

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

A GUIDE FOR GRADUATE STUDY

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Prepared by Career Services – 201 Hogg Hall

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

I. IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

Admission Tests

The following tests are administered at Lafayette College. Registration and information are available at www.ets.org and www.lsac.org.

GRE Subject Test: Saturday, October 28, 2017
Saturday, April 14, 2018

LSAT: Saturday, September 16, 2017
Saturday, February 10, 2018

The GRE General Test and the GMAT are computer-based tests that are given year-round at testing centers around the nation. To register and review testing locations, visit www.ets.org (GRE) or www.gmat.com (GMAT). *Please be advised that you must make an appointment to take these exams and you must make payment with a credit card at the time you register.*

GRE General Test: Testing available Monday-Friday with day and evening options.

Check the following websites for more information:

GRE General & Subject Tests: www.ets.org/gre

GMAT: www.mba.com/gmat

LSAT: www.lsac.org

MCAT: www.aamc.org

See Admissions Tests section (pages 9-10) for fees associated with each test.

II. TO GO, NOT TO GO, OR TO GO IN THE FUTURE

There are numerous reasons why people decide to attend graduate school. You may be fascinated by a particular area of study and want to immerse yourself in it further. You may have a clear sense of what career you want to pursue and an advanced degree is required for entry into that field. For example, law, medicine, and teaching in a college or university are areas in which education beyond the baccalaureate level is required. You may be motivated by a desire to increase your lifelong earning capacity. Accounting and computer science are examples of areas in which a Master's degree may prove lucrative. Finally, you may attend graduate school because, although a graduate degree in your field of interest does not necessarily translate into a more lucrative salary, the degree is necessary and leads to various intrinsic rewards. Social work and library science are two such fields.

If you don't fit into the categories above but are thinking about graduate school, it may be to your advantage to discuss your thoughts with your *Gateway* Counselor. If you are not part of the *Gateway* program, you can make an appointment with a career counselor in Career Services. The decision to attend graduate school will often involve long-term commitments of time, money, and emotional dedication. Take the time and collect the necessary information to verify that a graduate degree is the right step for you.

III. APPLYING

Types of Degrees

Graduate programs have become more and more specialized over the last several decades. Graduate schools offer specific degrees such as the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.), the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), the Professional Science Masters (P.S.M.), or the Master of Library Science (M.L.S.). Before entering such a specialized program, one needs to carefully consider his/her reasons for attending and goals once the degree is completed.

Another decision to carefully consider is whether to pursue a degree at the master's or doctoral level. Master's degree programs typically emphasize applied learning and practice, but many also have a research requirement. These programs are usually designed for the purpose of providing additional education or training in an area of specialization. Some Master's programs have a thesis component, and some programs emphasize course work that culminates with a comprehensive exam. Comprehensive exams may include a written test, an oral test, defense of a thesis, presentation, or a combination of these. If a comprehensive exam is a written or oral test, the emphasis is usually on the completed course work. Master's degree programs usually range between one and three years in length.

Most doctoral degrees, on the other hand, are designed to train researchers and thus typically focus on learning through research. This is especially true of the Doctor of Science or the Doctor of Philosophy. However, some doctoral degrees have a blend of applied learning and research-based focus, such as the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD). In the professional programs (e.g., law, medicine), there is an orientation to research, but these programs are also designed to produce people with high-level professional skills. For a doctoral program, rather than a comprehensive exam, students usually must prepare a rigorous defense of their completed dissertation. Doctoral programs typically require four to eight years to complete.

Researching Graduate Schools

When considering graduate schools, it is wise to ask for the suggestions and advice of your academic advisor and professors in relevant department(s). They have attended similar graduate programs themselves, have friends and colleagues at various graduate schools, and are familiar with current trends and research. It is also wise to talk to graduate students in your area of interest; they can offer current perspective of the field, particular programs, and the institution where they're studying. Visit schools that interest you, and talk with students and faculty.

