How to Apply to Graduate School
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OUR MISSION

Since 1976, the National GEM Consortium has been addressing a critical shortfall in American engineering and scientific talent by increasing the participation of under-represented minorities at the Master’s and Doctoral levels.

Our model is strategic and proven. We provide graduate Fellowships to highly qualified individuals from communities where such talent is largely untapped. Working in partnership with leading corporations, U.S. government laboratories and many of the nation’s top universities and research institutes, we provide GEM Fellows with the much-needed financial support that is often the deciding factor in pursuing graduate education, as well as practical experience through high-level, paid summer Internships. GEM does more than provide financial support, however. We work to ensure student success in these competitive academic and professional environments with effective programs that increase the recruitment, retention and graduation of GEM Fellows. More than 3,000 GEM Fellows have gone on to successful careers.
ABOUT THIS SERIES
At the National GEm Consortium our core business is providing graduate fellowships in engineering and science to highly qualified individuals from under-represented communities. We do this to address a critical shortfall in the production of American engineering and scientific talent by recruiting from communities that are virtually untapped.

The number and percentage of U.S. citizens receiving postgraduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) has been steadily declining for over two decades. Yet the need for qualified engineers and scientists has never been greater. Rewarding careers for individuals with Master's or Ph.D. degrees are plentiful. At GEm we believe that lack of information—not lack of opportunity—is the main reason more undergraduates don’t pursue advanced degrees in engineering and science.

GEm designed its Getting Ready For Advanced Degrees (GRAD) Lab symposiums for students like you.

GEM’s GRAD Labs help to demystify postgraduate education in science, technology, engineering, and math. They help you to understand why graduate school presents a career advantage, how to pick a graduate program, how to apply, and how to pay for it. They help you make informed decisions about this crucial phase in your life.

This publication is one of three Guides that accompany GEm’s GRAD Labs. These Guides provide a helpful summary and additional resource material.

- **Why Graduate School** (GRAD Lab Guide One) discusses the value of advanced degrees and what will be required of you.
- **This Guide, How to Apply To Graduate School** (GRAD Lab Guide Two) explores the essentials needed to apply, gain admission to, and navigate the graduate school process.
- **How to Fund Graduate School** (GRAD Lab Guide Three), helps you understand financing options, locate financial aid resources, and assess assistantship options.

You can also find the schedule and locations of an in-person or virtual GRAD Lab, or request that one be presented in your area by visiting www.gemfellowship.org, or calling 703-562-3646.

We hope this Guide helps make graduate school a reality for you!

THE NATIONAL GEM CONSORTIUM
Since 1976 the National GEM Consortium has been developing a pool of African-American, Hispanic-American and Native American talent in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). We are proud of the top-rated universities, renowned research facilities, and leading multinational corporations that comprise GEM.

Each year we identify and recruit 1,000 undergraduate students, graduate students, and working professionals for admission to advanced degree programs. Through three graduate Fellowship tracks—Master of Science in Engineering, Ph.D. in Science, and Ph.D. in Engineering—we provide financial support and practical experience through paid summer internships.

We also work to ensure success for our Fellows in these highly competitive academic and professional environments by providing programs through Member Universities.

The GEM Alumni Association, an influential network of more than 3,000 GEM Fellows, works to promote STEM education among America’s under-represented populations and bring exciting career opportunities in science and engineering to all.

INTRODUCTION
Thinking about a graduate degree? If so, it’s a good time to look at your options, even if you’re just beginning your freshman year. It’s never too late to begin to determine your interests, your strengths, and your passions. What can you do while in undergraduate school, you ask?

One thing is to be cognizant that your grades, even from your freshmen year, help shape your transcript for future study. Realizing that your grades can help or hinder your future goals may help direct the effort you put into your undergraduate studies. While your transcript is not all there is to an application, it will play a part.

Second, it’s during your undergraduate years that you should begin to discover your interests. You can learn about your strengths and weaknesses by getting involved in campus activities. Join student or professional organizations, participate in special projects, volunteer, and look for internship opportunities. Undergraduate is a perfect time for self-exploration. Take as much time as you can to make sure you’re making the right decision for you.

