The decision to continue one’s education after the completion of undergraduate studies is an important and challenging one, whether you are a recent college graduate or a working adult. Resolving to attend a graduate or professional school is only the first step. The multiple steps which remain (i.e., choosing a program, choosing a school, taking admissions examinations, etc.) can seem overwhelming. However, a lot of the worry can be alleviated if the application process is handled systematically.

Although the timeline provided below is highly recommended, you should consider that the preparation process might not occur over the two year time period for everyone. Therefore, use the timeline only as a guide to make the application process more manageable. Above all, realize that you can accomplish this task successfully and with minimal stress by taking it one step at a time.

**Fall (Two Years Prior to Expected Enrollment)**
- Begin researching areas of interest and possible schools and programs.
- Visit your current institution’s career center or local library for resources.
- Check Web sites of schools.
- Request material and information from numerous schools.
- Gather information and testing schedules for appropriate admissions tests (e.g., GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT, etc.).
- Speak to academic advisors, faculty or others in reference to schools and programs.

**Spring**
- Register to take appropriate admissions examinations in the summer or fall.
- Identify faculty/supervisors who would be willing to write recommendations next fall.
- Narrow down schools/programs of interest.
- Request application materials.
- Become aware of application deadlines, admissions policies and required application components for each school (it can be helpful to create a list).
- Possibly visit the schools and/or see if you can speak to current students or recent alumni of the programs.
- Research scholarships and financial aid possibilities.

**Summer**
- Update your résumé or curriculum vitae.
- Begin working on application essays and your personal goal statement.

**Early Fall (One Year Prior to Expected Enrollment)**
- Take admissions examination if you haven’t done so already.
- If the scores aren’t desirable, re-register to take it again before the end of the semester.
- Obtain letters of recommendation.

**Late Fall**
- Compile all necessary applications components and send to the schools.
- Take the admissions examinations again if necessary and have scores electronically sent to schools.

**Early Spring**
- Contact schools to make sure they have received your application materials.
- Identify other materials needed from the selected schools.
- Send thank you notes to those who wrote your letters of recommendation.

**Late Spring**
- Upon receiving letters of acceptance, notify school of choice of your decision to attend their institution.
- Send necessary deposits/fees.
- Contact the other institutions and decline admission.