The value of written resources should not be underestimated. One of the best places to start is with Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs and links from the Career Services website. This 6-volume set of guidebooks covers humanities, arts, and social sciences; physical science, mathematics, agricultural science, environment, and natural resources; engineering and applied science; business, education, health, information studies, law, and social work; and biological sciences. Much of the material included in this handout is covered in greater depth in the Peterson's Guidebooks. Other guides are also available such as the Insider's Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical & Counseling Psychology, Barron's Guide to Medical and Dental Schools, The Princeton Review's Best 295 Business Schools, and The Princeton Review's Best 169 Law Schools. This is only a sampling of available guides. Stop by Career Services, or check out the Career Services web page for further information.

Many sites have search capabilities using a variety of criteria. To reach this information on the Career Services website, go to "careerservices.lafayette.edu", click the "Students" tab, and then select "Consider Graduate & Professional School." Then go to "Helpful Resources."

In graduate school, the activity and reputation of the individual professor or department in which you are studying may be more important than the prestige of the overall institution. **Do not underestimate the benefit of keeping current with what is happening in your chosen discipline.** Become familiar with the journals and publications in that field. Follow your area of specialization and note who is publishing and from what institutions. Also note those who are on the editorial boards of those publications.

There are several basic questions to keep in mind as you examine institutions. First look at their academic training and secondly at their research activities. In addition, how do they approach teaching and the area of student development? Other questions to consider include graduate student body demographics, library and research facilities, as well as financial support/assistance and other resources available to the program. Also, what is the nature of the interaction between students and faculty? Other important considerations include the types of experiential opportunities available, such as assistantships and internships, and what types of advising and career services they provide.

What resources are available to help?

- Directories - Several directories were mentioned earlier. In addition to these, there are several other resources in Career Services, 201 Hogg Hall. Come in and browse through the graduate section of the library while also leveraging the online resources available at <http://careerservices.lafayette.edu/consider-grad-and-prof-school/>.
- Graduate School Liaisons – Across campus, professors have volunteered to serve as graduate school advisors for their academic departments. To access this information on the Career Services website, go to <http://careerservices.lafayette.edu/consider-grad-and-prof-school/>. Go to Helpful Resources section.
- Advisors - If you are considering law school, you should contact Karen Clemence, Senior Associate Dean of Advising & Co-Curricular Programs, ext. 5080 and visit the Pre Law Advising website at prelaw.lafayette.edu. If you are considering medical (MD/DO), dental, optometry, podiatry, or veterinary school, contact Professor Ken Haug, Faculty Chair of the Health Professions Advisory Committee, ext. 5214, or Julia Goldberg, Associate Dean of Advising & Co-Curricular Programs, ext.

5080, and visit the Health Professions website at healthprofessions.lafayette.edu. *Gateway* Counselors are also available to assist you.

International Students

International students compose a significant portion of the higher education system in this country. However, the United States has no set policy on the education of international students and neither do many universities. There are some consistencies despite the lack of national or institutional policies.

In applying to most universities, international students will be required to submit scores from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), or another appropriate entrance exam, just as U.S. applicants must. In addition, some schools will require the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In some cases, an international student will be admitted on the basis of the quantitative section of the above tests, personal statements, and letters of recommendation. Check with your schools of interest for admission requirements.

Many international students subsidize their graduate education through assistantships. Frequently these are teaching assistantships (TAs). Many universities screen TAs through interviews and testing to be sure they will be able to communicate effectively with the undergraduates they will be teaching.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Essays

The emphasis on essays varies tremendously from institution to institution. The application essay can be anything from a couple of paragraphs about why you want to attend graduate school to a lengthy document which expounds on your achievements, strengths and weaknesses, and your motivation for attending graduate school. Still others ask you to address hypothetical problems. The following five types of essays are some of the most common:

TYPE 1 – OPEN: No specific prompt, but topics to consider are often provided. Prompts may include asking for an autobiographical sketch, a description of your personality, or strengths and weaknesses.

APPROACH: Give detailed descriptions of important events only; generalize the less exciting aspects. When describing a weakness, show how you've overcome it. Explain any circumstance that may have inhibited your academic performance.