Third, developing connections with professors, teaching assistants, and fellow students now may help you in many ways in the time leading up to and during your graduate school studies. Of course, these connections will also enrich your life as an undergrad. If your
freshman year is behind you, simply start exploring your options now.

We’re here to help: this Guide explains what you need to know in order to decide on the STEM-related programs that will best suit you and your interests. It will also provide you with an understanding of what you’ll need to do when you apply for an advanced degree: the elements you’ll need to gather, the pieces you’ll need to write, and how to show an admissions committee that you’re the ideal fit for their program.

SELECTING A GRADUATE DEPARTMENT

Defining Your Interest
The first step to choosing a graduate department is to fine-tune your area of interest. Graduate study is different from undergraduate study because when applying to graduate school in engineering or science you are actually applying to a department versus the School of Engineering, or the School of Arts and Science.

It important to see if your interests align with the interests of the faculty in the programs you choose. Are the professors working on projects and doing research in which you’re interested? Also make sure there is a good mix of senior and less experienced professors. You want to make sure you have access to experienced professors throughout the life of your graduate program. You need professors in your specialized area of study to supervise your research and theses, and their research can influence the direction and development of your scholastic development. Plus, senior professors have more access to resources like laboratories and grants to support their students.

This is why it’s very important that you know as much as possible about the graduate department in which you’re interested.

Researching Graduate Departments
There are many resources available to help you find out about the graduate departments that interest you. An important first step is to look at the websites of departments in which you’re interested. See what the faculty is working on, what research is currently underway and get a sense of the focus of the department. There are also a number of guides that can help you in your research including:

- Peterson’s Graduate Programs in Engineering & Applied Sciences (www.petersons.com)
- The Gourman Report of Graduate Programs
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (www.chronicle.com)
- U.S. News & World Report (www.usnews.com)
- Forbes (www.forbes.com)
- USA Today (www.usatoday.com)
- GradPortal.org (www.gradportal.org)
- PhDs.org (www.phds.org/rankings)
- GradSchools.com (www.gradschools.com)

Talk to Your Professors
Professors at your undergraduate institution are a great source of information on graduate programs. The collaborative nature of engineering, scientific research, and higher education makes it a tightly knit community. So, schedule meetings with professors at your college to discuss their thoughts on the programs in which you’re interested. The professors don’t need to be in your specific area of interest to know about a department’s culture or reputation. Teaching assistants, research assistants, and departmental researchers may also be able to give you helpful information.

Campus Visits
The best way to see if a certain program is right for you is to visit the institution for a day or two. This can provide you with a great deal of information about the specific program and those involved, as well as a sense of whether or not it’s the right environment for you. If possible, visit all of the graduate departments where you’ll be submitting or have submitted an application.

Before you visit, find out if the school has any student chapters of organizations relevant to your discipline, such as:

- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
- Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES)
- Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

Then try to arrange for an in-person meeting so you can learn more about the department, the people, and what it’s like to be from your ethnic group or gender in that setting. For a broader view, you might also consider meeting with a representative of a university-wide minority organization that is not affiliated with a STEM field.

Note: Most graduate engineering programs will pay for a campus visit after you’ve been accepted. Graduate programs in science tend to require a campus interview, but at your own expense.
What to Ask
If you’re able to visit schools before sending in applications, you should try to find out what the department and its people are like. Ask questions of professors, graduate students, and/or research assistants in the departments you’re interested in so that you can get as full a picture as possible in order to make an informed decision.

Some suggestions:

Does the curriculum support my academic interests? Are there many course offerings in your area of interest? Are there interdepartmental courses offered that help to contribute to filling out the curriculum?

How many professors are doing research in my general area? If there is only one, what is his or her reputation and ranking? (Professors are ranked according to their experience.)

