

# Sample Questions For Graduate School Admissions Interviews

## What You'll be Asked During a Graduate Admissions Interview

Getting ready for a graduate school interview? Congratulations! Getting an interview is a significant step towards winning acceptance to the graduate program of your dreams. What questions can you expect?

- Tell me about yourself...
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- If you're not accepted into graduate school, what are your plans?
- Why did you choose this career?
- What do you know about our program?
- Why did you choose to apply to our program?
- What other schools are you considering?
- In what ways have your previous experience prepared you for graduate study in our program?
- What do you believe your greatest challenge will be if you are accepted into this program?
- In college, what courses did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
- Describe any research project you've worked on. What was the purpose of the project and what was your role in the project?
- How would your professors describe you?
- How will you be able to make a contribution to this field?
- What are your hobbies?
- Explain a situation in which you had a conflict and how you resolved it. What would you do differently? Why?
- Describe your greatest accomplishment.
- Tell me about your experience in this field. What was challenging? What was your contribution?
- What are your career goals? How will this program help you achieve your goals?
- How do you intend to finance your education?
- What skills do you bring to the program? How will you help your mentor in his or her research?
- Are you motivated? Explain and provide examples.
- Why should we take you and not someone else?
- What do you plan to specialize in?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What can be determined about an applicant at an interview?
- Any questions?

## What to Ask During a Graduate Admissions Interview

There are two reasons to ask good questions. First, you should ask many questions during your graduate admissions interview so that you can gather the information that you need to determine if this is the right program for you. Remember that you are interviewing the graduate program - you must choose the program that is right for you. Second, of course, good questions impress admissions committees. Ask away:

- What characteristics are specific to this program and distinguish it from competitors?
- Where are recent alumni employed?
- What do most students do after graduation?
- What types of financial aid are offered and what criteria are used for choosing recipients?
- Are there any scholarships or fellowships available? How do I apply?
- Are there teaching opportunities, such as teaching assistantships and adjunct positions?
- Do most students publish an article or present a paper before graduation?
- What planned practical experiences are included in the program (e.g., internships)? *Ask for examples of internship placements.*
- What is the relative importance of admissions test scores, undergraduate grades, recommendations, statements on applications, experience, and other requirements?
- Does the department prefer applicants immediately out of undergraduate programs or do they prefer applicants with work experience? If they prefer or require experience, what kind of experience are they looking for?
- How are mentoring and advising relationships established? Are advisors assigned or chosen?
- How long do most students take to graduate? How many years of course work? How long do most students take to complete their dissertations?
- Do most students live near campus?
- What is it like to live in this area as a graduate student (*ask other students*)

Source: Tara Kuther, PhD., About.com