

Questions to Ask Your Potential Supervisor

Research & Academics

- What are your expectations for hours spent on the lab on a daily and weekly basis, and what is your vacation policy?
- How do you normally determine the research grade?
- What is the expected publication rate?
- What are your expectations on authorship in a research group?
- How do your students typically start research projects?
- How do you define a successful research term for your student?
- Is there flexibility to these expectations?

Communication

- How frequently do you expect communications?
- Do you prefer email or in-person meetings?
- What are students supposed to prepare for these meetings?
- Are you available to meet on short notice?
- How quickly do you expect responses to emails both during and outside working hours?
- Discuss family issues that may influence your schedule (*e.g.*, family illness, parental leave, etc).

Time management

- What are your expectations for balancing research with teaching requirements?
- What are your expectations for balancing research with extracurricular activities?
- How much time do you expect students to put into professional development activities?

Lab Culture

- How is a new student integrated into the lab environment?
- How many people conduct research on lab projects?
- Are students assigned lab responsibilities? How is equipment shared/managed?
- Do students do activities together outside the lab?
- How is conflict resolved within your group?

Program Completion & Graduation

- How long do students typically take to complete the program (PhD or Masters) in this lab?
- How do your students structure their theses?
- Do there exist possibilities for funding beyond the time duration of the program?
- After completing their degree, what types of jobs and careers do your students have?
- What support do you provide students for finding their next position (academia, industry, government, non-traditional)?

Questions to Ask of Current Group Members

- What advice would you give to an incoming student?
- What are your career goals? How prepared do you feel for these positions?
- What is the quality of your advisor's supervision? Do they understand your research? Do they offer you useful feedback/advice?
- Does your supervisor hold you to reasonable expectations?
- How is the group managed? Are you assigned tasks/responsibilities in terms of equipment maintenance, training, and ordering?
- How does your supervisor handle conflict?
- What kind of culture exists in your lab? Do students spend time together outside the lab?
- What is your day-to-day schedule like? Are you expected to be in lab at certain time? How flexible is your schedule?