

GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

This outline is catered towards those students who would like to enter graduate school immediately after graduation. If you are going to take a gap year(s), you need to prepare your graduate school application at least a year in advance of your expected year of enrollment.

FIRST YEAR

- Consider a concentration(s) that represents your academic interests and passions.
- This is a good time to get to know the various faculty members in the science departments. If you are interested in research during your first year, or the summer months, approach a professor as early as possible with questions or your desire to work with them on a research project.
- Contact faculty about research opportunities for your second year during the spring semester.
- Set up a meeting with your academic advisor to get to know them and obtain advice on networking, study abroad, and graduate school.
- If you are thinking about graduate school, start engaging with faculty who are Pre-Graduate School advisors?
- Join student clubs or organizations of interest.
- Take part in peer advising/mentoring to start to develop a network on campus.
- Be serious in your studies and make sure to have a balance between coursework and extracurriculars.
- Develop good study habits in your courses. Get to know your academic support services and tutoring options, if needed.
- Attend graduate school or alumni-related events.

SECOND YEAR

- You should be exploring research opportunities during the fall semester or ideally working in a research lab already.
- Once you have decided on a concentration, meet with your new academic advisor.
- Consider study abroad options for your third year. Deadlines are in February so work on this in late fall or over winter break.
- Attend graduate school or alumni related events.
- Start looking for summer research opportunities here at Brown or off campus. [Pathways to Science](#) is a wonderful website for locating science internships throughout the country and abroad. Use your network for advice. Deadlines typically are in January-March. Plan ahead and ask for letters of recommendation over winter break.
- Start to network with peers or Brown alumni to investigate graduate school or research options.

THIRD YEAR

- The ideal time to do a summer internship is right after your third year. You will have obtained research experience which will make you a strong candidate. Many of the deadlines are right after the New Year so be prepared to work on applications over the holidays. Do not forget to ask for letters of recommendation

well in advance since most of the applications require them submitted with the application packet.

- Now is the time to think about research areas and graduate programs. You are starting to take science electives and reading the scientific literature that will give you an idea of what kind of research and programs are out there. Also, talk to Brown faculty and your advisor for help in this decision process and also for research opportunities in their labs.
- Reach out to Brown alumni in research areas that you are interested in. LinkedIn is a good place to start.
- Familiarize yourself with standardized tests, such as the GRE. Some programs may still require them. Devote some time to studying for these standardized exams.
- Decide on your letter writers for graduate school applications.
- Prepare drafts of your CV and personal statement over the summer.
- Being to explore financial aid options if applicable.
- Attend graduate school or alumni-related events.

FOURTH YEAR

- Decide on which schools you will be applying to and make a worksheet with deadlines and requirements.
- Arrange to have your transcripts ready to send to schools.
- Complete your statement of purpose for your applications. It is a very good idea to have a faculty member or the pre-Graduate school advisor proofread the letter. Plan on multiple drafts. If possible, send your draft to multiple reviewers.
- Decide who will write your letters of recommendation and ask for them well in advance of the due dates for the application. Typically, you will need 3-5 letters. Please see the handout on rules and hints about asking for letters.
- Apply for fellowships or assistantships if applicable.
- Graduate school application deadlines are usually between November and January. Allow ample time to open up application profiles and complete the applications.
- Interviews are usually held between January-March. Once you are asked to interview, prepare for interviews by arranging mock interviews and practicing succinct conversations about your research, professional goals, strengths, and weaknesses.

ALUMNI

- Determine which application cycle you want to start in and reverse engineer the timeline listed above.
- Ask for letters of recommendation from faculty before you graduate if possible. Send your writers updates before you formally start to apply.