



## The Graduate School Application Checklist

**Purpose:** This template is designed to help students systematically plan, organize, and track every step of the graduate school application process, reducing stress and improving clarity, efficiency, and readiness for admission.

### Student Details

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Intended Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_
- Target Start Term: \_\_\_\_\_
- Target Degree (Master's/PhD/Other): \_\_\_\_\_
- Career Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

### PHASE 1 – FOUNDATION & EXPLORATION (18–12 MONTHS BEFORE)

#### Self-Inventory Checklist

- ☐ Identify academic strengths
- ☐ Identify academic weaknesses
- ☐ Clarify long-term career goals
- ☐ List key academic interests
- ☐ Identify skills to improve
- ☐ Write one paragraph: "Why graduate school?"

#### Compare Offers

University	Funding	Faculty Match	Location	Cost	Deadline	Fit (Good/Avg/Poor)

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### Reach Out to Mentors

- ☐ Identify at least 3 potential mentors
- ☐ Email mentor #1
- ☐ Email mentor #2
- ☐ Email mentor #3
- ☐ Schedule a meeting with a mentor
- ☐ Record key advice received

### Standardized Test Planning

- ☐ Check required test (GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT)
- ☐ Register for the required test
- ☐ Create study schedule
- ☐ Take the first practice test
- ☐ Take the second practice test
- ☐ For Non-Native English Speakers:
  - ☐ Check IELTS/TOEFL/Duolingo requirement
  - ☐ Register for the English test
  - ☐ Book test date

## PHASE 2 – BUILD-UP & CANDIDACY STRENGTHENING (12–6 MONTHS BEFORE)

### Secure Research/Relevant Experience

- ☐ Apply for an internship/research
- ☐ Work on an academic project
- ☐ Document achievements
- ☐ Collect supervisor feedback

### Draft Core Documents

- ☐ Outline Statement of Purpose
- ☐ Draft Personal Statement
- ☐ Get mentor feedback
- ☐ Revise the first draft

### **CV/Resume Checklist**

- ☐ Update the education section
- ☐ Add internships/research
- ☐ Add skills section
- ☐ Format professionally
- ☐ Get a review from a mentor

### **Recommender Requests**

- ☐ Identify 3 recommenders
- ☐ Send formal request
- ☐ Share CV and transcript
- ☐ Confirm deadlines
- ☐ Follow up politely

### **Take Standardized Tests**

- ☐ Take required exam
- ☐ Send official scores
- ☐ Plan retake (if needed)

## **PHASE 3 – FINAL PUSH & SUBMISSION (6–0 MONTHS BEFORE)**

### **Finalize Shortlist (6–10 Programs)**

- ☐ 3 Reach schools
- ☐ 3 Target schools
- ☐ 2 Safety schools

### **Tailor Documents for Each Program**

**For each university:**

- ☐ Customize SOP
- ☐ Customize CV highlights
- ☐ Align with faculty research

### **Supplemental Essays**

- ☐ Read prompt carefully
- ☐ Write draft
- ☐ Revise
- ☐ Get feedback

### **Pre-Submission Audit**

- ☐ Proofread essays
- ☐ Confirm transcripts sent
- ☐ Confirm test scores sent
- ☐ Confirm recommenders submitted

### **Final Submission**

- ☐ Submit application
- ☐ Save confirmation email
- ☐ Track all applications in spreadsheet

## **PHASE 4 – POST-SUBMISSION & INTERVIEWS**

### **Interview Preparation**

- ☐ Review application
- ☐ Practice common questions
- ☐ Prepare questions for faculty

### **After Interview**

- ☐ Send thank-you email

### **Compare Offers**

University	Funding	Research Fit	Location	Career Support	Final Rank

**Final Decision**

- ☐ Accept best offer
- ☐ Decline others politely
- ☐ Confirm enrollment