

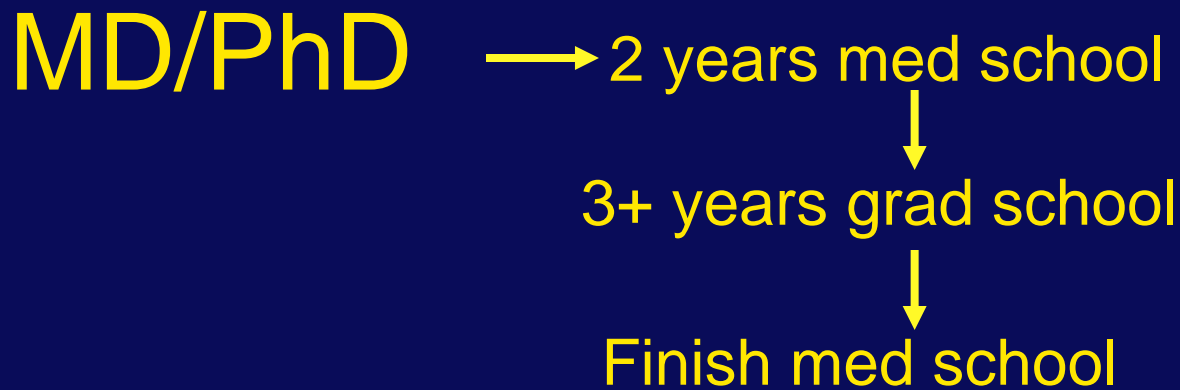
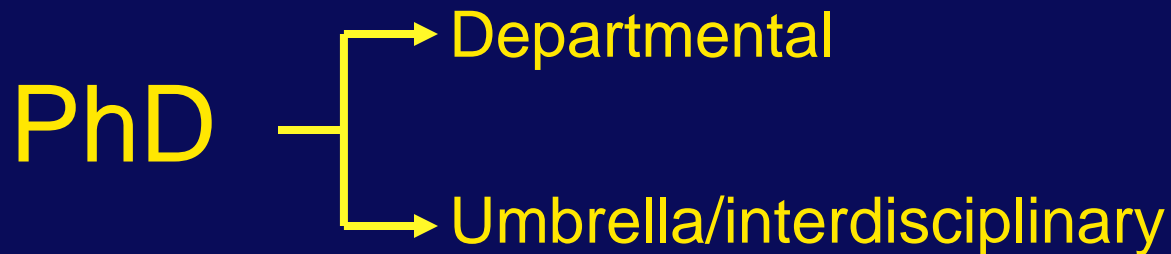
# Going to Graduate School

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# The critical first questions

- **Why do I want to go to grad school?**
- **Where do I see myself in the future?**

# What degree should I get?



# Making sure you are ready

- Research skills
- Problem solving skills
- Ability to read and comprehend scientific papers
- Communication skills - verbal & written
- Computer skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Time & stress management skills
- Life skills
- Maturity & willingness to sacrifice

**Where should I go?**

***LOOK CAREFULLY***

**&**

***ASK DETAILED QUESTIONS***

# Programs differ in many ways (I)

- Emphasis on teaching & mentoring
- Preparation for a broad range of careers
- Teaching and pedagogy training
- Focus on career & professional development
- Career guidance & access to career counseling
- Attention to controlling time to degree
- Culture, climate, morale, & student satisfaction

# Programs differ in many ways (II)

- Quality of Faculty

## Grants

- RO1 <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r01.htm>
- Training grants to the institution & individual students

## Publications

- Quality, not just numbers
- Students doing the writing & publishing as 1st author

## Awards

- Both faculty & students
- Where alumni end up

# The most important consideration

Where are many possible mentors doing things YOU want to do?

- Biological problem
- Techniques and approaches
- Model systems



# How do you learn about schools and programs?

- Mentors
- The web
- Meetings where schools recruit students
- E-mail inquiries
- Campus visits
- NOT from the US News & World Reports rankings

# To prepare a strong application, ask yourself...

- What tangible experiences have I had to prepare for a career in this field?
- What experiences tell me I will be successful?
- What personal characteristics do I possess that will improve my prospects for success?
- What are my career goals?
- Why this school and program?
- Why am I special, unique, and impressive?
- Have I overcome any obstacles in my life?
- How will I explain any gaps in my training or blemishes on my record?

# Who do you communicate with during the application process?



The Director of Graduate Studies

The program administrator

Specific faculty in the program

# What we look at

1. Your grades and course selection
2. Your GRE and/or MCAT scores
3. Your research experience(s)
4. Your letters of reference
5. Your personal statement
6. [Your interview]

# What we are REALLY looking for

- That you know what you are getting into to
- That you really want to do this
- That you are ready --- personally, academically, and professionally
- That you know what you know, AND what you don't know
- That you are likely to “fit in”

# What do you need to accomplish in your essay?

- Provide a rationale for going to graduate school
- Show that you are prepared
- Show that you understand what you are getting yourself into
- Explain why this school and this program
- Explain what you hope to accomplish in your career
- Explain bumps in your past
- Get them to want to meet you

# What do you need to accomplish during the interview?

- Present yourself effectively and honestly
- Show that you understand the field
- Present your current interests, knowing they will evolve
- Explain bumps in your past
- Find out if the research being done excites you
- Figure out if this is the “right” school and life for you

# Up next

Personal statements: October 29, 2008

Interviewing: December 2, 2008