Full professors are fully tenured professors who have proven they can conduct research and compete for funding dollars by writing grants. Funding translates into the ability to financially support graduate students.

Associate professors are less senior than full professors and more senior than assistant professors.

Assistant professors are generally at the early stages of their career.

If there is only one professor at an institution currently doing research in your area, it’s important to take a closer second look. An assistant professor may be innovative and energetic...but may or may not be experienced in obtaining funding, which means he or she may not be able to support you. A tenured professor may be a stellar research advisor...but is due for a sabbatical or have an army of graduate students—both potentially detrimental to a first-year graduate student in need of direction. A smaller department might provide you with more personalized attention...but it may impact the curriculum or course offerings.

What is the educational infrastructure within the department? Does the department have adequate experimental equipment that will allow you to do your research in a timely manner? Are there too many graduate students vying for valuable lab space, office space, and equipment? What is the condition of the equipment and the library? Is the library up to date and rich with the materials you’ll need?
How long does it take the average student to finish an M.S. degree? A Ph.D.? You may not want to go to a school that tends to keep its Ph.D. students for more than seven years. (Although in some disciplines this is unavoidable; you should find out whether yours is one.)

Can I live here? It’s important that you determine whether or not the campus and surrounding area will meet your needs. Try to picture yourself living in that area for several years. Are there students with similar interest and backgrounds? Will your cultural and social needs be fulfilled? The answers to these questions should be factored into whatever decision you make about the best school for you.

When you’ve narrowed down your list of potential schools to about 10, request an application from each. There is no optimal number of programs to which you should apply—cost may be a factor in the number of schools. But aim high...don’t be afraid to apply to your dream school, just make sure to include other alternatives.

THE GRADUATE ADMISSIONS PROCESS
The first piece of advice we give about the graduate admissions process is to do everything early! While the graduate school process is a long one, and you may feel you have plenty of time to write essays, get recommendations, or take your tests, you will find that the time passes quickly. You don’t want these deadlines sneaking up on you, or to be biting your nails as you wait for that last professor to finish a recommendation, or as you try to cram last-minute for the GRE. Giving yourself a full year in advance is a good plan of action.

There are three primary portions of an application that you’ll need to send or arrange to have sent to the schools to which you’re applying:

- Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- Transcript of your academic record
- Written section
  - Application form
  - Resume
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Statement of purpose

While we will touch on each of the three main components, our focus will be on the letters of recommendation, statement of purpose and resume, as students typically find they require the most guidance on these sections.

Graduate Record Exam
The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is a standardized test administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). It can be taken as early as the start of your junior year.

Many universities and fellowship agencies use the general GRE as part of your application. In some instances, programs to which you’re applying will also require you to take a subject-specific section.

Start with www.ets.org or www.gre.org for additional information and test preparation materials. It is important that you understand the format of the test and that you practice taking the test so you have a sense of where you may need to refresh your skills.

Transcripts
You’ll need to have a transcript sent to each of the institutions to which you’ll be applying. Most institutions have a registrar who’ll send official transcripts, typically for a fee of $5 to $10 each. At many colleges you can order transcripts online.

Keep in mind that deadlines for applications related to admissions, fellowships, and scholarships generally coincide (December through February). You’ll avoid the mad rush of students descending upon the registrar if you order early. Time your requests in such a way that your transcripts arrive at your short-listed schools about a month before the application deadline arrives.

In addition, we recommend that each time you request an official transcript that you take a look at a copy yourself. Many schools allow students to access an unofficial transcript online or, for a few dollars, the registrar will send a hard copy. It’s important that you double check your transcript for errors so you can have them corrected immediately.

Note: Remember that if you owe your university money for any reason, it’s likely that they will not send your transcript until the matter is cleared up.

The Written Section
Now we get to the heart of the application. While the more purely academic components (GRE and transcript) are important, numbers and letter grades can’t fully tell your story. Use the written portions to differentiate yourself and prove that you’re the best candidate with the most promise.

