

## Graduate School Admission Interviews

The graduate admissions interview is not unlike the employment interview. Just as employers are looking for candidates who are a good fit for a job and their organization, so too are graduate school admission committees looking for applicants who will be strong scholars and a good fit for their program. In both interview processes, the applicants are determining whether the job or the graduate program is a good fit for them.

### Prior to the interview

1. Learn as much as you can about each program. What is the program mission and what is the research focus? Who are the faculty? Where did they go to school and where they have presented and published? Read faculty publications.
2. Be prepared for individual as well as group interview formats.
3. Practice answering typical questions. (See list of typical interview questions below.) Consider asking a faculty member or a Career Services staff member to conduct a mock interview with you.
4. Make a list of questions you want to ask faculty and current students in the program. (See list of sample questions below.)
5. Ask Career Services for standard interview practice guidelines.

### The day of the interview

1. Dress professionally. Make sure your clothing is clean and comfortable.
2. Follow the standards of good interviewing practice.
3. When possible, try to meet with current students one-on-one to hear what they really think of the program, the faculty and advisers.
4. Don't discount the possible influence of current students in the program. They may be able to help or hurt your candidacy. Be at your best with anyone involved in the interviewing process.
5. If a meal or social event is included in the interview day, employ your best manners. Remember that you are being evaluated at all times.

### Typical questions you may be asked in a graduate admissions interview:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What is your motivation for pursuing graduate school?
3. What are your career plans and how will graduate school help you achieve them?
4. What do you plan to do after you graduate with your advanced degree?
5. What attracted you to this graduate program?
6. What other schools are you considering?
7. What qualities do you have that make you a good candidate for graduate school in general and this program in particular?
8. Tell me about your research experience and what you learned from it.
9. What are your research interests and how do you plan to focus your research in graduate school?
10. What do you do in your spare time?
11. How do you handle stress?
12. What will you contribute to this program that no one else can?
13. What college course did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
14. What experience have you had in this field? What did you learn and what did you contribute?
15. How do you plan to finance your education?
16. What will be your biggest challenge if you are accepted into this program?

17. How would your professors describe you?
18. Tell me about your biggest accomplishment.
19. What will you do if you aren't accepted into graduate school?
20. What questions do you have?

**Sample questions you might ask during a graduate admissions interview:**

1. What distinguishes this program from others in the same field?
2. What qualities are you looking for in program applicants, and how many applicants are accepted each year?
3. Does the department prefer applicants immediately out of undergraduate programs or do they prefer applicants with work experience? If they prefer or require experience, what kind of experience are they looking for?
4. What is the relative importance of admissions test scores, undergraduate grades, recommendations, statements on applications, experience, and other requirements?
5. Where are recent alumni employed? What do most students do after graduation?
6. What types of financial aid are available? What criteria are used for determining who gets aid?
7. What scholarships or fellowships are available? How do I apply?
8. Are teaching opportunities, such as teaching assistantships and adjunct positions, available for current students?
9. What kinds of graduate assistantships are available and how do I apply?
10. With what professional associations are students encouraged to affiliate and how do program faculty foster involvement?
11. How many students publish an article or present a paper before graduation?
12. What planned practical experiences are included in the program (e.g., internships)? What are examples of internship opportunities?