

The Grad School Search...

Use this sheet to keep track of decisions pertaining to the search process

WHY DO I WANT TO GO TO GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL?

- _____ To gain a Master's or Doctorate for entry into a particular career
- _____ To be eligible for professional licensing (physical therapy license, etc.)
- _____ To make more money in my first professional job
- _____ I love the field and want to learn more
- _____ I won't be able to do much with my undergrad major
- _____ The economy is slow and the job market is lousy
- _____ I will feel more comfortable in an academic setting
- _____ I want to delay the career decision-making process for 2+ more years
- _____ Other reasons: _____

Once you decide to apply, you MUST research your career field(s) of interest to determine what specific type of degree you will need!

WHERE DO I WANT TO GO?

Check off anything that is important to you, when choosing a grad school, from the following list. Then rank each item in order of importance.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| _____ Location of school (urban vs. rural) | Rank #: |
| _____ Location of school (proximity to friends/family) | Rank #: |
| _____ Size of total student enrollment | Rank #: |
| _____ Number of students in my specific program | Rank #: |
| _____ Prestige of school | Rank #: |
| _____ Prestige of my specific program | Rank #: |
| _____ Number of faculty in my department | Rank #: |
| _____ Quality of research conducted by faculty | Rank #: |
| _____ Amount of aid/assistantships given | Rank #: |
| _____ Success of past program graduates | Rank #: |
| _____ Attractiveness of campus | Rank #: |
| _____ Number/quality of activities and clubs on campus | Rank #: |
| _____ Other: _____ | Rank #: |

After you have determined what you value most when choosing a school, use the following checklist to ensure that you have researched your options thoroughly.

- _____ Search through www.petersons.com and www.gradschools.com
- _____ Consult U.S. News & World Report and/or other rankings
- _____ Ask appropriate faculty members for their opinions on schools
- _____ Talk to professionals in the field and ask them to recommend programs
- _____ Check out professional association Web sites for recommended programs
- _____ Call each school and ask questions (about program, faculty, etc.)
- _____ Write or call for program brochures that I can compare and contrast
- _____ Visit schools that interest me (if possible)
- _____ Speak with students currently in the programs I'm considering

_____ Read through the course catalogues for each program

HOW DO I APPLY?

In order to obtain applications you can either:

- Call or write the graduate/professional school offices asking for applications, course catalogues, and financial aid info - look in the Peterson's guides (in the Career Center) or schools' Web sites for the proper addresses
- Request applications by writing formal letters to the department chairs in which you describe your training/experience/interests

Law & Medical School Applications: The LSDAS (www.lsac.org) and the AMCAS (www.aamc.org/stuapps) are national services that assist with the application process.

Use the following checklist to ensure that you don't leave anything out!!

- _____ Clarify application process and requirements
- _____ Determine the standardized test(s) that are required (GRE, LSAT, etc.)
- _____ Schedule or register for a testing date
- _____ Study!! Practice!! Buy a study guide or take a test review course
- _____ Have test scores sent to appropriate schools
- _____ Request some official transcripts from the Registrar's office (call x4639)
- _____ Identify 3 people who can write me recommendation letters
- _____ Ask for recommendation letters EARLY (at least 2 months before due date)
- _____ Set up a Credentials File at the Career Center (call x4346)
- _____ Complete and organize my portfolio (put online if possible)
- _____ Write (and re-write) Personal Statements and have others proofread them
- _____ Schedule interviews/auditions and/or visits to campuses
- _____ Do a Mock Interview at the Career Center to prepare
- _____ Submit completed application with appropriate fees
- _____ FOLLOW UP by calling the school (2 weeks after mailing) to confirm that my application has been received and that it is complete

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The following factors are also important to think about. By answering these questions, you will begin to formulate a plan and a timeline that will work best for you:

- **Will I be ready to go to school again right after graduation or should I take some time off?**
- **How many pre-requisites will I need to fulfill before matriculating?**
- **When are most of the schools' application deadlines?**
- **When are the appropriate standardized tests offered?**
- **How long will it take for me to adequately prepare for the test(s)?**
- **Will any of the professors writing recommendation letters be on leave when I will be applying?**
- **Will I need to apply for financial aid (and fill out the appropriate forms)?**
- **How many schools will I have the time to visit?**
- **How many schools will I have the money to visit?**

We suggest that you begin to chart out the next year or two (perhaps on a calendar) and set some deadlines for yourself (i.e. date that personal statement will be completed, or date by which you will complete all school visits, etc.). This will allow you to keep track of the search process and to manage your time effectively. Stop by the Career Center for any additional help!

*Hamilton College Career Center**859.4346**www.hamilton.edu/college/career*