TYPE 2 - WRITING SAMPLES: Asks for a graded paper, a piece of fiction, or a report on one of your interests.

APPROACH: Send a variety of work, such as one science paper and one English paper, to display a wide range of talents.

TYPE 3 – SPECIFIC: Asks you to write on a single topic such as your greatest achievement, a memorable experience, an influential person, or a significant event.

APPROACH: Don't limit yourself to the occurrence (receiving X award). Include how you managed to receive X award (volunteer work, etc.). The event or person doesn't have to be dramatic but may have had a dramatic effect on you – tell why.

TYPE 4 – CREATIVE: Asks you to discuss a novel, a fictional character, or react to a quote.

APPROACH: Don't be afraid to be honest. You are judged less on your opinion and more on the logic of your thoughts. If you don't understand the quote, talk about it with friends to clarify your ideas.

TYPE 5 – GOALS: Asks you to write about your future plans, college major, or life experience.

APPROACH: Describe what you've done that shows a committed interest in the proposed area of study, such as club or association membership. Talk about what you hope to gain from the degree program and in turn what you hope to offer the world as a graduate of that particular program from that particular institution.

When writing your application essay, remember your audience. Admissions committees may be trying to evaluate several things, including the following:

- Motivation and commitment to a field of study
- Expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- Writing ability
- Major areas of interest
- Research, work, volunteer experience
- Educational background
- Immediate and long-term goals
- Reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- Maturity
- Personal uniqueness - how you would add to the diversity of the entering class

Remember to keep your essay positive. You will need to explain anything on your application that may have a negative reflection on you. However, the essay may not be the best place to address such concerns. These may be better explained in an attachment/addendum to your application.

Writing an essay for graduate or professional school takes time and should be something you begin working on early. Work with your academic faculty, a *Gateway* Counselor, and/or or pre-law/health professions advising to ensure your essay includes the key components most commonly associated with success.

Transcripts

The requirement to provide transcripts to the institutions to which you apply is almost universal. You may request through your Banner Self Service portal to have transcripts sent to your graduate institution(s) via mail or electronically. They are not provided directly to the requestor but are sent to the institution to which you are applying. See the Registrar's website, <http://registrar.lafayette.edu/> for more information.

Letters of Recommendation

Usually, two or three letters of recommendation are required for admission into a graduate program. Check with the institution of your choice for their policy. They may require the recommendations be from faculty members; however, some schools may specify a mix of faculty members and others who know you well. When choosing a reference, you should look for someone who has a high opinion of you, knows you in and out of class, is familiar with your goals, and has worked with or taught a large number of students. This person should be someone whose opinion will be held in high regard.

Before listing a reference, ask them if they feel they know you well enough to write a positive letter of recommendation for you. Ask early in the semester to provide adequate time for them to prepare their letter. In addition, give them any supporting material, such as a description of the program and institution, draft of your personal statement, and copy of your resume or CV. These materials will facilitate their ability to write you a comprehensive recommendation. It is also helpful to meet with your recommenders and discuss your interest in graduate or professional school.

Institutions will generally give you a choice of making your recommendations confidential or non-confidential. Discuss this option with your recommender. If you make them confidential, you will give up your right to review that recommendation. Typically, institutions will give additional credibility to a confidential recommendation, therefore it is advisable to waive your right to see the recommendation. If it is non-confidential, you will have the right to see the recommendation. Some of your references may choose to provide you with a copy of the letter.

