

FINDING THE RIGHT GRADUATE PROGRAM: A CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK GRADUATE SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS, AND PROGRAMS

These questions will help you get the information you need to choose the right graduate program for you:

TIME TO DEGREE:

- ✓ What is the average departmental time to degree for Ph.D.'s?
- ✓ If an incoming student already has a Master's, how long is the time to degree?
- ✓ What is the timeline of completion (including course work, comprehensive exams, and dissertation milestones)?
- ✓ What is the attrition rate?

BENEFITS:

- ✓ What types of funding are available? For how long?
- ✓ What types of health care benefits are available to graduate students?
- ✓ What types of childcare options are available?

PROGRAM OPTIONS:

- ✓ Are joint dissertations possible?
- ✓ What interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary opportunities are available?
- ✓ What types of teacher training are available for both academic and nonacademic careers?
- ✓ What types of internships or externships are available?
- ✓ Are there electronic portfolio tools available to gather information about/products of the degree process?
- ✓ How actively are students involved in departmental governance?
- ✓ What types of teaching, research, or administrative assistantships are available?
- ✓ Are there opportunities and training in grant writing, and publishing?
- ✓ Is there exposure to disciplinary associations, publications, and conferences?

MENTORING:

- ✓ What are the guidelines, if any, for faculty mentoring?
- ✓ How does a student find a mentor?
- ✓ How do committee members mentor?
- ✓ How many times per year do doctoral advisors meet with students to monitor progress?
- ✓ What has the advisor published?
- ✓ Is the advisor actively involved in research?
- ✓ What is the advisor's reputation as a teacher?
- ✓ To what extent is the advisor willing to involve students in his/her research?
- ✓ To what extent does the advisor show interest in or support the student's own research?
- ✓ Can mentors/advisors/committee members be selected and appointed from outside the university?

CAREER PLANNING:

- ✓ What types of professional development activities (groups, colloquia, seminars, etc.) are organized for/by the students?
- ✓ Are there any opportunities for networking/training with outside professionals (both in various types of institutions and outside the academy)?
- ✓ What types of positions (academic and nonacademic) do students find after graduation?
- ✓ Can the department/program provide accounts of graduates' job experiences after graduation?
- ✓ What are the salary expectations and/or scales?
- ✓ Does the department/program keep track of its alumni, and have any of the alumni offered to be contacts for current doctoral students?
- ✓ What proportion of students get jobs?
- ✓ What types of career placement services are there?

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http://depts.washington.edu/envision/phd/obtaining_phd/program_questions.html.*

For more information visit www.pathwaystoscience.org or contact the Institute for Broadening Participation at contactus@ibparticipation.org.