



A Guide to Preparing For the Graduate & Professional School Fair

Before The Fair

Attire & Presentation of Self

Attend the fair in business casual attire, to show your high level of preparation and professionalism. You want to stand out to the fair representatives and make a solid first impression. The person you meet may participate in candidate selection or provide feedback to the selection committee of the programs you might apply to.

Materials to Prepare

- ☐ A portfolio/notebook to write down notes
- ☐ Pen/Pencil
- ☐ Folder to collect materials in
- ☐ Questions for the representatives

Research Universities/Program:

Perform a preliminary review of which graduate/professional programs and schools interest you. Think about the overall institution, department, and specific focus of potential programs. Use this space to note possible programs:

College, University, or Professional School:

Graduate or Professional Program:

Additional items to research prior to the fair:

- ☐ Program application requirements and deadline
- ☐ Faculty & research – who are the primary faculty for the program, what research did they conduct or currently engaged in?
- ☐ Review the Graduate School Handbook
- ☐ Financial aid, scholarships, and/or assistantships
- ☐ GRE/LSAT/GMAT Testing
- ☐ Visit ETS Website (<http://www.ets.org/gre>)

Self-Reflection

To help you prepare for the event and possible questions from the school representatives, consider your responses to the following questions, think of 2-3 talking points per question:

1. Top 3 Career(s) or Job Type(s):

2. Why are you interested in this particular program of study?

3. What do you know about the university/department?

4. What would you write your final research/thesis on?

5. Which faculty, and what research are you most interested in?

6. What have you done/learned at CI that helped you in your graduate school endeavors?

During The Fair

General tips and advice:

- Attend the fair to learn more about graduate school programs and requirements. The sooner you know what they are looking for the more prepared you will be to submit an application that reflects the skills and qualification programs are looking for.
 - Note - attending the fair and learning about programs does not require you to submit applications. A goal for the fair could be simply learning about various programs and opportunities available to you.
 - Eavesdrop. Listen to the conversations of other students and the graduate school representatives.
- Volunteer to help with the fair. Student volunteers can help graduate school representatives during the event, which can provide a different perspective and allow you to observe and learn more about various programs.

Recommended questions to ask representatives:

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| □ How do most students fund their graduate education? | □ What is the relative importance of admissions test scores, undergraduate grades, recommendations, statements on applications, experiences and other requirements? |
| □ Does your program offer scholarships or assistantships? | □ Does the department prefer applicants immediately out of undergraduate programs or do they prefer applicants with work experience? What kind of experience are they looking for? |
| □ What is your graduation rate? | □ How are mentoring and advising relationships established? Are advisors assigned? |
| □ What kind of students thrives in your program? | □ May I contact you with further questions? |
| □ What are your placement rates and types of jobs obtained by recent graduates? | |
| □ What characteristics are specific to this program and distinguish it from similar programs? | |
| □ What planned practical experiences are included (e.g. internships)? Ask for examples of internship placements. | |
| □ What is the ratio of students to faculty? | |

After The Fair

- **Organize & Reflect** - Review brochures and business cards you've gathered and make additional notes on the graduate schools and programs you've visited, and decide which ones you would like further information from or to apply to.
- **Continue Research** - Be aware that requirements and deadlines can change. To ensure information you gathered at the fair is still applicable, it is important to check the website of the specific program(s) you are interested in regularly for updates.
- **Follow-up** – As needed, stay in touch with the graduate school representatives of programs that interest you most. Do not hesitate to ask questions that may not be clear on their application or website information. Remember that your inquiries are also an opportunity to show your interest, professionalism, and qualifications as a candidate for their program – ensure your correspondence is specific, courteous, and professionally written.

Graduate & Professional School Fair Information:

For a list of participating university programs or to register to volunteer at Career & Internship Fair visit: go.csuci.edu/cdsweb

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