Tips for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

1. **Ask your professor nicely and politely.** It is recommended that you make these requests in-person whenever possible. If you must make the request remotely, do so with a formal, well thought out email request. If you are in doubt about the kind of recommendation the reference will write, ask them.
2. **Early, early, early.** It takes time and care to write a good letter of recommendation and professors are busy. Ask for the letter well in advance of the due date. How far in advance? The earlier the better—at least a month before the due date to be safe. Never ask for a letter fewer than two weeks before the deadline. Don't forget to tell the professor the due date of the application!
3. **Give the professor talking points.** Just because you did well in the professor's class doesn't mean that the professor knows you. This is very important: the more information you give the professor, the better the letter your professor can write! If you inform your professor that you won a college-wide academic award, then that information will likely end up in your letter. You may want to provide some or all of the following:
 - Information about your experiences with the letter-writer (e.g., courses taken, class project topics, etc.)
 - Your resume or curriculum vitae
 - Information about the program to which you are applying
 - Honor societies to which you belong
 - Anything that makes you unique
 - Awards that you have won
 - Relevant work experience, internships, and research
 - Service activities such as volunteer work
 - Copies of admissions essays
 - Anything you want included in the letter
4. **Make your professor's job easy.** Fill out as much information as you can. If the recommendation is on a graduate school form, then write the professor's name, address, phone number, etc. on the form before you give it to the professor. If the recommendation needs to be mailed, give the professor a pre-addressed, stamped envelope. These courtesies are especially important if the professor must write several recommendations for you.
5. **Waive your rights.** Many letters of recommendation allow you to choose whether you waive or retain your rights to see the letter. It is recommended that you always waive your rights; readers will give a waived letter more weight. Many letter-writers won't write a non-confidential letter. If you're nervous that the letter-writer won't write you a good letter of recommendation, then ask someone else!
6. **Follow up.** The absent minded professor is more than just a cliché. Your professor may forget to write your letter. Don't be afraid to check in periodically with your professor to see if the recommendation has been sent. Just be careful not to be a nag.
7. **Thank your professor!** Write a thank-you note to your letter-writer (at least an email thank-you note)!
8. **Did you get it?** Let your professor know if you get the job, the internship, or the spot in graduate school. They want to know!

Interviews

Interviews may or may not be required for graduate school admission. Medical schools generally require interviews, as do many business schools. Law schools, generally, do not interview for admission. Be prepared for the interview just as you would be prepared for a job interview. You must be able to explain to the interviewer why you are interested in that school and that particular program. Know what you want that individual or committee to know about you so you can present it in a logical manner. You may be asked for your thoughts on a controversial topic or may be asked to put yourself into a situation. In either case, they are not looking so much for you to have a "correct" answer, as they are interested in observing your thought processes. **Schedule a mock interview with Career Services.** This is an excellent opportunity to receive constructive feedback and experience the "feel" of an interview setting. It is advisable to send a thank you letter to your interviewer 24-48 hours after your interview.

Auditions and Portfolios

Graduate programs in music, theater, and dance will frequently require auditions and programs in art, architecture, journalism and other visual fields will often ask for portfolios. The purpose of both the audition and portfolio is to show your background and preparation in your chosen field. The admissions committee will also attempt to assess potential from these sources. Check with your schools of choice for their policies. In your portfolio, be sure to label each piece individually. The level of proficiency in an audition will vary according to whether your program is in performance or an area such as education. Again, check the policies of your preferred graduate schools so that you can prepare well in advance.

V. ADMISSION TESTS

Many graduate schools require an applicant to complete one of the common entrance tests. For business school, the test generally required is the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), for medical school, it is the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), for law school, it is the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), and for many other programs, it is the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Check with your desired graduate program for its requirements.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) administers the GRE. The *GRE General Test* is a computer-based test and is offered at testing centers around the country. The GRE Subject Tests are offered two times a year at Lafayette. The dates for the Subject Test administrations are given in the front of this packet. The cost of the GRE is \$205.

The General Test is computer-adaptive, multi-staged test that measures your verbal, quantitative, and analytical abilities. Your performance on the first segment of each the verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning sections determines the next question set. Within each section you may skip and go back to questions you marked for later. You can receive a score on each section from 130-170 for verbal and quantitative reasoning and an analytical writing score of 0-6. Schools will either take your total score or an average of your scores. **To maximize your score, it is best to answer every question.**

The GRE Subject Tests are designed to measure your knowledge of one of seven specific areas including: biochemistry, cell, and molecular biology; biology; chemistry; literature in English; mathematics; physics; and psychology. *GRE Subject Tests* cost \$150 per subject. Each of these tests is 2 hours and 50 minutes long. Prior registration through ETS is required. Booklets are available in Career Services or online at www.ets.org/gre/.

