

Graduate School Considerations (Compiled by Ashley Morishige '11)

Ask faculty:

Applied vs. fundamental objectives, Work focus
Lab funding
Openings on what specific projects
Project selection and assignment
Lab meeting frequency and style
Other responsibilities
Style/Approach

Advisor:

- Style
- Applied vs. fundamental objectives
- Publication record
- Citation record
- IP disclosures
- Lab size, scale
- Work focus
- Lab composition – postdocs, docs, masters
- Lab funding
 - o Sources
 - o Current
 - o Future
 - o What is available for me?
 - o How is financial support decided
 - o Does each student receive financial support
 - o Which areas are being funded
- Openings on what specific projects
- How are advisors and projects selected and assigned
 - o Method and timeline
- Does professor publish with their students
- Does advisor send students to conferences, etc.
- Graduate students leaving and others taking over projects
- Overall vision – how are you now operating and plans for continuing
- Collaboration
- Meetings
 - o Frequency
 - o Individual, group
- Tenure track / tenured yet?
- Other responsibilities
- Facilities and access to them

Academics:

- Research
- Courses
- Other requirements
- Research hours, class hours
- Courses per term
- Enjoy class
- Helps research?
- Flexibility in class choices?

Support:

- Work space
- Tech support
- Housing – cost, location, quality, availability, process
- Happiness, support
- Geography, location
- For specific student populations
- Insurance – cost, dental, vision, medical
- Funding – stipend amount, cost of food
- Facilities – gym, clubs, societies, fun
 - o Accessible to grad students?
- Crime rate

Future Prospects / Outcomes:

- PhD:
 - o Admission
 - o Qualifying exams pass rate
 - o # years to a degree
 - o Timeline for that degree
 - o Publications you walk out with
- Career:
 - o Academia
 - o Post doc
 - o Industry
 - o Companies
 - o Utilities
 - o Think tanks
 - o Government / policy
 - o Ask for examples

Other Considerations:

- Trust your gut

- Are students trying to sell me on the place?
- Do I feel like I belong and am drawn in and want to be there?
- Collaborative community?
- 10 years from now, what do I want to be doing?
- Current students sense of happiness
 - o What do you do outside of research
 - o Happiness with program position in mind

- Productivity
- Support for helping me be productive
- Can I survive it?