You have decided to pursue your master’s degree in your chosen field. Awesome! Here is a checklist to help you in conquering the admissions process.

**Immediately**

- Maintain highest GPA possible.
- Make sure you have gained experience in the field you want to pursue in graduate school.
- Talk to current faculty members to explore options and access their expertise.
- Think about additional classes you may need your senior year.
- Schedule time to study for the necessary graduate exam(s) and set an early deadline for taking the tests in order to allow for needed retakes.

**Junior Year – Spring**

- Questions to ask and find the answers to:
  - Should I go to graduate school? Why?
  - Which program will I study?
  - Which school should I go to?
  - How do I pay for it?
  - What is the school’s ranking?
  - What is the program’s ranking?

**NOTE:** If your degree is researched based or traditionally considered an academic degree then you should gain admission to and attend the highest ranked school/program that you can afford. On the other hand, if you can gain your degree or executive certificate without an emphasis on a thesis, dissertation, or traditional admission requirements, then a less expensive school/program might be a good choice for you.

- Begin researching a minimum of 6-8 potential schools and requesting information (online) from those institutions. Your online correspondence needs to be professional. Remember to have 2 “reach” schools; 2 “strong possibility” schools; 2 “safe” schools. Find out admission requirements (online) for the different schools.
- Determine application procedures, graduate exam requirements, and application deadlines.
- Take a practice GRE test. Your score will help you determine how much preparation you’ll need in order to succeed. ETS.org has free practice tests. If your practice scores weren’t too hot, sign up for a GRE preparation course and study Algebra For Dummies, etc.
After appropriate test preparation, register for the required graduate entrance exams, both general and subject test, as required by your individual programs.

Go over an unofficial copy of your transcript, checking for any errors.

Investigate national scholarships and grants and their deadlines.

Create a preliminary list for letters of recommendation. They should be from faculty and professionals.

Throughout this whole year you need to be networking among faculty. They can recommend good programs and may even help you make connections with your target schools.

**Junior Year – Summer**

- Take graduate entrance exams. If you’re not happy with your scores, sign up to take them again. If satisfied with your test results, have them submitted to your chosen schools.
- Request (online) updated application materials from your chosen schools.
- Write your personal essay(s) and get it critiqued by trusted faculty and by the DSU Career Services Center located on the 5th floor of the Holland Building.
- Double check application deadlines and traditional or rolling admissions policies at your chosen schools. Keep in mind that many medical and law schools have separate national application processes as well.
- Visit the institutions you are most interested in and meet the appropriate faculty/departments/students (if possible).

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**Sample schedule for a senior year student hoping to enter graduate school in the fall. Be sure to modify this schedule to fit the specific school’s deadlines.**

**Fall Semester-May:** (more than one year before graduate school begins)

- Research potential schools.
- Speak to professionals in the field who know about different programs.
- Consider the cost of attending different schools.
- Consider relocation and/or effects of school on my family and relationships.
- Take practice tests for MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, MAT, etc. Study guides are available at Barnes and Noble or Amazon.

**June:**

- Register for testing at DSU Testing Center Career Services in our testing area at testcenter@dixie.edu 435-652-7696

**July:**

- Request information from schools that interest you.
- Meet with several of your professors who can recommend good programs and help you make some connections.
- Take required entrance exams
August:

- Re-take required entrance exams if needed. This leaves you time to send the scores to the programs you are applying to.
- Begin writing your personal statement/letter of intent.

September:

- Finalize your list of prospective schools.
- Pick a professor or two from each school you are considering whose research interests mirror your own and familiarize yourself with their work e.g., dissertation, published journal articles, etc., if applicable.
- Contact your recommenders and ask if they will write letters of recommendation for you. Keep developing your personal statement.

October:

- Request official transcripts.
- Send your recommender supplemental materials (i.e., 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 possible, or follow-up to increase your chances of receiving an invitation for a visit from those programs that invite candidates.
- Talk to current students in the programs and meet with key professors
- Explore living areas around the campus.

November:

- Have someone in the field, a professor or advisor, and your Career Services Career Coach review and edit your personal statement. Leave time for rewriting and editing.
- Start your FAFSA form online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

December:

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

January:

- Focus on financial aid—Finish your FASFA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

April:

- Celebrate your acceptances!
- Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn’t meet your financial needs.
- Report your success to your career coach and recommend writers.