

Attending a Graduate School Fair: Tips for Students

Prepare

- Do advance research on the schools and programs that will be represented at the fair.
- Prepare questions to ask the representatives about their programs.
- Prepare answers for questions you might be asked. For example, representatives may ask you about: your plans after graduation; when you plan to attend graduate school; why you want a graduate degree.
- Dress in business casual attire. Remember, you want to make a good first impression. You want to project an appearance that says you are mature and serious.
- Arrive early and give yourself plenty of time to review the layout of the room and schools displays and information.
- Visit the schools you are most interested in first.

Inquire

- An informed and focused set of questions will convey to the representative that you are truly interested in graduate school.
- Your questions allow the representative to avoid generalities and treat you as an individual.
- Look for useful printed materials to take with you: business cards, brochures, handbooks, etc.
- Here are variety of questions that should help you get the most out of the conversations.
 - What are the admission requirements (GPA, undergraduate coursework, entrance exams, experience, interview)?
 - What is the average entrance exam score and GPA of students who are accepted?
 - When is the application deadline?
 - Is there an early admission deadline?
 - What is the application process/timeline (application materials, interview)?
 - Are students admitted in both the fall and spring semesters?

- How important is it for applicants to have extracurricular activities, volunteer and/or work experience?
- Are there any recommended courses in addition to the stated pre-requisites?

- How much does the program cost (tuition, student fees, housing)?
- What types of financial aid are available (fellowships, assistantships, scholarships, loans)?
- Is it possible to work full-time and complete the degree as a part-time student?
- Will I complete an internship as part of the program?
- How much choice will I have about where I do my internship?

- How many faculty members are there and what are their areas of research?
- What do you think is unique about your program?
- How many years on average does it take students to complete the program?
- Is a thesis, dissertation, or comprehensive examination(s) required for completion of the degree?
- Will I be able to take electives to pursue other areas of interest?
- What is the projected size of the entering cohort?
- Do you reserve spots for in-state residents?
- Do you provide joint degrees?
- Where are graduates of the program employed?
- What percentage of your graduates are employed in a relevant field within six months to one year of graduation?

- Could you tell me more about the facilities (libraries, labs, offices, gyms)?
- Could you tell me more about student life on campus (diversity of the students, student organizations, housing, and campus support services)?

- Do you have open houses or information sessions?
- Would it be possible for me to arrange a campus visit in which I could meet with admissions representatives, current students, and faculty?

- May I contact you if I have additional questions?

Pursue

- Really take a look at all the printed materials, DVDs, etc. that you collected at the fair. Find out what additional information they provide. Look for more detailed information about the degree programs on their websites.
- Use that business card or other contact information after the graduate fair. Ask for assistance in connecting you to additional people on campus who might help you such as the departmental advisor and fellowships office.
- Find out if there will be on-campus visitation days in the fall. Are these open or by invitation? Do they target underrepresented groups? Do they assist with the cost of travel?
- Find out if there are summer research programs on campus that will allow you an in-depth experience prior to applying.