Researching Graduate Schools

Researching graduate programs typically involves more legwork and personal contact than researching professional schools because of the number and variety of graduate programs. Unlike professional school students, who typically choose a school based on its overall academic program, graduate students might select a school based on a faculty member under whom they wish to study. Students interested in graduate school should begin their exploration early and keep an open mind as they gain more knowledge and contacts in research.

Undergraduate Preparation

- Talk to your PI, as well as others in your lab, about your desire to go to graduate school. Ask them for advice.
- Attend seminars on campus, particularly when visiting scientists are speaking. (Learn more at http://medicine.osu.edu/calendar/) Learn what topics interest you. If you are inspired by particular speakers in your area of interest, introduce yourself, mention that you plan to pursue a graduate degree in their field, and ask if you can follow up with them about openings in their lab. Networking is vital to success!
- Gain as extensive of a research experience as possible. Engage in lab activities, such as journal club. If possible, attend a professional conference.
- By late Junior year, decide if you will pursue an integrated graduate program or if you want to go into a specific discipline.

Searching for Graduate Program

1. Limit your search by geographical preferences
2. Limit your search by research area
3. Resources to use:
   a. Your PI and other OSU and non-OSU faculty contacts
   b. www.gradschools.com
   c. Websites of schools, programs, and researchers that interests you
   d. Rankings such as in US News and World Report
4. Once you have identified programs of interest, make contacts at those schools. Program Coordinators of the graduate program are usually the best place to start. Ask for faculty contacts in your area of interest, as well as current student contact information. Again networking is vital to success!

Factors to Consider when Comparing Programs

1. Curriculum
2. Funding
3. Faculty in your area of interest
4. Teaching opportunities/requirements

Tips

- Take the GRE no later than summer before senior year
- Application deadlines vary greatly. Develop a system to keep track of the various deadlines for all the schools that interest you. In some cases, application to the graduate school is much earlier than the program deadline. Additionally, eligibility for fellowships, assistantships and other funding may require that an application is submitted early. As with most graduate and professional programs, applying early won’t necessarily mean that you are admitted early, but early applicants can be admitted before the published deadline.
- Also refer to “Researching Professional Schools” for more questions to ask as you explore programs.

Developed by: Lori Martensen, Program Manager
www.medicine.osu.edu/bms
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