



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.
4. *Current issues in your field.*
 - 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 books and newspapers do you read?
10. What do you do during the summer?
11. How will you finance your education?
12. What other schools have you applied to?
13. What do you plan to specialize in?
14. Why did you get a poor grade in _____?
15. Do you have any questions?
16. Which school is your first choice?
17. What kind of social life do you have?
18. Describe your schedule at your undergraduate institution?
19. What were your favorite courses taken?
20. Did you participate in any special projects in college?
21. Will your religious convictions interfere with your studies or practice?
22. How did you arrive at your decision to become a _____?
23. Do you feel you should have gone to a different college?
24. What do you do in your spare time?
25. Tell me about yourself and your family.
26. What do you think are the most pressing social problems?
27. Describe your study habits.
28. What are your hobbies?
29. What experiences led you to your career choice?
30. What are your plans for marriage and a family?
31. Why isn't (name of school) your first choice?
32. Why do you think you are better suited for admission than your classmates?
33. What is the status of (job title) in modern society?
34. What has been your most significant accomplishment to date?
35. If you had great willpower, how would you change yourself?
36. What are the characteristics of a mature person?
37. What can be determined about an applicant at an interview? What television programs and movies have you seen recently?
38. Describe any research project you've worked on at your undergraduate institution.
39. What is your opinion on (major current event issues)?
40. What newspaper do you read and what columnist do you like the best?
41. How do you cope with frustrating situations?
42. What will you do if you are not accepted?
43. How do you rank among other students in your major at your institution?
44. Have you ever worked with people, and if so in what capacity?
45. Who has the greatest influence on your life?
46. What made you apply to our school?
47. What are your weaknesses?
48. Describe your exposure to (subject) at your undergraduate institution.
49. If you are accepted to more than one school, how will you decide which to attend?
50. How do you see yourself ten years from now?
51. Why did your grades go down in your _____ semester?
52. What is your favorite piece of music?
53. Do you know enough about hockey to compare the _____ and the _____ teams?
54. What would you do to improve the quality of life in large cities?
55. What topics of conversation do you most enjoy?
56. If you were to have a year off, what would you do with it?
57. What is your favorite form of entertainment?
58. How do your parents feel about your career goals?
59. How did you prepare for the entrance exam?
60. Can you explain why your admission test scores went up (down) when you took the test a second time?
61. Would you be willing to serve in an area where there is a shortage?
62. What message would you like me to convey to the admission committee in your behalf?
63. What were your most favorite and least favorite courses in college?
64. Have you been interviewed or accepted at any other school?

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