Grad School Interviewing

Before the Interview
- Learn about the program and faculty.
- Read recent faculty publications to learn more about them.
- Prepare intelligent questions to ask.
- Remember that you're judged by your application but also by your presentation and your interest in the program and faculty.

Rehearse
- Answers to commonly asked interview questions – it will improve your comfort level and allow you to think clearly.
- If confronted with a question that you're unprepared for, ask for a moment to think about your answer.

Preparation
- Provide honest answers -- Don't tell them what you think they want to hear, tell them what you believe. Most schools just want to get an idea of who you are and what your experiences are.
- If you don't know about something they ask you about, tell them you don't know it. If you try to talk through it they'll see right through it. Follow current events: Be aware of what is going on around the world and specifically in in your field.

Possible Interview Topics
1. Your academic record.
   - If you have discrepancies in your academic record address it from the perspective of improved performance.
   - If you participated in research, show you fully understand the nature of your research project.
2. Extracurricular Activities.
   - Talk about any interests you may have of a non-academic kind.
3. Motives for pursuing grad school
   - Give thought before your interview as to your reasons for pursuing grad school.
   - Illustrate your reasons in a concrete way with specific experiences.
   - Talk about relevant skills.
   - May be asked to discuss controversies or issues in your field.
   - What is important is your ability to think logically and sensitively.
5. Program details
   - You may be asked why you are interested in their particular school.
   - Your answer should indicate that you have given some thought to your selection.
   - Prepare few questions that are pertinent to each school.

What the Interviewer Is Really Assessing
The following criteria will usually be touched upon if the interviewer is preparing a written report of your visit/interview:
1. Physical appearance: Grooming, demeanor of self-confidence
2. Personality: Friendliness, ability to establish rapport and charm, sense of humor
3. Communication skills: Ability to express ideas clearly, fluently, and intelligently
4. Motivation: Soundness of career choice, conviction of interests, enthusiasm
5. Maturity: Ability to undertake responsibility that the career entails
6. Interests: educational, social, and cultural interests
7. Level of concern: genuine interest in people, their problems, and helping them solve them
8. Emotional stability: Composure while under pressure
9. Intellectual potential: demonstrated superior intellectual abilities
10. Overall subjective reaction of the interviewer to the applicant
Sample Graduate School Interview Questions

Typical questions that are often asked

1. Why did you attend your undergraduate institution?
2. What are your extracurricular activities?
3. Why do you want to become a ______?
4. Why do you want a graduate degree in ______?
5. Why would you be an asset to our department?
6. Why should we accept you into this program?
7. What makes you a good candidate?
8. What appeals to you about our program?
9. What do you think are the most pressing social problems?
10. How will you finance your education?
11. What other schools have you applied to?
12. Did you participate in any special projects in college?
13. What do you plan to specialize in?
14. Why did you get a poor grade in ______?
15. What is your opinion on (major current event issues)?
16. Why did you choose this major?
17. What do you do in your spare time?
18. What is your favorite form of entertainment?
19. What is your favorite piece of music?
20. What topics of conversation do you most enjoy?
21. Describe your study habits.
22. What are your hobbies?
23. What experiences led you to your career choice?
24. What will you do if you are not accepted?
25. How do your parents feel about your career goals?
26. How do you cope with frustrating situations?
27. What are your weaknesses?
28. How do you prepare for the entrance exam?
29. What do you think are the most pressing social problems?
30. What do you do in your spare time?
31. What are your weaknesses?
32. How do you prepare for the entrance exam?
33. Have you been interviewed or accepted at any other school?