

BUILDING YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

What sets you **apart** from the rest of your peers?
What makes you an **asset** to the program you are applying to?
What is your **competitive edge**?

Step 1:

Are you considering graduate school? If yes, the time to start preparing is NOW! Talk to an advisor regardless of your academic standing or GPA on how you can start preparing for the next step in your education.

First-Year—Start thinking about what career you want and what level of education you will need. Work with an advisor to build a schedule that enhances your goal.

Sophomore—Start to hone your career goals and make sure you are taking advantage of resources at the university to boost academic success and career planning. You can start Step 2 if you are ready.

Junior—Decide what schools you will be applying to, being mindful of admissions deadlines and requirements, and follow Step 2 by your first semester at the latest. Meet with your academic advisor to make sure you are on track to graduate.

Senior—Prepare to submit application materials to graduate programs. Follow Step 3 no later than the beginning of your first semester and take advantage of early application deadlines.

Step 2: Laying the Ground Work

Build an Individual Development Plan (IDP), visit ASCC for resources on achieving academic success, or take a Career Course!

Build strong relationships with professors, TA's, and industry supervisors.

Attend networking events and try to connect with people that are in your intended field of study.

Build your resume: internships, research projects, volunteering, student leadership/ involvement, etc.

Know what exams will be required for graduate school (i.e. GRE, etc.) and start studying.

Step 3: Apply for Graduate School

Order your **official transcripts** with enough time to submit your application. Do not open the sealed envelope!



Study for the **GRE or other exams** about a year in advance and take exams no later than two months before applications are due.



Ask faculty, supervisors, and other prestigious people who are familiar with your work for **letters of recommendation**.



Draft your **personal statement**. Keep it simple, with a good balance of personal history and experience. Connect with the graduate program's objectives.



Build your **resume, CV, or portfolio** by following an example that is short and concise.



Make sure all application materials are prepared. **Submit application** in a timely manner.



Prepare for the potential graduate school **interview** if provisionally accepted. Then, wait for final decision from graduate program!