



Career Connection

The Ohio State University
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Evaluating Programs That Match Your Interests

Once you have identified programs that match your interests, your next step is to evaluate the programs and rank them according to how well they meet your needs. The following list of criteria can be used to help you decide which programs provide a good match given your career goals and personal needs.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Do the course descriptions sound interesting?

What specializations are available?

Does the curriculum directly support your career goals?

Does the program focus on theory and research, or does it emphasize application of knowledge and skills?

If practicums are required, is there a good variety of practicum sites?

FACULTY

What is the faculty to student ratio?

Do they hold degrees from leading institutions?

What type of special recognition have they earned (e.g., awards, grants, etc.)?

What have they published?

Do the top scholars teach, or are they primarily involved in research?

Is there diversity in both cultural backgrounds and research interests?

PROGRAM REPUTATION

Is the program accredited?

Is the program well-established or relatively new?

Is the program nationally ranked in terms of excellence?

To find out about a program's accreditation status you can simply ask someone affiliated with the program. Accreditation is particularly important in fields that require licensure. For instance, it is easier to get approval to take the licensure exam for psychologists if you have graduated from a fully-accredited program.

Program rankings are provided annually in *US News and World Report* and *The Gourman Report*. Their rankings are based on different criteria and worthy of comparison. The *US News and World Report* rankings are available through their website (www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/bchome.htm), and the *Gourman Report* can be found at most libraries.

COST

What are the tuition and fees?

What types of financial aid are available?

What are the state requirements for becoming a resident (i.e. how soon can you become a resident to reduce your tuition)?

CAMPUS FACILITIES

What is the quality of the library, recreation center, and other areas designed for studying or student interaction?

Is there an adequate number of computer labs?

How comfortable are the classrooms?

CAREER SERVICES

What type of employment assistance is provided by the program or the university as a whole?

Are these services only available to current students or are alumni eligible as well?

With which companies or organizations do graduates tend to find employment?

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Taking into account the weather and social/political climate, can you picture yourself living there for a minimum of two years?

What are employment opportunities in the area?

Is there a public transportation system?

The above list is provided to give you a starting point - what other questions do you need to ask determine how well a program fits your needs? Once your list of questions is developed, you will want to use multiple sources of information as part of your investigation (e.g., published materials, students enrolled in the program, alumni, and your own first-hand experience). Do not overlook the value of interviewing others as part of the evaluation process. Talking with faculty, students and alumni will help you compare what you think the program will be like with how it really is. Generally, the more people you talk with the better.