

Possible Questions to Ask When Visiting a Graduate School

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When visiting possible graduate schools, it is important to have questions prepared for the visit beforehand. During your visit you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. You need to gather enough information on the institution, program, and advisor to tell if you have a good match. Having questions will show the prospective graduate schools your preparedness and it will help keep you focused when going through the interview process. Below are possible questions to ask: 1) Graduate students within prospective labs and 2) Professors.

Questions for Graduate Students:

- How easy is it to work with your professor? Does he/she work with you through the steps of research, or does he/she allow you to work on your research individually?
- Do you work on projects that have already been developed, or do you create one of your own individually?
- How much time does your advisor expect you to spend in lab? Do you need to be there before he/she comes in, and how late are you expected to stay?
- How long does it take students in your lab to graduate?
- What do you think of the graduate program, generally and specifically? What are the pros and cons you have discovered being in this program?
- If you could choose a graduate program again, would you still choose this one?
- How many courses do you have to take?
- Do you receive funding? Is it enough to live on? Did you have to take out student loans? Do you have/get to TA classes?
- Do you enjoy attending this university?
- What is the student community like?
- What is the social life around campus like?
- What is the cost of living?
- Are there many apartments near campus?
- How safe are the surrounding neighborhoods?

- Is there a shuttle service and public transportation? Do they work well?
- How much does parking cost?
- What was the transition like from your undergraduate degree to a graduate degree?
- Do many of you work in addition to taking classes and conducting research?
- What are your career goals after you finish your education? How do you think this graduate program is preparing you for it?

Questions for Professors

- How is your lab organized?
- Do you like to work one-on-one with your students, or do you guide their work as they work individually?
- Do incoming students work on projects that have already been developed, or do they create an individual project?
- How many hours of lab work do you expect per week of your students? Is there a system in place to track lab hours?
- How long does it seem to take students in your lab to graduate (masters and Ph.D.)?
- What are the students who graduated from your lab doing now? Did they go into academia, or are they pursuing other careers?
- What is the academic community like at this university? Is there much collaboration between the faculty?
- What kind of funding opportunities are there for a master's student? For a Ph.D. student?
- Do many of your students work in addition to taking classes and working on research?
- How are students funded (e.g., TA-ships, Research Assistantships, fellowships)?