

Graduate School Interview Questions

Personal Characteristics / Skills / Strengths:

- Tell me about yourself
- What is your strongest personal asset?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?
- What challenges do you think you might face in the graduate program?
- What would one of your friends/teachers/supervisors say about you?
- What would a supervisor or professor tell me are your strengths?
- What skills or abilities do you hope to strengthen through our program?

Academic Experiences/Performance:

- Why did you major in _____?
- Why did you choose to attend _____ College/University?
- When did you choose to enter this occupational field and why?
- How did you make the decision to apply to our program? What other programs did you consider?
- What do you know about our program?
- How has your undergraduate background prepared you for our program?
- What do you believe to be the major trends in your intended career field at this time?
- What courses have you enjoyed the most?
- What courses have been most difficult for you?
- What satisfaction have you gained from your studies?
- What has motivated you to pursue this academic field?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- Why do you want a graduate degree in _____?
- 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?
- Tell me about the research project you completed with Professor _____?
- Do you feel your academic record accurately reflects your abilities and potential?
- What didn't you like about your college/university?
- Why would you be an asset to our department? How would you be able to contribute to our program?
- What skills and experiences do you feel have prepared you for admission to this program?
- Why should we consider you for our program instead of several other equally qualified candidates?
- How many programs have you applied to besides our institution/program?
- If you're not accepted into graduate school, what are your plans?

Unusual or General Questions:

- If you could have dinner with someone (living or dead), who would that person be?
- Describe your greatest accomplishment. How did you achieve it?
- What do you feel has been your greatest failure? How did you handle it? How has it changed you?
- Tell me about a time you were faced with a difficult situation and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a mistake you made and how you handled it.
- What was the last book you read or movie you saw?
- How do you work under pressure? Give an example.
- If you were told by a doctor that you had only 1 year to live, what would you spend that time doing?
- How will you make the world a better place?

- In college, what courses did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
- What are your hobbies?
- What would you change about yourself and why?
- 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?
- Describe any research project you've worked on. What was the purpose of the project and what was your role in the project?
- How will you be able to make a contribution to this field?
- What do you plan to specialize in?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- Do you have any question you would like to ask us?
(The interviewer does not actually have to answer these – just see what kind of question(s) the interviewee comes up with for you)