Application Form
In addition to the rote “fill-in-the-blank” questions like name and address, most application forms ask questions that enable you to begin presenting yourself to the admissions committee in a
To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend Isabella Garcia to your graduate institution. I came to know her both in the class and during consultations in my office. She was a regular contributor to classroom discussions (which are important in a class on professional communications). Overall, she showed obvious appreciation of the purpose of the course and put forth extra effort to assist us all in achieving that purpose.

While she was one of my A students, I think her strongest qualities were those associated with teamwork and research. One of the class assignments was a long team presentation for which she and her team shared preparation and delivery duties. This presentation was the culmination of a complex project (encompassing extensive research and the composition of a written proposal, progress report, and final report), and it required considerable coordination and planning. Isabella’s team presentation was excellent, and Isabella played an important part in that success. Not only did she show strong interpersonal and management skills during the preparation of the oral report, but I was also pleased at her ability to speak confidently about a complex technical subject in terms the audience could easily follow. In addition, she played a central role in the group composition of a lengthy written report. In short, her communication skills, whether as an individual or a collaborator, are polished and effective.

Isabella is highly motivated, and I believe she has the intellectual abilities and work ethics to meet her goals. Her ability to commit herself to her studies—along with her teamwork and leadership skills during collaborative tasks—suggests to me that she is deserving of academic honors and financial assistance via scholarships or fellowships that might be available. I truly recommend her most enthusiastically.

Lonnie Jones
Ph.D., Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering Department
University of America
Research advisor. A professor who has served as your research advisor would be in an excellent position to comment on your research competence.

Undergraduate advisor. An undergraduate advisor who has seen your intellectual development would be an outstanding person to document your growth.

Mentor. A mentor could be a very good choice, so long as you’ve worked with him or her on a research project.

It might seem obvious, but it’s imperative that these letters be positive. Whether or not you’re “sure” you’ll get a great recommendation, we recommend that you ask each person if he or she can write you a strong, positive recommendation. Only if the answer is an unequivocal “yes” should you actually request a letter of recommendation. It’s not an inappropriate question; you must ensure that a bad or even lukewarm letter of recommendation does not make its way to your preferred list of schools. Few Dos and Don’ts you might keep in mind when seeking recommendation letters are:

**Dos**

- Do choose someone who knows you well enough to give you a recommendation.
- Do get recommendations from employers, professors, school administrators, and anyone else who is familiar with your work ethic.
- Do ask for the recommendation in person, rather than sending an email.
- Do tell the letter writer why you need the recommendation letter.
- Do mention specific things that you would like to see included.
- Do send a thank you note afterwards.
- Do keep copies of the letter.

**Don’ts**

- Don’t wait until the last minute. Secure letters of recommendation as soon as possible.
- Don’t ask someone to lie.
- Don’t ever forge signatures.
- Don’t choose someone only for his or her title. Pick someone who has a title AND knows you well.
- Don’t choose someone who is a poor writer.
- Don’t hesitate to get as many recommendation letters as possible.
- Don’t be surprised if the person you are asking for a recommendation letter asks you to write a letter that they will later modify and sign. This is a common practice.
- Don’t forget to say please and thank you. A letter of recommendation is a valuable resource.

A good way to build relationships that will produce the kind of letters you’ll need is to visit professors regularly during office hours. Discuss class topics, your educational goals, and career plans. This will enable him or her to write a positive and specific letter. Of course, it will have the more immediate benefit of demonstrating your interest in the class you’re currently taking. Besides, one-on-one discussions with professors can be wonderful experiences academically and personally.

Once you’ve arranged for people to write your recommendations, provide each with a packet of information that includes your statement of purpose, your resume, and a summary of any independent work you’ve performed to make it easier for them to include specifics. Speaking of making it easier, be sure you give your letter writers an adequate amount of time to get their letters in before the application deadline. Generally, ask them three to four weeks in advance of the application deadline.

Finally, we recommend that you check the box that says you waive your right to see the letter. It’s the accepted standard and, in fact, many professors will not write a letter unless this box is checked.

