Today, we’ll talk about some upcoming deadlines for applying to graduate school.

N.B. As of today (7 Aug 2015, some of the dates in this presentation have not been updated from last year, because the home websites have not been updated yet.  

DOUBLE-CHECK ALL DEADLINES, repeatedly.
When registering, use the name *exactly* as it is shown on the identification documents you will present at the test center. (That is, don’t register as “Katie Elliott” if your driver’s license says “Katherine T. Elliott.”)

If the names don’t match exactly when you present your credentials on the day of the test, you will not be permitted to take the test and your test fee will be forfeited.

A penalty is assessed for late registration, and a further penalty is assessed for changing your test center.

The American Physical Society hosted an “Acing the Physics GRE” several years ago; you can download the slides or watch the video. http://www.aps.org/careers/guidance/webinars/greprep.cfm

You may be asked to “register” to access the video.
2. The GRE General Test

Scheduled (online) first three weeks of each month (Sept through Jan)—mornings, afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays

Computer-based only

“Prometric Testing Center”
Turner Student Services Building
610 East John Street, Champaign

For more information or to schedule, (217) 244-1342
3. Fellowship Applications
Check eligibility requirements carefully
  Start early!
Some require GRE scores—check
  Start early!!
All require letters of reference
  Start early!!!
Most require submission of multiple documents
  Start early!!!!!
Come to our workshop in September (stay tuned)
4. Grad School Applications
Each school has its own rules and deadlines—hew to them witlessly
Some deadlines are as early as Nov 30 (Ohio State) and as late as Feb 15 (Iowa State)
Some programs differentiate between “physics” and “applied physics” and have different deadlines (e.g., Cornell and Stanford)
Some programs combine physics and astronomy—others have separate departments
Some schools allow you to apply to multiple depts, some require separate apps (and fees!) for each dept, some allow you to apply to only one dept per year

Some programs have earlier deadlines for consideration of your application for fellowships or research assistantships. In general, the earlier you get your applications in, the more careful consideration your application will receive.
5. Special cautions for internationals

Some programs have different (earlier) deadlines for international students

Some programs waive TOEFL tests if you receive a bachelor’s degree from a US institution, but many don’t—check to see if you’ll need the TOEFL or equivalent score

N.B. If you are an international student (i.e., studying in the United States on a student visa), you probably will be considered an “international” applicant, even though you will have received your bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois. You will probably have to comply with all requirements for an international applicant, including requirements for TOEFL, TSE, or other tests of English fluency.

If you are applying for graduate admission and expect to be supported by a teaching assistantship, you may have to pass more stringent fluency tests of spoken English for some programs.

Some programs have earlier deadlines for international students—check!
6. Start making decisions now

Where you’re going to apply—have a range of prospective programs and at least two or three “safety-net” schools on your list

What schools you plan to visit

Whom to ask for recommendation letters

Start thinking now about who your letter writers will be. In a few weeks, we’ll talk about writing letters of recommendation, but start preparing your “application packets” for your letter writers now.

Include in each packet the following:
- Your complete legal name, as you are putting it on the application
- The names of the schools that you need letters for, along with the instructions for how and where to submit each letter and the deadline when each letter is due.
- Your CV (more about that later in the class)
- Three or four sentences, in bullet points, about your aptitudes or experience that make you a particularly attractive candidate for that program
- If you are not applying for a physics graduate program, what you’ve done to prepare for success in (electrical engineering, materials science, atmospheric sciences...)

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7. Ask early—ask often

Talk to your professors

Talk to grad students and postdocs in your research group

Talk to your Physics mentor

Talk to Professor Cooper, associate head for graduate programs

Make sure your decisions are informed
A great resource for you

“An Anecdotal Reference for Applying to Graduate Schools in Physics and Related Sciences—2012”

A personal reflection and “how-to” from a former student
Lives in the Undergraduate Lounge
Please comply with the author’s wishes—no photocopying or redistribution
Personal opinion; your mileage may differ