Registration bulletins and review materials are available in the Career Services library. You may also register for the GRE General and Subject tests at: www.ets.org/gre/. Research each graduate institution to find which exam(s) you

need.

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

Educational Testing Service administers the GMAT. The cost to take the GMAT is \$250. It is a computer-based test and is offered at testing centers around the nation. Information concerning the testing times and location of the local testing center is given in the front of this packet.

The GMAT measures your analytical skills. Your score report includes five separate sections: *Verbal* with a range of 0-60 (below 9 or above 44 is rare); *Quantitative* with a range of 0-60 (below 7 or above 50 is rare); *Analytical Writing* with a separate score report with a range of 0-6 in half-point intervals; *Integrated Reasoning* with a separate score report with a range of 1-8 in single-point intervals; *Total* with a range of 200-800 (two-thirds of test takers score between 400 and 600). The test begins with one 30-minute *Analytical Writing* section, and continues with one 30-minute *Integrated Reasoning* section, followed by a 75-minute section of multiple choice questions for each *Verbal* and *Quantitative*.

Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

The Law School Admission Test is administered by the Law School Admission Council/Law School Admission Services (LSAC/LSAS) and is offered four times per year; twice yearly at Lafayette. The test dates are given at the front of this packet. The cost of the LSAT is \$180.

The LSAT is designed with four 45-minute sessions, one of which does not count in the scoring of the exam. It also includes a 30-minute writing exercise. This is not scored but is sent to the law schools with your scores. For more information on applying to law school and the LSAT, see Karen Clemence, Senior Associate Dean, Advising & Co-Curricular Programs ext. 5080 and explore the Pre Law Advising website at prelaw.lafayette.edu. Register for the LSAT at <https://www.lsac.org/>.

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

The MCAT attempts to assess an examinee's knowledge of basic biology, chemistry, and physics. It also attempts to evaluate scientific problem solving, critical thinking, and writing ability. Medical schools require MCAT scores before considering an application. MCATs are given in April and August of every year. It is **strongly recommended** that you take the MCATs in the spring of your junior year, unless you intend to defer your application until the following year. For more information on the MCAT, contact Professor Ken Haug, Chemistry Department, at ext. 5214 or Mrs. Simona Glaus, Coordinator of Health Professions Program, at ext. 5521, or visit the MCAT website at www.aamc.org. The cost of the MCAT is \$305. For more information on applying to medical (MD or DO), dental, optometry, podiatry, or veterinary programs, visit the Health Professions Advising website at healthprofessions.lafayette.edu.

VI. FINANCIAL AID

Federal and state governments, private foundations, and universities all provide funds for graduate study in the form of loans, grants and work opportunities. Financial aid for graduate study does exist, however, it may take some research on your part to uncover the opportunities.

WORK PROGRAMS

When applicants apply to graduate schools, they frequently consider the idea of assistantships. Generally, they think of teaching assistantships. However, teaching assistantships are just one type of work program available to the graduate student. Assistantships usually require 10 to 20 hours of work per week depending on the position. Some assistantships pay only a salary, while others also provide tuition breaks or remission. An assistantship salary may be awarded in the form of a periodic stipend and is generally considered taxable income. Other work programs are usually on an hourly basis. Check with your chosen schools to find out which work programs are available and the benefits of each.

Teaching Assistantships

These assistantships are available to a student who is doing graduate work in an area which also offers courses at the undergraduate level. English is an example of a subject that is sometimes taught at the freshman level by graduate teaching assistants. In a teaching assistantship, you will give lectures, grade papers, correct assignments, teach labs, and counsel students. Some schools abide by policies that require a teaching assistant to have completed a certain number of hours of graduate study or a prerequisite course.

Research Assistantships

Research assistants usually work directly with a professor. This type of assistantship may not be available for first year graduate students. Again, you should contact the academic department to inquire about the opportunities and their policies.

