Graduate School Checklist & Timeline

Make a list of what you’re looking for in a graduate program and what you’d like to do with a masters or doctoral degree.

- Look at general information about graduate school online:
  - http://www.princetonreview.com
  - http://www.gradview.com
  - http://www.gradschools.com

Create a list of potential schools/programs.

- Look at graduate school databases online:
  - http://www.gradschools.com/
  - http://www.petersons.com/

- Look at graduate school options abroad:
  - http://international.gradschools.com/

Questions to consider.

- Are you confident enough in your decision to make the necessary commitment in time, effort, and resources?
- Will this advanced degree lead you to where you want to be professionally or personally?
- How will attending graduate school affect your family, relationships, or responsibilities?
- How will you finance it and do the programs you are considering require or recommend related or prior experience?
- Will location be a factor or will courses be offered online?

Research and compare your options.

- Time commitment (e.g. 2 year program vs. 4 year program)
- Part-time vs. full-time programs
- Private vs. public institutions
- Entrance requirements
- Program approaches/specializations
- Faculty and teaching methods
- Program reputation
- Placement success of program graduates
- Tuition costs and financial aid available/assistantships
- Housing/living expenses

Use your research to choose 5-10 program possibilities, and narrow your list.

- Consult with your professors NEIU Alumni, and professionals in the field to discuss program highlights and their experiences in graduate school.
Plan campus visits, and schedule meetings with program faculty members or current students who can answer your questions.
Determine which programs you plan to apply to, and begin the application process.

Spring of your Junior Year:
Schedule date to take the GRE and/or other specific tests, and request that your scores be electronically sent to each school where you are applying.

August/September (Fall of Your Senior Year):
Request application information or research application processes online (be sure to note deadlines for applying and addresses where supplemental materials should be sent).

October/November:
Submit applications and application fees for each school by its published deadline.
Request copies of your transcript from the Registration Office (it is usually best to have them sent directly to the addresses where supplemental materials should be sent).
Approach faculty members, employers, etc. to write recommendation letters. Remember to provide them with any required recommendation forms, your resume and the deadline for submission.
Compose personal statements or essays for each institution and have your statement/essay revised by a faculty member or a career advisor.
Revise your resume and submit with supplemental information.

December:
Request scholarship/fellowship/assistantship information from each school where you applied.

January/February:
Complete the FAFSA Online and submit all completed scholarship application forms.
Prepare for any admission/assistantship(s) interviews
Attend any preview days/assistantship interview sessions/faculty interview sessions for each institution.

March/April/May:
Follow-up on institutions that you have not heard from and make your final decision.
Submit commitment forms and/or fees to the institution you have chosen, and register for classes.
Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.