The Graduate School Experience: The Ins & Outs of Getting In

Applying to graduate school can take a while. Application deadlines tend to be in December to February of the previous academic year, so it pays to start early. Here are the steps to take.

1. **Select Programs**
   Discuss options with advisor, research programs, scout potential advisors, confirm application deadlines and requirements.

   **Timing:** 6–8 Months Prior to Application Deadline

2. **Take GRE, Subject Exams**
   If required by program(s); international students may need TOEFL or similar exam.

   **Timing:** 2–6 Months Prior to Application Deadline

3. **Prepare Applications**
   Order transcript(s), arrange for letter(s) of recommendation, prepare statements of interest for each program, any other application requirements.

   **Timing:** 2–4 Months Prior to Application Deadline

4. **Submit Applications**
   Follow up with programs to ensure all materials arrive.

   **Timing:** 1–3 Months Prior to Application Deadline

5. **Review Offer Letters**
   Consider stipend, tuition waiver, other benefits, local cost of living, etc.

   **Timing:** 1–2 Months After Application Deadline

6. **Visit the Program**
   Make sure this is the right place for you for the next few years.

   **Timing:** 1–2 Months After Application Deadline

7. **Accept Offer**
   Research the area and prepare for your transition to graduate school; international students should also apply for visa.

   **Timing:** 1–3 Months After Application Deadline

Many programs have rolling admissions, so the earlier you submit your application, the better your chances of getting the offer you want.

For more information, see “The Road to Grad School” in inChemistry (inChemistry.acs.org).