**Statement of Purpose**

Now it’s time to write your statement of purpose. Your statement of purpose ("statement of intent" on some applications) is where you’ll prove you’re a perfect match.

A strong statement of purpose will:

- Show the admissions committee that you have an idea about what you want to study and why you believe it is important.
- Demonstrate that you are familiar with their program and have thought about why you’re applying.
- Reflect the many characteristics that will make you a good graduate school candidate—motivation, persistence, intellectual curiosity, earnestness and confidence.
- Assure the committee that you’re a good fit for the program.

It should begin by explaining why you want to attend graduate school and why you’ve decided on your specific area of study. You should also outline what you intend to do with the degree once it’s been obtained. For example, you may wish to be a university professor in order to conduct cutting-edge research and serve as a role model for your students. Perhaps you would like to work in corporate America, developing inexpensive and effective solar panels.

A second section should discuss any undergraduate research you’ve done and any research papers you might have coauthored with a professor or graduate student. Did this lead to your current interests?
“GEM has provided The Viterbi School with high quality students from around the country who are not only academically talented, but possess the leadership required to rise to the top in engineering. GEM students have contributed greatly to our community, especially through their mentorship of our undergraduates. We are proud to have a GEM alumnus continue his service to Viterbi as a member of our Industry Advisory Board.”

Traci Thomas Navarro
Center for Engineering Diversity
Viterbi Admission and Student Affairs Division
University of Southern California
“This semester,” bellowed the teacher as he addressed the room of high school seniors, “I will make you all chemists.” The class let out a collective groan. “You will all have to complete a real research project using the facilities of local universities.” Like most of my classmates in the AP Chemistry course, I dreaded the huge amount of work that loomed before me. Little did I know that this work would help determine my future. In the months ahead, I committed more time to this one course than I ever had before, poring over chemistry textbooks and working in the laboratory into the early hours of the morning. I always had an inkling that my future lay in science and technology, and this experience proved it beyond question. The methodological laboratory preparations, the interweaving of theory and practice, and the tangible results of a successful experiment all appealed to my disciplined and inquisitive nature. By the end of my senior year, I had developed a solid foundation in the principles of chemistry, and just as my teacher had promised, I was on my way to becoming a chemist.

Despite my growing interest in chemistry, I still harbored dreams of becoming a fighter pilot in the United States Air Force at the time of my high school graduation. Even as I spent my evenings in the laboratory for AP Chemistry, I woke up early in the morning to run and do a routine of sit-ups and pushups. I was preparing for the rigorous physical and mental demands of the Air Force Academy. Over the course of previous summers, I had experienced the sweeping rush of glider school and had soloed in my first motorized aircraft. I hoped for the challenging life of an Air Force pilot and was on my way to making it a reality through sweaty self-discipline and intense mental focus. On one sunny afternoon, I saw a thick letter with a Colorado postmark in my mailbox. I was now a cadet at the Academy.

As with all military institutions, the first years at the Academy were intensely demanding. Strenuous endurance tests, high-level academic work, and hazing by upperclassmen made a junior cadet’s life extremely trying. Nonetheless, I thrived during these years because I never lost my sense of focus or my love of chemistry. Even as I dreamed of being a fighter pilot, I found my chemistry courses to be highly engaging and challenging. All cadets were given a choice of academic tracks, and I had chosen science and engineering. As in high school, I worked in the laboratory late at night and ran early in the morning. Whenever I got fatigued, I just remembered how close I was to fulfilling my goal of becoming a pilot.

After a visit to the ophthalmologist one day, my dreams of airborne glory were abruptly shot down. My vision did not meet the Air Force standards required of pilots. It was a crushing blow, and at first I did not know what to do. Nonetheless, I knew that I was not without direction. Once again, my life pushed me towards studying chemistry. This was a subject that I knew I would enjoy, so I packed up my science textbooks, threw away my flight training manuals, and headed back to my hometown college, the University of Texas at Austin (UTA).

