



Graduate School Visitations

Before you visit the school you need to:

A) **DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** Know what you need to know about the school before you go.

1. Research the school on the web and find the names of one or two faculty members you'd like to work with for your graduate work.
2. Find out about institutes, centers, libraries and other resources on campus that are of interest to you and relevant to your graduate study or needs.
3. Talk to NAU faculty who went to school there. (Scan the NAU Graduate Catalog or look on the department website to find out where NAU faculty went to graduate school.)
4. Call the school's departmental or admissions office to find out if there are recruiters in your area. Meet with them to assist you in planning your trip and to make a positive impression on them.
5. Attend the NAU Career Day & Graduate School Fair to meet recruiters from that school or to find comparison information about similar programs/schools. Go to nau.edu/gateway for more information.

B) **SCHEDULE YOUR TRIP AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME.**

1. Make sure that you will be on campus at a time that students are there, classes are in session (can you sit in on a class?), faculty you want to meet are available, department/program staff are in the office.

C) **COMMUNICATE WITH FOLKS AT THE CAMPUS YOU ARE VISITING:**

1. E-mail the faculty you'd like to work with, graduate students in desired program, and department staff. (Sometimes departmental staff can help you to locate inexpensive lodging or perhaps arrange for you to stay with someone during your visit. They have also been known to arrange for group meetings for visiting students, depending on the school and program.)
2. Make appointments with faculty, staff or students you'd like to visit with.

D) **THINK A LOT, AND WRITE DOWN YOUR QUESTIONS**

1. What do you want/need to know to go to school, live, (work?) in that place? What kinds of financial, housing, transportation, childcare, employment, etc. information do you need or want while you're there? What kind of physical environments can you handle (concrete jungle, very rural)? What kinds of facilities are important to you (concert halls, museums, public libraries)? What kinds of cultural resources are important to you (cultural centers, cultural events)?
2. Realize that you will also be making an impression on faculty/the department, graduate students, etc. while you are visiting. It's important to be professional.

While on campus:

A) ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS.

1. Talk to faculty, students and department/program staff. Talk to staff at institutes, centers and libraries and other resources on campus. Find out what kinds of services they might provide if you became a graduate student on their campus. BE REALISTIC and find out what they really offer. For example, if you were going to do research using certain academic journals and they have them in the library but that section of the library is only open from 2-6pm, Tu-Th... That's valuable information for you. On the other hand, if they offer graduate students extended hours, you might not know that unless you ask. What are study areas like? What do other graduate students think about the department/program, faculty, resources on campus?

B) Check out living situations/options. How do graduate students in your field deal with housing? What does the housing look like in various neighborhoods? What are the price ranges?

C) Think about transportation. Check out local transportation options.

When you return:

A) WRITE IT DOWN. Include:

1. Name of school and department(s) visited
2. Dates traveled
1. Name of Professors/faculty you spoke to
2. Evaluation of visit(s) with professor(s)
3. Names of centers, institutes, libraries visited.
4. Evaluation of school/campus (resources for graduate students in your field, student support services, location, etc.) Evaluate institutes, centers, libraries and other academic resources on campus that are of interest to you and relevant to your graduate study. When you visited, were they what you expected? Will they really be resources for your work?
5. How did you feel while you were there? How does your experience match your expectations?
6. What is your decision about the school after your visit? Is it still in your top five? Why or why not?

Use this to help you to choose between graduate schools.