



EMORY

LANEY  
GRADUATE  
SCHOOL

Graduate Division of Biological  
and Biomedical Sciences

### **Interview Weekends**

Interviews are usually held in late January through early March by invitation of the Program to which a student has applied. Interview travel expenses are paid by the Division for domestic applicants. The Division programs do not pay international travel expenses but can sponsor domestic travel if the applicant is in the country already. Alternatively, Skype interviews can be arranged.

### **What is a Graduate School Interview Like**

Being invited for an interview indicates that faculty in the program believe that you are prepared for graduate school and have intellectual interests that match topics studied within the program. For the program, the goal of the interview is to assess your interests, background and goals more in depth. The interview is also an opportunity for you to assess whether Emory is the right fit for you, and we hope that it is.

During the interview you will meet with faculty and current students, both formally (in individual or group interviews) and informally (at dinners, other events). During your visit you will learn about the research being done by faculty and students. During interviews, faculty and students will want to learn about your previous research experience, what types of biological questions interest you, and to what degree you possess "intellectual curiosity". While you are not expected to know everything about each faculty member's research, it is good practice to review research that is conducted in the program. You should ask questions and make every effort to be engaged. You should convey your love of science and your enthusiasm for research.

Finally, remember that this is a few days where you get to be around other people who love science. Enjoy it.

### **Typical Interview Questions**

*This list was prepared by a group of graduate students at Emory.*

#### **Your Scientific Interests**

- What are your research interests? Put them in the context of the big picture.
- What aspect of the program is of greatest interest to you and why?
- Where do you see your field going in the next 5-10 years?
- What do you want to work on in my lab? (Note, your answer should be question, not system driven)
- Why are you interested in the research questions/field/discipline that you're planning to pursue or are pursuing?
- What is an interesting paper you have read lately?
- What are the big picture questions (not topics) you want to investigate?
- How do you plan to approach your questions?
- Why do you want to pursue a PhD in your area of interest?



### **Typical Interview Questions (continued)**

#### **A General Perspective on You**

- How do you work best? Independent or with a team? At home?
- What was the biggest challenge you encountered in your undergraduate classes or lab work, and how did you deal with it?
- What motivated you to apply to grad school?
- What have you done in the past that helps prepare you for graduate school?
- What do you think you will contribute to the program?
- Why do you feel prepared to start graduate school?

#### **Previous Research Experience**

- Be prepared to discuss your previous research experience.
- How has your research experience prepared you for graduate school?
- What questions did you help answer?
- Give examples of research troubles/failures/bad luck that you've tried to solve.
- How do your interests/past research experiences fit with the strengths and goals of the program?

#### **Goals**

- What are you looking to gain from your graduate school experience?
- What skills do you want to develop at Emory? How are you going to do that?
- Why do you need a PhD to achieve your career goal?
- Where do you see yourself in 15 years?

#### **Emory and the Program**

- Why are you considering Emory? In other words, what specific resources does Emory offer to enhance your scientific trajectory?
- How do you think your interests will fit in with the program?
- Why are you interested in the program?
- Who are you interested in working with? Why?
- Have you established a relationship with one or more faculty members within the program?
- Why do you think this program would be a good fit for you?
- What would make you choose Emory over other programs?
- What questions do you have about the program?



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### **Other Resources**

#### **General Advice**

- <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/graduate-admission-tips-interview.aspx>
- <http://gradschool.about.com/od/interviews/a/interview.htm>
- <http://sociobiology.wordpress.com/2012/02/27/impressing-us-on-your-graduate-school-interview/>

#### **Questions you Might Want to Ask at an Interview**

- <http://www.asbmb.org/Page.aspx?id=196> (scroll down)

#### **Preparing for Online Interviews**

- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/learnvest/2013/04/09/7-tips-to-nail-a-skype-interview/>
- <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ace-your-skype-job-interview-14-smart-tips/>