Administrative Assistantships

Administrative assistantships are often available to first year graduate students and can be found in a variety of offices. Usually, the graduate student is studying something that relates to that office, but that is not always the case. Assistantships can be found in offices such as admissions, financial aid, student programs, career services, and others. Contact the academic department or graduate school of the institution you plan to attend for more information.

Work-Study

The federal student work-study program provides students demonstrating financial need with employment opportunities. These opportunities are usually within the institution the student is attending or another non-profit organization. Some institutions only provide work-study to undergraduates and not all have work-study funding. To qualify, you must be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident and be enrolled in a degree or certificate program half-time or greater and you must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of your program of study.

Other Employment

Many schools have an office that coordinates off-campus employment opportunities for students. These opportunities do not require financial need and are not subsidized. Job vacancy listings are usually found in career services or financial aid; contact these offices in your chosen institution for more information. Students may need to find and secure employment independently.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

These are generally awards that do not require a service or repayment. Sometimes they are a block amount designed to help offset costs and sometimes they cover specific costs such as tuition and fees plus a stipend to help with expenses. A grant may require one to be studying a certain field and is usually awarded to someone who demonstrates need. A fellowship is usually awarded on the basis of ability and does not require a demonstration of financial need. The portion of a grant or fellowship that is used to cover anything other than direct educational expenses may be considered taxable income.

Grants and fellowships may be available through federal or state agencies, the institution, or from foundations. Mrs. Simona Glaus, 105 Scott Hall, has a number of books that provide information on grant and fellowship sources. Skillman Library and the Career Services library also provide such resources. See [Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional School Programs](#) and [Peterson's Guide to Scholarships, Grants, & Prizes](#) for more detailed information on the different sources of grants and fellowships, and application procedures.

Prestigious fellowships are available for international study. Two of the most prominent are the **Rhodes** and **Fulbright**. Meet with Dean Julia Goldberg to discuss your candidacy and access the application process.

Many other opportunities are also available. Contact Dean Julia Goldberg, 105 Scott Hall, for an appointment to discuss appropriate opportunities that fit your academic and educational interests. Also, explore these opportunities from the Office of Advising & Co-Curricular Programs website at externalscholarships.lafayette.edu/scholarships.

LOANS

A number of loan programs are available for graduate study. Remember to borrow with care. Educational loans can become an overwhelming burden after graduation if they are overused. However, they are an important source for students who need financial assistance to attend the institution of their choice.

The **Stafford Loan Program** is guaranteed by the federal government and is preferred by students because it allows the student to defer payments until after graduation. Financial need must be demonstrated to qualify for a Stafford Loan. Contact the Financial Aid Office for the appropriate need analysis form. The loan covers only the cost of attending less any other financial aid you receive. For more information about Federal Student Aid go to studentaid.ed.gov.

Federal Perkins Loan Program is a long-term loan program with low interest rates. Check with your graduate institution regarding the availability and for additional details.

The **Health Professions Student Loan (HPSL)** provides long-term, low interest loans to full-time, financial needy students to pursue a degree in dentistry, optometry, pharmacy, pediatric medicine, or veterinary medicine. Learn more on the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Health Resources & Services Administration page (<https://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/loans/>). Other loans are available through independent lenders and some schools and professional associations have their own loan programs. Check with your institution and any appropriate professional associations for information regarding these opportunities.

The **Direct PLUS Loan** is a federal loan that can be used to cover expenses not covered by other financial aid. Direct PLUS loans qualify for the federal repayment options such as graduated or income-based repayment, as well as loan forgiveness.

VII. Graduate School Timeline

Information in parentheses below provides a timeline as it relates to beginning graduate school the summer or fall immediately following a May graduation from Lafayette. Please note that many applicants decide to take time between undergraduate and graduate study to gain professional experience, take additional courses, prepare applications, and confirm their interests. This timeline can also be useful if you decide to apply a year or more following graduation.

NOTE: Students interested in medical (MD or DO), dental, optometry, podiatry, or veterinary school should check with the Health Professions Advisory Committee for specific timeline information:

healthprofessions.lafayette.edu. Students interested in law school should visit prelaw.lafayette.edu for timeline and other helpful information.

