Your Graduate School Action Plan
Based on the University of California System checklist, as revised by University of Wisconsin-Madison

FRESHMAN YEAR (SELF-DISCOVERY)
- Explore your interests and abilities. Talk to and visit with your academic advisor.
- Develop productive study habits and skills.
- Establish (and maintain) at least a 3.0 GPA.
- Learn to use time wisely (manage time).
- Seek research opportunities. Join an undergraduate research program.

SOPHOMORE YEAR (ASSESSING OPTIONS)
- Define and establish your personal and career goals.
- Determine a relevant major and minor. If possible, talk to students and faculty in your major area about graduate studies.
- Begin to make contacts in your chosen career area.
- Identify potential mentoring relationships with professors or graduate students.
- Begin or continue conducting undergraduate research with a professor.
- Attend graduate and professional school fairs.
- Begin web searches on summer research internships and co-ops at various universities and apply to those which match your goals. (Your university Career Center can help!)

JUNIOR YEAR (SETTING GOALS)
- Examine and confirm your career choice.
- Strengthen your mentoring relationships. Discuss your interests with faculty and advisors.
- Research appropriate graduate programs. Contact departments for catalogues and visit programs and campuses that interest you, when possible. Consider university location, weather, cost of living, etc.
- Get acquainted with the research work of faculty in the graduate programs that interest you (on the internet and elsewhere).
- Research entrance exam/test dates and fees (such as GRE, MCAT, etc.). Study for the exams. Take the appropriate entrance exams.
- Attend graduate and professional school fairs.
- If possible, participate in a summer research internship. This can be an important step toward graduate school admission.

SENIOR YEAR (MAKING YOUR SELECTION)
- Contact faculty with whom you may want to work, after you have familiarized yourself with their research. Remember, it is faculty who decide to admit students to graduate programs.
- Apply Early!! Inquire about application deadlines based on when you plan to enroll.
- Complete the application process (letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, transcripts, etc.).
- Research application fees and fee waiver options.
- Contact the schools to ensure that your application is complete.
- Register to take the entrance examination/test, if any. Check with the department(s) to which you are applying for examination dates.
- Apply early for federal funding fellowships (e.g. NSF, NIH, NASA, Ford, AAUW), federal financial aid (FAFSA), and/or university/departmental funding opportunities.