

For the Current Graduate Students

1. How well are the graduate students treated by faculty members? In general, do the graduate students enjoy working with their research advisers?
2. Is the atmosphere between groups or individual graduate students [overly competitive](#)? Do the graduate students hang out together outside of work?
3. Are graduate students proud of the group/department/school they are working with?
4. Do graduate students have enough time for a [balanced work/social life](#)?
5. What's the qualifying exam like?
6. What are the facilities like? Do graduate students have private desks, cubicles, windows in their office?
7. Are the provisions for housing, health insurance, etc. adequate? Are they included in the stipend?
8. Do the faculty and department encourage students to apply for outside funding/fellowships ([GRFP](#), NIH, etc.)? Do they require a teaching assistantship (TA)?
9. Are there any female/minority faculty in the department? If not, are there potential [mentors](#) elsewhere on campus (a women's center, minorities in STEM student organizations, etc.)?
10. What kind of support is available for graduate students with children?

For a Graduate Student in the Group You're Interested In

1. What is your adviser's communication style?
2. How frequently is your adviser available to meet with you? How often do they want to meet?
3. Have you ever had to resolve a conflict with him/her? How was it handled?
4. When you have a question related to your research, how does your adviser respond? Do they direct you to the literature, give direct feedback, etc.?
5. When writing, what is the level of feedback you receive? Multiple drafts with exhaustive corrections, a few drafts with suggestions, etc.?

For the Potential Adviser

1. What current projects do you have with available funding for graduate students? How long do you expect those projects to continue?
2. Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years or so? Do you have plans to take a sabbatical?
3. What expectations do you have for your graduate students (working hours, publication rate, etc.)?
4. Do you encourage your students to attend conferences? Are there specific conferences you recommend?
5. Do graduate students collaborate with other groups either within or outside the university?
6. What do you think about graduate students taking time away from research for professional development (i.e. public speaking, science communication)?
7. What do you think about graduate students taking time for interdisciplinary interests (i.e. entrepreneurship, internship)?

For the Graduate Department

1. Do graduate students have free access to athletic and other university facilities?

2. Are there graduate student organizations (Graduate Student Senate, etc.)?
3. Are graduate students encouraged to attend [conferences](#)? If so, who funds the travel?
4. What kind of professional organizations have chapters in the area?
5. How frequently do students publish papers?
6. What percentage of students pass the qualifying exam?
7. What's the average amount of time students take to finish their degree?
8. Is the graduate student population [diverse](#)? Are there varying political, social, economic, etc. views represented and respected?
9. Have there been any instances of harassment? How did the department handle that situation?

For Everyone

1. Have there been any major changes to the department in the past 5-10 years that have affected graduate students?
2. Are graduate students able to use the instrumentation freely?
3. Is it common for graduate students to participate in professional development and/or internships during their PhD?
4. What's the cost of living in the city? Is it easy to get around? Is there public transportation? Is the neighborhood near campus fairly safe?
5. What do people do for fun?