

# Is graduate school in your future?

An introduction to the graduate school planning/information process

contributed by the  
Career Development Center

One of the initial steps in applying to a graduate or professional school is to research application deadlines so that you can develop a timeline of when to submit official transcripts, graduate test scores, letters of recommendation, personal essays, and related material.

Many graduate and professional schools have January or February application deadlines for admission for the following fall. However, there are exceptions. Competitive programs and fellowship competitions may have earlier deadlines. Professional schools such as law, medicine, business, or dental school—have rolling admissions, which means that applications are reviewed and applicants are admitted prior to the official deadlines. Application deadlines vary, therefore it is very important to start researching deadlines and admission requirements early! Although many graduate school application deadlines are in January/February, you should apply in October to assure plenty of time for unexpected requests or lost materials.

The application deadline for the graduate program is often different from the application for assistantships and fellowships. A general rule for these is to APPLY EARLY! Most schools begin screening for these positions early in February. If you apply early, you will have a better chance for financial assistance and career-related experience opportunities.

A completed application will typically include three letters of recommendation, an autobiographical statement of your interests and goals for graduate study, graduate admission test scores, and official undergraduate transcripts. In addition, some schools will require an interview prior to acceptance into a graduate program.

More information on the graduate school planning process is available at the Career Development Center (CDC) and online at <http://www.pserie.psu.edu/career/gradschl.htm>.

The timeline below can be used as a guide in your planning process. You may also want to put one of these graduate school fairs on your calendar. Visit the CDC for a list of schools that will be attending.

#### Upcoming Graduate School Fairs:

Gannon University, Waldron Student Center Grad Fair 2000  
Tuesday, October 17,  
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

University Park, Hetzel Union Building (HUB) Alumni Hall  
**Law School Fair 2000,**  
Thursday, October 19,  
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

University Park, Hetzel Union Building (HUB) Alumni Hall  
**Graduate School Fair**  
Tuesday, October 24,  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Information for this article was adapted from the Career Development Center's web site <http://www.pserie.psu.edu/career/gradschl.htm>, the University of California at Berkeley web site <http://career.berkeley.edu/80/Grad/Grad.stm>, and Capital University's web site <http://www.capital.edu/services/career/esgptimeline.htm>

#### GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

##### 15-18 months prior to beginning a graduate program

- Use the graduate school resource guides in the Career Development Center's resource room.
- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs.
- Talk with faculty and advisors in your department about graduate programs and application requirements.
- Develop a list of recommended schools. Request program information and application materials.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admissions tests.
- Investigate national scholarships.
- Begin planning your references.

##### 1 year-15 months prior to beginning a graduate program

- Take required graduate admissions tests.
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register with a national application or data assembly service.
- Verify application deadlines. To prevent sloppy applications, photocopy the forms you receive before completing them.
- Write directly to the department to request information on specific programs and degree requirements.
- Write your application essay.

