty in the program rather than a group of visiting professors. Consider the faculty with whom you might want to work.
3. Make a list of the programs that offer degrees in your area of interest and note the following info. for each program that interests you:
 - a. Health insurance available?
 - b. Living stipend or assistantships available?
 - c. Scholarships/tuition waivers available?
 - d. Due date for application?
 - e. Graduate exams (e.g. GRE, LSAT) required?
 - f. Application requirements (cover letter, resume, letters of reference, research statement, etc.)
 - g. G.P.A. requirements?
 - h. Cost of application?
 - i. Tuition costs and fees?
 - j. Number of years required to complete the program?
4. Narrow your list of programs, excluding those that are cost-prohibitive and pose other problems. Based on the newly narrowed list, divide the list into three sections: the programs into which you are confident you would be accepted, the programs into which you think you might be accepted, and the programs into which you think it is unlikely you would be accepted. Note in which section the programs to which you most want to apply fall. Choose your top five (give or take) programs and then choose one or two programs you are confident you would get into as "back up" programs. Chat with professors and mentors about your final list.

SUMMER before Senior Year:

1. Study for whatever graduate exams you must take to apply to graduate school. Buy the study books and practice tests and take this seriously. You need to do well on these tests.
2. Schedule your graduate exam for late summer or early Fall. Make sure you leave enough time to take the exam at least twice well before application deadlines. Many do much better the second time around because you know what to expect and are used to the testing environment.

FALL of Senior Year:

1. Draft all materials needed for each application. Make cover letters university-specific (tailor them to each program, don't treat them as form letters). Ask someone (ideally a mentor or professor) to proofread your materials and make suggestions.
2. Ask recommenders if they will write letters of recommendation for you. Ask at least a month before due dates. Provide recommenders with your application materials and links for the programs to which you are applying. Talk with them about the programs and your plans so they can write more personal letters for you. Most graduate schools will have you apply online and will send email requests to your recommenders for their confidential letters. If your recommenders need to send hard copies, provide the recommenders with stamped and addressed envelopes.
3. If given the option, always waive your right to see your letters—if you don't waive this right, it looks like you have something to hide and your letters won't be taken as seriously.
4. Submit applications.
5. Wait.

SPRING of Senior Year:

1. Wait.
2. Share news of your acceptances and rejections with your recommenders.