



QUESTIONS TO ASK PROSPECTIVE GRADUATE SCHOOLS

- Visit the campus and sit in on their graduate classes. Notify the prospective departments that you would like to visit them and attend a class. Do not simply show up to the class unannounced.
- Talk one-on-one with the faculty and graduate students.
- Ask how long it takes to graduate. This is also known as “time to degree”, “normative time.” Ask if the classes are offered regularly. Because of the budget cuts, course offerings are becoming scarce at all universities and colleges regardless of level.
- Find out if faculty are accessible and student-friendly.
- Read departments’ websites and the faculty’s articles. Learn as much as you can about the program and faculty. Look for Departmental Research Centers and Area Studies, and what Grads are studying. These will tell you what active work is being done in the department and on campus.
- Ask the department where their graduates get jobs after they complete their degrees.
- Always be nice and polite to the secretaries and student affairs officers, they usually know everything!
- Funding: What type can you expect? There is usually funding for Ph.D.s, but is limited for Master’s students.
- TA-ing vs. Fellowships: If the department offers you lots of teaching assistant positions, this is not a good idea in your first or last years. TA’ing takes a lot of your time and energy. When you first arrive to your program you need time to settle in, and when you are at the end of your program you need to be writing your thesis/dissertation. Choose the time you will be a teaching assistant wisely.
- Even though you are applying to grad schools now and are stressed out, push yourself to apply for outside funding for entering/first year grad students. You can do this in your senior year.
- Be professional and informed.
- Apply for application waivers!
- Lastly: When asking your faculty for a letter of recommendation, or when scouting out campuses, take with you your contact information: professional-academic resume (CV), transcripts, & note of introduction with one paragraph describing your research area of interest. Fill out your letter of recommendation form’s information.