

Maximizing Your Campus Visit

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Here are a few suggestions about how to maximize your visit to campus. A good starting point is to reach out to the graduate advisor or director of the department or program for which you are applying and set-up short (30 minute) meetings with different individuals in the program/department. This is to your benefit since programs/departments are the ones who make admissions decisions for graduate students. Contact information is available via the program/department website.



Before you go:

1. Do your homework and find out faculty members' research areas and courses they teach.
2. The office coordinator is a great resource and contact person who usually handles application materials, schedules, and has a lot of insight into the program.
3. Try asking the same question of different groups to get a sense of organizational culture.
4. If available, request a tour of the program/department facilities.

Who should I meet?

You should try to schedule a meeting with the graduate advisor or the director of the program/department, a faculty member, and at least one current graduate student. It may not be possible to meet with everyone depending on their individual schedules and the time of year that you visit.



What should I ask?

Graduate Advisor/Director and Faculty Members

- How are mentoring and advising relationships established? Are advisors assigned?
- What are your expectations of graduate students in your program?
- What are examples of student success (publications, grants, jobs, doctoral programs, etc.)?
- What types of funding opportunities are available to graduate students (assistantships, grants, etc.)?
- What characteristics are specific to this program that distinguish it from others?
- What are the opportunities for graduate student engagement in this program (internships, field experiences, opportunities to work on grant-funded projects, etc.)?
- How would you generally describe graduate students in your program?
- Why did you choose your area of research?
- What did you wish you had known about this field when you were starting your career?

What should I ask?

Current Students

- What made you decide on this program?
- What are some of the aspects, both positive and negative, of being a graduate student at WMU?
- What academic support services are available for graduate students?
- What do you like/dislike about the Kalamazoo community?
- What recommendations do you have for housing, places to go, shopping, childcare, etc.?
- Looking back, what do you know now about being a graduate student that you wish you knew when you started?

What should I visit on campus?

Depending on your specific field, the following are a few things you should look for when visiting the program/department:

- labs
- classrooms
- libraries
- meeting rooms
- study spaces
- graduate assistant offices
- places to eat