

**EARLY-MID FALL  
(September- November)**

**Prepare to apply**

- By now you have a list of advisors and schools that you would like to apply to. Check out the application websites and add all the requirements and supplemental materials that each application needs to your excel sheet. **Take note of the due dates! DO NOT write down the wrong date, Asmara did that for one application and nearly missed her chance.**
- Organize your excel sheet by the due dates and work on applications accordingly.

**Personal Statement- WARNING: TIME CONSUMING! NO PROCRASTINATING HERE!**

- Use what you have learned from your phone calls with advisors to write your personal statement.
- Avoid cliques and too many buzzwords. Think of how many of these they read a day. Gross. Don't waste their time, or they will throw it in the "no" pile after their eyes have finished glazing over. You want to sound authentic, so if you *have* to use a buzzword like the ones listed below, only use it ONCE. Think about how you can show the reader that you have the quality of these buzzwords without using these words. This was some of the best advice Asmara's undergrad advisor gave her.
  - Passion/passionate
  - Dream
  - Team player
  - Hard worker
- Give them your character arc. The recipe is something like this: the first paragraph is "Here's what I'm into," the second is "here's what I have done to further my skills in that area," the third is "here's what I have learned from those experiences/ and my future goals," and the fourth paragraph is "here's how/why you can help me further my goals while I help you reach yours."
- Make it specific to each school and program. Most of the personal statement will be the same but the last one or two paragraphs should be about the school/ advisor/ program/ project
- Edit, edit, and more editing. You will almost always have another edit, but, as Malisse's undergraduate advisor always said, "there is no final draft. Only a deadline." Find your voice and trust that you have done a good job. Don't get too obsessive, and never let some edit out your true voice. Ask your mentors to proofread your drafts. They have seen many applications and will help strengthen yours.