Graduate School Checklist & Timeline

✓ **Questions to consider when thinking about graduate school:**
   - What are my short and long-term goals?
   - Will graduate studies help me to achieve those goals?
   - Leave in some time off from school before pursuing my graduate education?
   - What are pros and cons?

✓ **Make list of what you're looking for in a graduate program**
   - Check out general information about graduate schools/programs online.
   - What criteria are important to you?
   - Make a list so you know how to evaluate programs you look at. Common criteria include:
     - Location
     - Cost
     - Program reputation
     - Credentials provided
     - Success rates of graduation

✓ **Generate list of potential programs/schools**
   - Research potential programs online to review your options.
     - http://www.princetonreview.com/grad/research/
     - http://www.mycareerblast.com/my_grad_school.html
     - http://www.gradview.com/articles/choosing.html
   - Consider graduate school options abroad!
     - www.gradschools.com/program-types/graduate-schools-by-country
   - Other helpful websites include:
     - www.gradschools.com/
     - www.petersons.com/
     - www.usnews.com/education
   - Stop by the Graduate School (106 Gillis Building) for graduate school resources here at UK.

✓ **Continue your research and compare options and goals**
   - Time Commitment (1 vs. 4 year program)
   - Part-time vs. full-time programs
   - Public vs. Private institutions
   - Acceptance rates & entrance requirements
   - Placement success of program graduates
   - Placement locations (where grads go)
   - Program size and demographics
   - Teaching methods
   - Program reputation
   - Tuition costs & financial aid available
   - Living expenses

✓ **Use your research to choose 5-10 program possibilities. Start to narrow you list.**
   - Talk to advisors, professors & professionals in the field to discuss program highlights and their experiences in graduate school.
   - Plan campus visits, meetings with program faculty members.
   - Ask to be connected with current students

✓ **Determine which programs you want to apply for and start the application process.**
   - Make a folder for each program you apply to and include a checklist of application requirements to keep yourself organized.

<u>Timeline (generally speaking, some *programs like medical school require a different timeline*)</u>

✓ **Spring Semester of Your Junior Year:**
  - o Schedule to take GRE, GMAT, and/or GRE subject tests and request that your scores are electronically sent to each school where you are applying.
  - o Note: Schedule in advance months before you intend to take test as testing facilities fill up quickly
  - o Consider test prep courses with Kaplan. Visit www.kaptest.com to explore options.
  - o Use online study resources like these:
    - ▪ www.gmatpracticeprep.com
    - ▪ www.mygretutor.com
  - o Consider test prep books like Princeton Review, Cracking the GRE, The Ultimate Math Refresher for GRE, GMAT, and SAT, The GRE Test for Dummies

✓ **August/September - Fall Semester of Your Senior Year:**
  - o Research application information & application processes. Keep track of all deadlines for applying, as deadlines will differ with programs.
  - o (Be sure to find out if the schools you are applying to use a rolling admissions process. This means the earlier you apply the better.)

✓ **October/ November - Fall Semester of Your Senior Year:**
  - o Submit applications and application fees for each school by deadline.
  - o Request transcript from Registration Office. It's usually best to request the UK Transcript Office (located in Funkhouser Building) send transcripts directly to the addresses where supplemental materials should be sent.
  - o Approach Professors, Employers, etc. for letters of recommendation.
  - o Compose personal statements/essays for each institution and have them revised by a faculty member, writing center, and staff in the Graham Office of Career Management.
  - o Revise resume/curriculum vitae and submit with supplemental information. (Again GOCM staff can help.)

✓ **December - Fall Semester of Your Senior Year:**
  - o Request/Research funding information for programs such as scholarships, fellowships, assistantships from each school you applied.

✓ **January-February - Spring Semester of Your Senior Year:**
  - o File your Federal Income Tax Return. This must be done before to complete FAFSA.
  - o File FAFSA and submit all complete scholarship applications.
  - o Prepare for admissions interviews by scheduling an appointment with Graham Office of Career Management or online services such as:
    - ▪ Interview Stream (must login through Handshake to get into interview stream.)
  - o Campus visits for interviews if possible

✓ **March-May - Spring Semester of Your Senior Year:**
  - o Follow-up with institutions that you have not heard back from and make final decision.
  - o Submit acceptance paperwork to your program of choice.
  - o Notify other programs of your decision if necessary.
  - o Send handwritten thank you notes on nice stationary to those who wrote letters of recommendation letters, and inform them of your chosen program.

Setting Yourself Up for Success

Application – Read through and complete your applications carefully and clearly. Make copies of any paper applications you get so that you'll be able to re-do them if any mistakes are made.

Test Scores – Take tests early enough so that you have time to repeat them if needed. Make sure that you understand each program's requirements (i.e. how many attempts they'll accept, if they average scores, etc.)
GPA – Be aware that some programs may calculate your GPA their own way. Find out if re-taking classes will help raise your GPA.

Recommendations – Choose references who know you well, can speak of your strengths, and who will submit in a timely manner. Help your references write the best letters for you by giving them plenty of time to write your letters (4+ weeks) and everything needed (your resume, names of grad programs, stamps, envelopes, etc.)

Personal Statement – Readers are looking for how you think, your commitment to the profession, the strength of your decision to go to grad school, and how well you "fit" with the program. Proofread carefully and have others review, as well.