

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING OF/ABOUT POTENTIAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Big Picture Questions

- What is the academic reputation of the department?
- What is the curriculum?
- What is the size of the program?
- How flexible is the program?
- Will you have the option of designing your own program or concentration?
- What is the estimated time to complete the program?
- Are there research or internships requirements? If so, what are they, and how do they work?
- Is this program a good fit for me?

Faculty, Faculty, Faculty

- How many faculty members are there (full time, associate, and adjunct)? What's the faculty-to-student ratio? What's the ratio of full time to adjunct faculty?
- What research interests are represented in the faculty? What are their most recent, and most influential, publications?
- How available are faculty members to the students?
- Are there faculty advisors? If so, are students assigned an advisor or do they choose one?
- How much time do the faculty members spend away on research, at conferences, etc.? Is there a rotating sabbatical process? Is there a rotating advising/mentoring process?
- Are the professors willing to back student research interests?

Money Matters

- What is the tuition for the program? Is it charged by semester, year, or point of credit? Does the tuition change depending on your level/standing?
- Are there any "hidden costs" of attendance? If so, what would those be? (For example, is there a student insurance fee, are you required to travel for conferences, are there membership requirements in professional organizations, etc.?)
- What is the cost of living in the area?
- What is the average student loan debt for graduates from the program?
- Is there institutional aid available? If so, what is the average scholarship amount?
- Are other sources of funding available? What outside scholarships might be worth considering?
- Are there opportunities to work on campus? Fellowships? Teaching Assistantships? Work Study?
- Is there institutional support available to help graduate students to attend conferences?

Career Planning

- Is there a Career Services Office on campus that serves your prospective program?
- Is there support, in your program or in a central campus office, for finding internships?
- Is assistance provided with job placement? If so, what kinds of services and resources are available?
- Are there any career fairs on campus that would be relevant to students in this program?
- What percentage of graduates finds employment in the field within the first 3 months after graduation? 6 months?
- What kinds of careers have graduates from this program pursued?
- Which organizations recruit graduates in this program?
- If available, what is the average income of graduates immediately after graduation? Two years out? Ten years out?
- Will there be opportunity to network with alumni?
- Is there support building a resume and practicing for interviews?

Housing

- Is graduate student housing available? If so:
 - Where is the housing located? Is it on-campus or off-campus?
 - Can it accommodate couples and/or families?
 - What is the cost of housing? How does it compare to the larger market?
 - What type of transportation is available?
- If graduate student housing is not available, what options are there in the area? Are they financially possible given the other program costs? Can they accommodate your family circumstances?

Student Life and Satisfaction

- Are current students happy with the program?
- How many students are typically in each class?
- What is the perception of the faculty? Do they seem committed to mentoring? How available are the advisors and professors outside of the classroom? What's the common communication style?
- What do students wish they had known before entering the program?
- What's registration like? Do students have problems getting into needed classes?
- What activities are students involved with? Are there any professional groups or activities on campus?
- What is the average student experience with seeking and acquiring an internship?
- Is there high attrition? If so, what kinds of reasons lead students to withdraw?
- What facilities are available for graduate students?