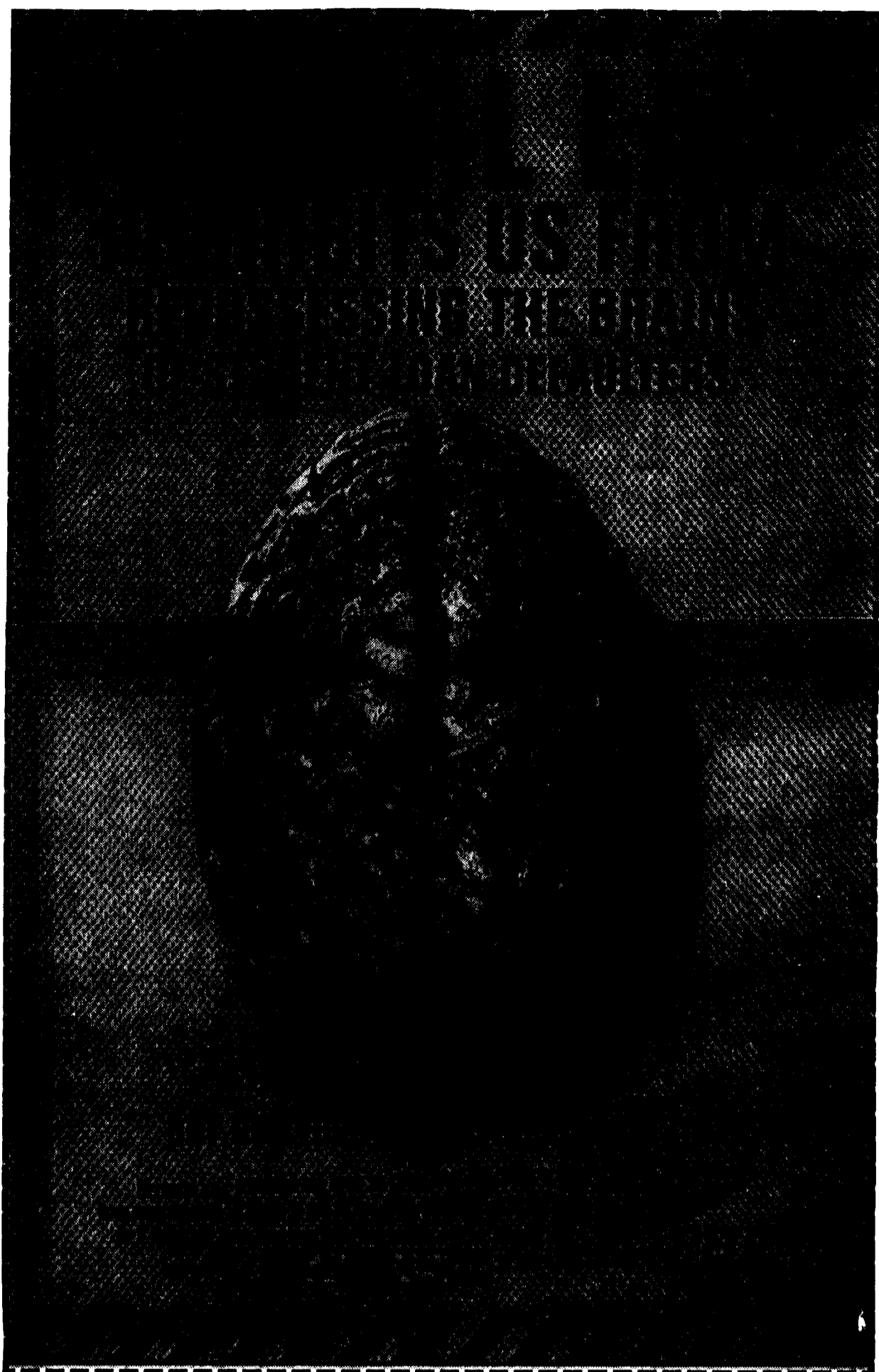
##### 9 months-1 year, prior to beginning a graduate program

- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Take graduate tests if you have not done so.
- Send in completed applications. Make photocopies of your completed forms.
- Have Registrar's office send official transcripts.
- Schedule interview (if needed).
- Request information on assistantships and fellowships.
- Register for financial aid.

##### 3-9 months prior to beginning a graduate program

- Submit all materials by the stated deadlines.
- Check with each institution before the deadline to verify that your file is complete.
- Visit institutions that accept you.
- Apply for assistantships or fellowships.
- Send a deposit to your school of choice.
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision as soon as possible to allow for others to be offered admission.
- Send thank you notes to all references and others that may have assisted in your process.

The sooner you turn in your application packet, the greater your advantage. Fifty percent of all applications will be sent in the last month. One way to be ahead of the crowd is to make your personal deadlines a month earlier than the stated deadlines.



## WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER FALL BREAK?

"We're all going to the Apple Fest in Franklin, PA."

(L to R) Erica Werner, Bio 01  
Molly Mitchel, Elementary Ed 01  
Tiffany Caccavo, Business 01



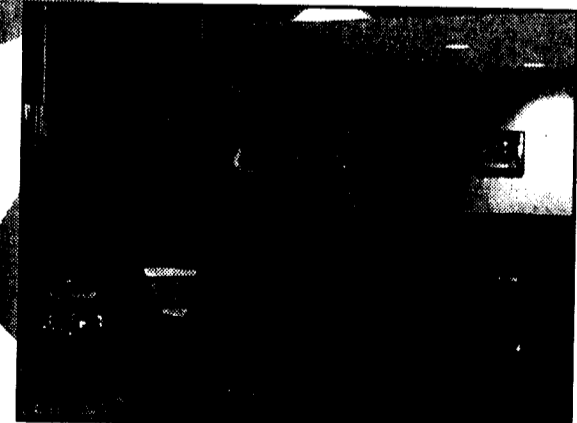
"We are going to take a trip to the Appalachian Mountains and the Ohio River."

Scott McCall, MIS 08  
Catherine Brown, Bio 03



"I'm going to the beach."

James Tahon, Commu 07



"I'm going to sleep, watch football, and eat."


John [Name], Engineering 03



"I am going home to hang out with my friends."

Clint Altman, [Name] 03





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# BEHREND DAY

## Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>

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