As much as I had loved chemistry before, my studies at UTA convinced me that I had found the right vocation. I was particularly inspired by Dr. Joseph Steele. Like my high school chemistry teacher, Dr. Steele knew that the best way to instill an appreciation for the field was through active research and meaningful laboratory work. He believed that one should never learn from a book what one could learn from a beaker, flask, or Bunsen burner. As soon as I explained my experience and interest in the field to him, he offered me a position in his group doing research on the decomposition mechanisms of electro-optic dyes. The research I performed involved finding suitable organic dyes for electro-optic modulators. After months of grueling work and wise guidance from Dr. Steele, I was ready to present my research at regional and national meetings of the American Chemical Society. Networking with chemists from around the country allowed me to glimpse not only other possible fields of chemical research, but also the potential career options I might want to pursue. Had it not been for Dr. Steele’s personal guidance and help, I doubt that my future career plans in chemistry would be as clear as they are today.

Because of my two-year commitment to the United States Air Force, I was unable to apply to graduate school directly after college. Instead, I spent two years serving as an intelligence officer. From this job, I have greatly improved my analytic ability, communication skills, pressure management techniques, and patience as a researcher. Like chemists, intelligence officers often have to construct coherent models of reality from incomplete pieces of data. This position has offered me insights and training that no classroom setting could match. Nonetheless, I am ready to return to my first love, chemistry.

Although my life has taken some unexpected turns in the last few years, the field of chemistry has been an unwavering companion and a source of intellectual interest. Whether it was discovering research in high school, learning advanced chemical theories at the Air Force Academy, or presenting my findings at meetings of the Chemical Society, the lure of studying physical structures has always guided my decisions. My advanced research in electro-optic modulators and my course work in classes such as Molecular Orbital Theory have given me the analytical ability, laboratory skills, and theoretical knowledge to excel in a rigorous doctoral program. During my Ph.D. studies, I intend to focus on inorganic and materials chemistry in order to design new materials for use in industry. By a stroke of fate, the weak vision that prevented me from becoming a fighter pilot allowed me to envision my future as a successful chemist.
The third section of the statement of purpose should describe any special circumstances that you’ve had to overcome in your life—but never apologetically. Perhaps you had to work to pay your way through college school, and this may (or may not) have affected your grade point average (GPA). Any trends or anomalies in your academic record can be explained in this section. Just keep this part short and to the point. You want the focus of the document to be on those aspects of your background that best reflect your ability.

Finally, you should reiterate what you intend to do with your advanced degree if given the opportunity to study and conduct research at this institution.

How you write your statement of purpose is equally as important as what is in the statement. Be sure to:

- **Have a strong opening paragraph.** The opening paragraph should set up the remainder of your statement. It should grab the attention of the admissions committee and clearly and succinctly lay out what you’ll accomplish if admitted into their program.

- **Tell a story.** A story is much more compelling than just a listing of facts. A story can give context to your accomplishments and experiences and will humanize you for the admissions committee.

- **Be succinct.** Make sure to present your attributes, experience and expertise as clearly and succinctly as possible. Never use 10 words when 6 will do.

- **Most of all be honest.** It does you no good to write only what you think the admissions committee wants to hear. If you wind up going to a school that accepts someone you essentially manufactured, all involved will be unhappy.

The statement of purpose is one of the most important documents in your application. To ensure it’s as strong as possible, you may want to:

- Seek help from writing resources on your campus.
  - They can help you brainstorm ideas, determine the best style, craft a story and more.
- Ask a professor or advisor that you trust to review your statement and provide feedback.
- Consult writing and grammar aids like Strunks’ “Elements of Style;” do not rely solely on the spell and grammar check on your computer.
- Give yourself plenty of time for writing and re-writing.

Here are some tips to help you write a successful resume.

