

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL FAIR

PRESENTED BY GRADUATE STUDIES CENTER STAFF

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California State
University

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WHAT IS THE GRADUATE SCHOOL FAIR & WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

- Once a year in the fall semester the Graduate Studies Center sponsors the Graduate & Professional School Fair
- This is your opportunity to learn about graduate schools and gain an early start on the application process. If you are thinking about going to graduate school
- Attend the event to learn more about what options are available to you. You will meet with school representatives face-to-face, allowing for personal interaction in asking questions of a specific school. At the event, you can:
 - Explore the possibilities of graduate and professional education.
 - Learn about the requirements for programs.
 - Get detailed information about various schools and their programs.
 - Gather materials to review later.
 - Network with professionals in your future field.



SCHOOLS ATTENDING



HOW TO PREPARE

- Do you have questions about graduate school or want to chat with a counselor about graduate programs? Make an appointment with the Graduate Studies Center Counselor and/or attend the events hosted by the Graduate Studies Center. Prior to the fair, be sure to:
- Research graduate schools of interest by reading their program descriptions and visiting their websites. View information on the graduate schools attending the fair on [Graduate Studies Center website](#).
- Prepare questions for schools of interest based on your research.
- [Prepare your elevator pitch](#) to highlight the skills and knowledge you are building and your areas of interest.
- Be prepared to answer questions representatives might ask.



ATTIRE & SELF PRESENTATION

- 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



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WHAT DO I DO AT THE FAIR?

- Come dressed in business professional attire. You want to make a good first impression, and you want to project an appearance that says you are mature and serious.
- Arrive early and give yourself plenty of time to review the layout of the fair and schools' displays and information.
- Visit the schools you are most interested in first.
- Look for useful materials to take with you: flyers, brochures, handbooks, etc.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK RECRUITERS?

- How do most students fund their graduate education?
- Does your program offer scholarships or assistantships?
- What is your graduation rate?
- What kind of students thrives in your program?
- 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?
- Does the department prefer applicants immediately out of undergraduate programs or do they prefer applicants with work experience?
- How are mentoring and advising relationships established? Are advisors assigned?
- May I contact you with further questions?



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.

MORE RESOURCES

- Graduate Studies Center
- Career Center
- Faculty & Program Representatives from the institutions you are interested in attending



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