

Application Timeline

This timeline approximates applications to research universities in the US system, and should only be used as a general guide. For accurate information, consult the web sites of the programs to which you will be applying.

May:

Begin researching potential schools. Take a free GRE practice test. Your score will help you determine how much preparation you'll need for the real deal.

June:

Sign up for a GRE test prep course (we recommend the in-person or online options). Register for the GRE general test if necessary.

July:

Request information from schools that interest you. Consider paying a visit to your alma mater to meet up with a few former professors. They can recommend good programs and may even help you make some connections.

August:

Take the GRE general test. If you're not happy with your scores, sign up to take it again. Begin drafting your statement of purpose.

September:

Register for the November GRE subject test (if necessary). Finalize your list of prospective schools, and familiarize yourself with the professors who share your research interests at each school. Contact your recommenders. Keep polishing your statement of purpose.

October:

Request official transcripts from your undergraduate institution. Send your recommenders supplemental materials (like your resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools. Arrange a campus visit if you can.

November:

Have someone in the field and a few smart (and honest) friends read over your personal statement. Take the GRE subject test; make sure that your scores will be sent directly to schools.

December:

Complete and submit all applications, keeping copies of every section for your records. Verify that your recommendations have been sent.