A few questions to think about:
- What degree do I want to get and why?
- What subject do I want to focus on and why?
- Where do I want to go - what kind of university, what kind of department, locations where I want to live for a few years?
- Is grad school for me?

Information to gather
- Essay(s), personal statement, letter of intent - describing what you’re interested in, why that institution, who you might want to work with
- Recommenders & their contact info: ok to ask them “Do you feel you can give me a strong letter of recommendation?”
- Transcripts
- CV/Resume
- GRE (if required)

Important details
- Deadlines vary, make sure you know what the deadline is & if they have any priority deadlines
- Applying can be expensive, but many institutions have waivers of application fees if you need a waiver

Worth considering
- Funding programs like NSF GRFP that you can apply to at the same time you’re applying to grad school. (See https://www.nsfgrfp.org for more info.)

If you’re selected for an interview...
- Do your research: review information on the people you’ll be interviewing with (research interests, publications), this helps with coming up with questions for them and shows you’re interested
- Prep your questions - interviews are dual purpose, for the program to learn about you and for you to learn about the program and environment
- Timing of interviews varies between programs - some programs make offers and then do interviews to determine funding, others do interviews before offers

If you get an admissions offer from a program...
- Think about the match between you and your goals and... the faculty available as mentors, the program requirements, the culture of the program, the courses you’ll take, and any other specific details about a program that are important to you
- Review the funding that is available with the position in detail, so you’re very clear on what is being offered
- Spend some time thinking about your goals and if the program is a fit for what you want to do
- * All grad schools have a common decision date (April 15) and programs must give you that time to decide, but you can decide before that date

Grad School Applications Process Overview

People you might want to talk to when considering grad school & doing research on different graduate degree programs...
- Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)
- Program Manager
- Department Faculty
- Current Students
- Alumni

University/Department

Admissions Committee
Reviews Applications

What the Admissions Committee does: follows a review process to determine how to prioritize interviews, conducts interviews to assess applicants, and decides which applicants to offer admission.

It is ok for you as an applicant to ask the DGS of the program about their process and timeline, but the level of detail they share will vary.

Admissions Offers

Interviews

Might be in-person, virtual, or a combo; Might take place at different points in the admissions cycle (e.g., before admissions offer, after admissions offer)

Important to remember: the program is interviewing you to determine how well you fit their program, but you are also interviewing them!

Admissions Offers

Should contain information on what kinds of funding you are being offered and other details to help understand what kind of commitment they are making to you as a student.