INTERVIEWING

Many programs require an interview prior to gaining admission. These can take many forms, from one-on-one conversations to group interviews to Skype interviews. As with professional interviews, graduate school interviews are typically about fit within the program and if you have the skills and abilities the program requires.

- Treat your graduate school interview like a professional job interview; dress and act professionally and be prepared.
- Review your application, faculty in the program as well as their interests, and how those interests align with your research interests. Think about what makes you a good fit for the program and what makes you unique compared to other candidates.

The Career Center can assist you with practice interviews for graduate school through 30 minute mock interview appointments.

POSSIBLE GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your career goals? How will this graduate program help you achieve your career goals?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. What unique qualities would you bring to this program that other candidates would not?
5. Tell me how you have worked effectively under pressure.
6. Explain a situation in which you had a conflict and how you resolved it. What did you learn?
7. Why did you choose this school/program?
8. What appeals to you the most about our program?
9. What do you think will be the biggest challenge as a graduate student in our program?
10. Tell me about a time when you did not meet your goals.
11. Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you letter to each interviewer within 48 hours of the interview.
- Contact the Career Center at 303-556-2250 for any questions regarding graduate programs or assistance needed with the application process.

YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO SEVERAL SCHOOLS: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE MAKING A DECISION

FUNDING

It is important to take into account the cost of living in a specific state as it can increase the cost of going to school. However, it is important to not base a decision entirely on the cost of attendance; you must consider the reputation of the program.

1. Are there any teaching or research assistantships available to cover tuition?
2. Is there any other form of funding available and if so, for how long?
3. Are you able to pay bills and tuition, buy food, socialize, etc. with the amount of money you are being offered, or will you need additional sources?

REPUTATION AND FIT

Researching the reputation of a program early in the process will pay off in the future when graduation approaches and it is time to look for a job. However, keep in mind that it is rare for a school/program to have every single factor you are looking for. This is a good time to prioritize what is most important to help you in your decision making process.

1. What is the reputation of the program? (e.g., is it nationally ranked?)
2. Is the program accredited?
3. How long does it take to complete the program?
4. How many students actually complete the program and graduate?
5. What percentage of students get a job in their field after graduation?
6. Is the program’s philosophy congruent with yours?
7. How accessible are faculty members?
8. Does the program fit your research interests?
9. What are the degree requirements of the program?

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Visit the school, and see how it feels. Find out if you are comfortable with the environment/setting.

1. Is the school’s location somewhere that you would like to live for the next 2+ years?
2. Is public transportation something you will need?
3. Is it too far from your support system?
4. What kind of employment opportunities are there?
5. Do graduate students seem satisfied with the program?

Only you can make the final decision. Look at the pros and cons of a program, and make a list to determine if the benefits outweigh the costs. For a second opinion, discuss your options with an advisor, career counselor, faculty member, friends, or family members. The best fit is a program that helps you reach your career goals and has a comfortable atmosphere. Your decision should be based on what will help you gain the most out of your graduate program.

COMMON QUESTION

What are Graduate Teaching/Research Assistantships? A form of professional development and financial support for graduate students. Student must be enrolled full-time in order to be eligible for the position. Most assistantships carry a monthly compensatory stipend for services provided. Not every program offers assistantships, but if they are offered they can be applied for on the school’s website or through an application process. They often are very competitive positions, so apply for assistantships early!
Choosing a Graduate or Professional Program

Use a variety of resources to evaluate programs. The reputation of the department/program can be far more important than the overall reputation of the school. Faculty in your future area of study is one of your most valuable resources since they are/have research and academic knowledge.

Evaluate Program Content

Some careers require a professional license in order to practice (medicine, counseling, teaching, law, etc.). Attending an accredited program will make you license-eligible. Attending a program that is not accredited could prevent you from being able to work in your desired field. Look on the school’s website to find out if the program is accredited.

Admissions Requirements

Do your research on the program’s website and find out which entrance exam is required. If it is the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), do they require it for admission? If not, consider a college or university where you can take the needed prerequisites before applying. How many letters of recommendation do you need? Most times requires the student to cover tuition/part of the cost. May require student to complete a research thesis or a comprehensive exam upon completion of program.

Entrance Exams

- Dental Admission Test (DAT): www.adoa.org/dat
- Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT): www.gmat.org
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE): www.gre.org
- Law School Admissions Test (LSAT): www.lsac.org
- Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT): www.aamc.org
- Test Prep and Admissions Courses for free: www.Kaptest.com

Personal Statements

The purpose of a personal statement is to help graduate programs determine whether your career goals and interests can be met through their program. Clearly state your short and long-term goals and explain how the university can help you meet those goals. Describe your areas of research and professional interests. Refer to past experiences, both academic and “real world” that are relevant to your specific graduate study. Demonstrate your ability to think and express ideas clearly and effectively. Articulate what is valuable about the perspective that you will bring to the field of study and the specific department. Make it clear exactly why you want to attend that particular school.

Contact or visit the Writing Center to get help with your personal statements and essays!