Six Months Prior to Applying (Spring of Junior Year)

- Research area of interest, institutions, and programs.
- Begin making outreach to faculty at programs of interest. Speak with your *Gateway* Counselor and/or faculty advisors for guidance with this process.
- Talk to your *Gateway* Counselor and faculty advisor about application requirements.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admissions tests.
- Begin compiling a list of faculty from whom you will request recommendations.

Three Months Prior to Applying (Summer after Your Junior Year)

- Take required admissions tests.
- Request and review application materials.
- Visit institutions of interest.
- Write your application essay or personal statement and have several people review it.
- Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies. Be sure not to miss any! (For some programs, applying early can enhance your chances of being accepted.)
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service most programs use.

A Year Prior to Matriculating (Fall of Senior Year)

- Obtain letters of recommendation. Give faculty at least one month's notice.
- Take graduate admissions test, if you haven't already.
- Send in completed application materials.

NOTE: To maximize candidacy and opportunities for funding, it is advisable to apply at least one month prior to the application deadline, and for PhD programs even earlier.

Six Months Prior to Matriculating (Spring of Senior Year)

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1, if required.
- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Visit institutions that accept you, if you haven't already and schedule an interview.
- Send a deposit to your institution of choice.
- Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision, so that they can admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.
- Let Career Services know your decision.

Revised (2017) and reprinted from: Graduate & Professional School Programs, Peterson's, Princeton, NJ, 1999.

VIII. SUMMARY

In conclusion, there is a lot to think about when deciding to attend graduate school. Begin by talking to your *Gateway* Counselor, Faculty Advisor and others who may be able to help you. Research your schools of interest, carefully analyzing their programs, facilities, location, size, cost, financial aid opportunities, and career services. If possible, visit your schools of interest. Take the appropriate entrance exam. If along the way you need some help, come by the Office of Career Services. In short, prepare yourself for a challenging and exciting academic experience.

Much of this information has been adapted from **Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional School Programs**. We encourage you to review these guides at Skillman Library or the Career Services library, as well as to explore the extensive resources provided on the Career Services website.

CAREER SERVICES

201 Hogg Hall

610-330-5115

careerservices.lafayette.edu

Fax (610)330-5719

Graduate School Advising Grid

	Career Services/ Gateway Counselor	Career Services: Career Library	Career Services: Website	Academic Dept/ Faculty	Dean of Advising & Co- Curricular Programs	Other Resources
Considering Graduate School?	X	X Print Guides and Directories	X Overview and Online Resources	X		X GradSchools.com
Considering Professional School? (Law or Health)				X	X	X lsac.org, aamc.org
Identification of Programs	X	X Print Directories	X Online Resources	X	X	X See Career Services website for links
Program Rankings/Quality			X	X	X	X Directories in Skillman Library
Personal Statement: Content	X	X	X	X	X	
Personal Statement: Structure, Grammar, and Proofreading	X			X		X Writing Associates
Mock Interviewing	X				X	X Lafayette.interview stream.com
Test Prep Information		X Practice/Review Guides	X Online Resources		X	X See Career Services website for links
Test Administration Information	X Test Dates and On-Campus Testing		X Overview and Online Resources		X	X www.ets.org
Admissions Requirements		X Print Directories	X Online Resources	X Print Directories	X	X Program Websites
Scholarships, Fellowships		X Print Guides	X Online Resources	X	X Externalscholarships. Lafayette.edu	X GradSchools.com, Petersons.com
Financial Aid			X Online Resources			X www.fafsa.ed.gov, www.finaid.org
Advice from Graduate Students	X Alumni Panels, Alumni Networking					X Contact programs of interest to connect with current students
Graduate Student Shadowing	X Externships					

The **Graduate School Grid** provides you with resources to help you throughout the Graduate or Professional School process. This grid should serve as a navigational tool. The **Grid** provides a selection of key on and off campus resources, but is not exhaustive.