

# Graduate School Application Timeline

IEEE Graduate School Workshop

Thursday, May 28, 2009

## *Now – July:*

- Choose grad schools and specific programs
  - Ask professors at Caltech in your field where you should be applying
  - Look at school websites
- Start looking for fellowships and scholarships
  - These applications are probably due before your grad school applications

## *August – September:*

- Schedule GRE
  - Take by the end of October
  - Schedule about 1 month in advance
  - Figure out what parts schools require
- Finalize list of schools – make a plan
  - Figure out what each school requires
  - Make a timeline of when you will complete each part
  - Applications usually become available in mid-September (15<sup>th</sup>)

## *October:*

- Take GRE (if not done already)
- Ask for recommendations
  - Tell them what they need to do and when they need to do it
  - Many schools handle a lot of this for you (it's mostly online now)
- Start applications
  - At least fill out the basic info so that you don't have to do it later when you are busy

## *November:*

- Write Personal Statement and other essays
  - Address reason for grad school, research interests (with reasons), past experience, career goals, reasons for the particular school
  - Usually 1-2 pages
  - Some prompts are very specific, others are very open-ended
- Complete all fellowship and scholarship applications

## *December:*

- Complete applications
  - Usually due Dec. 1 – Jan. 15. (most are due Dec. 15)
- Order official transcripts from Caltech
  - Very fast, easy, and free. Just do it on REGIS. (takes a few days)
- Get recommendations
  - You'll probably need to remind your recommenders

## *February – April:*

- Hear back from grad schools
  - Usually in March
- Visit grad schools
- Make decision
  - Usually due April 15<sup>th</sup>

# Topics for discussion

## *Recommendations*

- Who to ask to get a good recommendation letter?
- How much in advance to ask for recommendations. When is too early? When is too late?
- What materials to prepare before asking for recommendation (i.e. resume, research papers, personal statements, etc.).

## *Personal Statement*

- When to start writing?
- Who should we ask to proofread our personal statements?
- What do professors look for in a personal statement?

## *GREs*

- When is the best time to take the GREs? For juniors and sophomores.
- How much weight do GREs carry in an application?

## *Other*

- How much weight do GPAs carry? Does it serve as a cutoff? Or?
- How can we strengthen our application? What can juniors do in the remaining time? What can sophomores do?

## Notes: