

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT A GRADUATE SCHOOL FAIR

A Graduate School Fair provides a wonderful opportunity to speak personally with admissions representatives from a number of graduate and professional programs about your credentials, their admissions requirements and what distinguishes their program from other programs offered in the same field.

Tip: Take a few moments before the fair to look at the list of attendees and the full descriptions of the programs they offer, which can be found on the Bates Center for Purposeful Work website -- be sure to speak with admissions representatives from the programs that interest you.

Here are some suggested questions:

Admissions:

- What is the admissions selection process? What is the makeup of the admissions committee? Is selection made by the faculty of the specific department to which you are applying? If selection is made by a faculty member, is the selection based on the faculty member's desire to become the applicant's graduate supervisor?
- What are the program's goals and specialties? Knowing the answer to this question will help you assess how strong a candidate you are by comparing your strengths to these objectives.
- What do you look for in assessing an applicant's qualifications?
- What type of evidence do you look for in considering whether a student possesses special skills or interests that mesh with faculty research interests?
- What tests are required for admission? What is the latest date they may be taken in order to be considered for admission next fall?

Curriculum:

- What are the programs' areas of expertise? E.g., an Economics Department may offer expertise in labor economics as opposed to economic development.

Housing:

- Is graduate housing available?
- Does the school help graduate students find housing?
- Is off-campus housing available nearby? What is the average cost of off-campus housing?
- Is parking difficult to find? Is there a public transportation system?

Financial Aid:

- What will it cost over x years to attend this program?
- How do most of your graduate students pay for the program?
- How much scholarship money is available? What criteria are used to award scholarships?
- Is parent income considered? How many awards are continued through to completion of the degree?
- How does your school handle financial aid awards? Can I expect to know the aid awarded and proportion of loans/scholarships before I am required to pay a deposit?
- What types of teaching assistantships are available?

Career Development:

- At which companies do students typically find employment?
- Where do students typically find employment geographically?
- Is there a network of contacts that could help students obtain jobs in a particular geographic region?
- What resources do you provide to assist students in finding jobs?
- Is there a career office for graduate students?
- How does the office work with alumni who request services?