



Virtual Grad School & Summer Research Fair

Participant Guide

The Virtual Graduate School & Summer Research Fair aims to provide scholars with an opportunity to explore some of the top graduate school programs in the country in a virtual environment. This participant guide contains tips and advice to help you make the most of this

Before the Fair

In the days leading up to the virtual fair, you should spend time preparing for the event. This will ensure that you get the most of the experience and that you make a good first impression. Since this is a virtual fair, we suggest that you keep a word document open so that you may copy/paste information into the virtual chat room.

- ❑ **Review and update your resume/CV.** You will have the opportunity to upload your resume during registration. Make sure your resume is updated, free of grammatical errors, and that it looks professional. We encourage you to have your resume reviewed by career services or another appropriate resource.
- ❑ **Picture.** If you decide to upload a picture to your profile, ensure that it is a professional picture or headshot.
- ❑ **Research all of the schools and programs that will be represented at the fair.** Make sure you know the basic information about each institution you plan to connect with and the programs you are interested in.
 - ✓ Note admission deadlines and general requirements (ex. GRE scores)
 - ✓ Read about special programs/concentrations that spark your interest
 - ✓ Explore the financial aid/financial support information available
 - ✓ Identify faculty within your areas of interest and explore their research
- ❑ **Make a list of all of the questions that you still have regarding specific programs.** Based on your research, come up with a thoughtful list of questions that will help you narrow down your graduate school choices. Do not ask questions that can be easily answered by going to the program or university website. The depth of questions you ask and familiarity you show with the program/faculty will demonstrate your preparedness and interest. Your questions should help you determine if there is a match between the school/program and your interests and goals.
- ❑ **Prepare answers for questions that the admissions representatives may have about you** such as: your plans after graduation, when you plan to attend graduate school, why you are planning to pursue a doctorate degree.
- ❑ **Prepare an elevator “speech”.** Write a concise, professional message that reflects who you are, your research interests and experiences, and your future goals in regards to your education. This speech should include:
 - ✓ Your name, educational background
 - ✓ Research interests, career goals
 - ✓ Unique experiences
 - ✓ Strengths and accomplishments
 - ✓ What you are seeking from graduate programs.

During the Fair

- ❑ **Get in line for schools/programs in order of preference.** You may not have enough time to “speak” with representatives from all of the programs. Rank schools in order to preference and make sure you prioritize your top choice schools.
- ❑ **Introduce yourself by providing your name, university, major and year in school.** Depending on how the conversation progresses, you may be able to utilize part or all of your elevator speech, ask questions that you have already prepared, or develop new questions based on new information. Let the representative know if you have a particular interest in a certain program. You may initiate conversation by asking a question based on

information you already know from their website such as, "Could you tell me more about the (fill in the name of a specific program) you offer?"

- Be professional.** Make sure to be respectful and professional, utilize appropriate grammar, spell out words, and avoid emoticons when chatting with admissions representatives. While the representatives won't be 'seeing' you, they will be evaluating you based on your written interaction.
 - ✓ Greet the recruiter professionally
 - ✓ Thank the recruiter for meeting with you
- Ask how to get more information about the graduate school/program.** You may not have enough time to ask all the questions or attain all the information you are seeking—or you may have additional questions after the fair. Inquire how you may get in contact with the representative or how to attain more information in the future.

After the Fair

- Save notes from the fair.** You will learn about many programs at the fair – make sure you write down notes from each communication so you do not get confused.
- Follow up with the recruiter.** Send a thank you e-mail, follow up on any pending items, and/or request a follow up time to connect after the fair.
- Follow up with possible faculty.** If you were provided with information about program faculty who may be interested in working with you, make sure to contact them promptly and mention the name of the recruiter who provided you with his/her information.
- Share information with fellow scholars.**

Sample Questions to ask Recruiters

- What distinguishes this department? Are there any special programs for which this graduate program is noted?
- What types of resources are available to assist students in designing, conducting and publishing their own research?
- Are students automatically considered for graduate assistantships and fellowships or will I need to apply through a separate process?
- What types of funding are available to graduate students?
- How diverse is the graduate student population at your institution?
- What type of academic, personal, financial, and career assistance is available to graduate students?
- Is graduate housing available?
- Typically when is financial aid dispersed? Is it dispersed prior to the first day of class? If it is after the first day of class, how do students ordinarily purchase their books? Are emergency loans available?
- Are there funds available to help students attend conferences and present their research?
- Is there a mentor/advisor system? If so, how does it work? Are faculty advisors assigned to prospective students or do students have a choice?
- What is the class size of this program?
- How diverse are the graduate students in this department/school? Are there support services or organizations for ethnic minorities and/or women?
- If a master's degree student wishes to pursue the Ph.D., will he/she have to reapply to the graduate program? (for institutions that have the Ph.D)