- Research the job/school you are applying for and tailor your resume to fit that institution.
- Be as specific as possible. Use words that describe the size and qualities of your projects. For example, “Supervised maternity unit” doesn’t tell a reader anything about the results you produced.
- Quantify your accomplishments. Potential employers are looking for results-oriented employees who save time and reduce costs. Never include job duties on your resume if you cannot follow them up with the result that was produced.
- Use only past-tense verbs. Follow this rule even when writing about your current job. This creates consistency throughout your resume.
- Use different verbs throughout the document. Use a thesaurus or a dictionary to come up with different verbs to describe your abilities.
- Do not exceed two pages in length.
- Have someone proofread your resume before you send it in.

**A Few Words About Deadlines**

The application process will have many deadlines associated with it. While many students wait until the first semester of their senior year to begin filling out applications, applying for fellowships, and preparing for and taking the GRE, you can begin in your junior year—and we recommend you do so.

Keep a master calendar of deadlines associated with the graduate application process. These should include GRE test dates, application deadlines for each school, dates to request transcripts and letters of recommendation, and deadlines for fellowships. (See GRAD Lab Guide Three: How to Fund Graduate School for information on fellowships.)

If applying online, save your e-mail confirmation and a PDF or screen shot of the “Congratulations we have your application” type of message you’ll get after hitting “send.” You should also print out and/or make a PDF of your application in case it somehow gets lost. If you’re mailing an application, it’s worth the additional cost of sending it certified mail, return receipt requested. This way you have proof that the application was sent well before the deadline.

**Note:** Even if you give a professor or other recommender a generous three to four weeks to get a letter in, it’s a good idea to provide each with a gentle reminder about two weeks before the deadline.

**Tips For Writing A Good Resume**

“Résumé” is from the French word for “summary”. Your resume should always contain experiences that are relevant to the position you wish to fill. To maximize your chances for an interview, your resume should capture a person’s attention within 30 seconds.
A STEP CLOSER TO YOUR DREAMS

Figuring out what you want in a graduate program, researching programs, and even going through the application process brings you one step closer to your dreams. All the legwork, the research, finding the departments and professors who will challenge and motivate you is an incredible experience. And, truly, when you find the right program for you and you are ready to start your first day, it will simply feel right. While it may seem like a lot of work, the benefits you’ll derive will be seen for years to come.

Timeline for The Application Process

Because there is so much to do in the application process the best way to ensure success is to have a plan. The following calendar gives helpful tips of what activities you should approach when. Of course you’ll need to personalize to reflect your specific circumstances—but it’s a start. Good luck!

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<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEFORE YOUR SENIOR YEAR</strong></td>
<td><strong>Share your personal statement with professors you know</strong></td>
<td><strong>Take the GRE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Begin to draft a personal statement</td>
<td>➢ Ask their advice about which graduate programs you might consider</td>
<td>➢ Revise your personal statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Explore graduate programs</td>
<td>➢ Consult your campus writing center to review your statements</td>
<td>➢ Complete GEM Fellowship Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Contact graduate programs that interest you and request information</td>
<td>➢ Narrow your graduate program choices</td>
<td>➢ Order transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Get GRE information and begin review</td>
<td>➢ Register to take the GRE</td>
<td>➢ Complete GEM Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Apply for GEM Fellowship online <a href="http://www.gemfellowship.com">www.gemfellowship.com</a></td>
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<th>NOVEMBER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Download application forms and complete a draft</td>
<td>➢ Submit your applications</td>
<td>➢ Follow up to ensure that supporting documents were received</td>
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<td>➢ Submit completed application forms</td>
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<td>➢ Ask faculty for recommendations</td>
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**Note:** Letters of admission are sent on a rolling basis beginning in February.

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<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>MARCH</th>
<th>APRIL</th>
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</table>
| ➢ Visit your prospective programs, if possible | ➢ You will receive notification from The GEM Consortium | ➢ **April 1**
You should receive admissions letters by this date |
| | ➢ Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Even if you expect to receive funding, it is good to have other options. | ➢ **April 15**
You must accept or decline offers of admission. |
| | | Accept or decline GEM Fellowship offer. |
LINKING EXCEPTIONAL TALENT TO EXTRAORDINARY CAREERS