



Graduate School Questions

When selecting a graduate school consider asking these questions to help you make your decision.

- What do you teach here?
- What is the largest and the most typical class size for a graduate class? Are classes restricted to graduate students or are undergraduates common in your graduate classes?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of going to grad school immediately after completing the undergraduate program? The advantages and disadvantages of waiting a few years? The best use of the interim time?
- What are the criteria and process for selecting teaching assistants, research assistants, and fellows?
- I will probably need financial assistance. Can you tell me how most students fund their studies here?
- Will I get to develop my own topics, or will I be expected to work on a professor's ongoing research?
- What is the mean time to complete (a) class work, (b) research, (c) dissertation? (i.e., what is the mean time to complete the Ph.D.?) Ask about the program as a whole, but perhaps more importantly, by professor.
- What is your attrition rate? Of those who don't finish, what are their reasons?
- What kind of student thrives in your program?
- How reliable is your financial support year to year? Is the first-year offer always sustained given attainment of academic goals?
- What is the age, race, gender balance, ratio of married/single, and geographical origin of graduate students in the program? (In other words: Are there any other people like me?)
- May I have some bibliographies of recent publications by faculty? Which professors have won awards and grants lately (and presumably need graduate assistants)?
- Can you tell me about your placement rates and types of jobs obtained by recent graduates? (*Avoid* relying on testimonials and anecdotal evidence.)
- May I meet some currently enrolled students (in person or via phone or e-mail)? Be sure to ask about their research topics and be sure to take notes on specific professors mentioned.
- How can I be a strong candidate for a program like this?