

UCI School of Education



Graduate School Recruitment Weekend
Congratulations in making it this far!



Read the program's website, lab websites, and grad student websites. Learn all that you can and be familiar with where you are going before you get there! Prepare well so that you can ask thoughtful, meaningful questions.

Questions for Both Faculty & Students

The PhD Program

1. What is the reputation of the graduate program?
2. What do you consider the strengths/weaknesses of the graduate program?
3. What are the methodological/equipment/software resources for research?
4. Do graduate students obtain strong quantitative/qualitative training?
5. Is there specific training/equipment/coursework in my primary area?
6. How many first author publications do most students graduate with?
7. Are you hiring new faculty? What is the ratio of junior to senior faculty?
8. What is the dropout rate? What is the retention rate of your students?
9. How often do outside speakers and visiting scholars visit?
10. What is available academically outside of classes (e.g., symposia, writing center, professional development workshops, etc.)?
11. Do graduate students get office space?
12. How do recent grads fair in the job market?
13. What do students and faculty do during the summer?
14. What facilities outside the department or even outside the university would I have access to?

Funding

1. Are healthcare, dental, and mental health benefits available (free, small co-payment, etc)?
2. What does Summer funding look like for students here?
3. Is travel funding available and is there a cap (hint: ask if authorship matters for conferences & travel funding)?
4. How many students have NSF or Ford (& other) fellowships?
5. Do students win major awards from foundations or associations?
6. Do students get practice and training with writing grants?
7. How are most students funded? (GSR/TA) For how much money and for how long?
8. Will I have the opportunity to work on grant-funded research?
9. What's the cost of living in this area – how much is rent, typically?

Teaching

1. Do students have the opportunity to develop their own courses?
2. How much do I get paid to be a TA (versus Reader or GSR)?
3. What are the teaching resources within and outside of the School of Ed?
4. How much is teaching valued here - as an R1 institution - and are students supported/encouraged to gain teaching experience to complement their research work?
5. When you teach with TAs, what are the major issues and problems that you find, and how do you resolve them? (Ask both TA's & Faculty)
6. Is there any formal training in teaching aside from TA assignments?



Social Life

1. Do students get together socially?
2. How friendly is the program atmosphere?
3. How supportive or competitive are students here?
4. How do you like living in Irvine?
5. What do you do for fun? (Ask Faculty & Students)
6. What non-academic activities do students here normally engage in?
7. How much informal, casual interaction takes place between the faculty and the students?
8. I know most of my time will be spent studying and doing research, but what is the social life like here? Where do people go on Friday nights?

Student Support

1. What kind of academic, personal or career counseling is available to students? (e.g., Grad Division)
2. Is there a mentor system amongst graduate students?
3. How accessible are the professors to students?
4. How diverse is the student body?
5. Are there support services or organizations for ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ, international students, immigrant/migrant students, students with learning differences, etc.?

Questions for Potential Advisors and Other Faculty Members

Research

1. What are your current research projects? What stages are these projects in? What would my role be like in those research projects?
2. Do graduate students work on both your on-going research as well as their own more independent, but related, projects?
3. What lines of research do you envision working on for the next 5 years?
4. Are there many inter- or intra-departmental research collaborations?
5. How would you describe your mentoring style and expectations?
6. How often, in general, do you meet with your graduate students? How often do the students who make up your lab meet as a group? What are these meetings usually like?
7. How many graduate and undergraduate students are in your laboratory?
8. Are other grad students/post-docs around and able to help if the PI is unavailable?
9. I work on xxxx. Are you familiar with that area of work? Do you have any brief recommendations for directions I might pursue? (hint: this can help you gauge an intellectual/research match)
10. What is your next major project, after you finish your work on your current one?

Expectations

1. Are there specific expectations that you want your students achieve (e.g., a first authored paper within the first 3 years, a conference presentation, etc.)
2. What should I expect to work on during my first year?
3. When students graduate, how many publications and conference presentations do they typically have, and what kinds of jobs do they usually get?
4. What do you think ABDs should do to prepare for the job market? How did you prepare for the job market?

Curriculum/Program

1. What characteristics distinguish this program from others?
2. What is the faculty to student ratio?
3. Looking at the current department, what new directions do you think you'd like to see it move in in the next 5-10 years? Why?
4. What is the placement rate of recent alums and where are they employed?



Questions for Graduate Students

Views of the Program

1. What do you consider to be the best and worst aspects of this program?
2. What is one thing you wish you had known or understood better before coming here?
3. How hard do students work?
4. Do most students get along well with each other and with faculty members? Why or why not?
5. Do students work in more than one lab?
6. How is the course load? Did you enjoy the classes?
7. Why did you decide to come to UCI?
8. What do you want out of graduate school?

Views of the Advisors

1. How much time does [your potential advisor] spend one-on-one with his/her advisees?
2. What is his/her mentorship style – hands off or hands on?
3. How much feedback does he or she give on written work?
4. Are students treated like collaborators (or overqualified research assistants)?
5. How helpful and responsive is your potential advisor?
6. How productive are students in my potential advisor's lab?
7. Are students in this lab taking the lead on projects?
8. What is your advisor's policy regarding authorship?
9. If I come up with new ideas or new approaches, will faculty be willing to work with me?
10. What is the mentoring philosophy of my potential advisor?

Other

1. How was your adjustment to graduate life at this University?
2. How was your experience as a first-year graduate student?
3. I noticed you worked on [] project (or with [] person). How did that go?
4. What was your role on [] project?

Some of these questions are from:

<http://www.unc.edu/~mjp1970/Mitch's%20Grad%20School%20Advice.pdf>

<http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/Psychology/Docs/Interview.pdf>

<http://neoacademic.com/2011/08/10/grad-school-preparing-for-interviews-and-visits/>

***Tip:** Email us ahead of time we are here to support you! Check out twitter & blogs for great advice and other things to consider from faculty, students, and other applicants going through the same process as you!*

P.S. The School of Education DECADE members are proud of you!



COVID-RELATED QUESTIONS

What kind of resources did the school offer to students to address the pandemic?

Were emergency funds released to students? (e.g., CARES Act) Will there be more funds?

What do fall classes look like? (in-person, hybrid, online?)

How is the quality of online instruction?

Is Zoom Pro funded for students?

How have faculty shifted their mentorship style to support students in their classes and their advisees?

Has the workload/coursework expectations shifted since the pandemic? If so, how?

How has the pandemic affected TA/GSR opportunities?

How has the pandemic affected the school's overall funding?

How has the school supported students with child care responsibilities?

Can students defer their admission until Fall 2022?

What were the refund policies for housing if students needed to leave campus housing? How does this affect our guaranteed housing contract?

Will there be office spaces available for students in the fall?