



## 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