2023 Further Education Fair Tip Sheet

Bring Your Full Self
You might read or hear in several places advice around how to show up to an event like this, such as what to wear; how to talk; where to look; how to hold your body; etc. Let’s take a few moments and deconstruct this kind of “advice”. Who are we trying to emulate when we edit our bodies and our behaviours? Upholding one specific example of interaction as the ideal for everybody to emulate, while sometimes offered from a place of well intention, causes harm.

You have a finite amount of cognitive energy. Having to edit your body and behaviour when you’re trying to interact with other people might not feel very helpful for you. So, we encourage you to let go of “advice” that encourages you to show up in a way that doesn’t match how you want to show up. Instead, we encourage you to show up in ways that feel comfortable and safe to and for you!

Asynchronous Content
The Further Education Team produces short webinars on key topics surrounding graduate and professional school. These webinars can be accessed by navigating to the “Webinars” section of the Further Education resources webpage, linked below.

https://uwaterloo.ca/career-action/further-education/further-education-webinars

We’re always looking to expand our webinar content so if there’s a topic you’d like us to cover, connect with a member of the Further Education Team!

Booking Form
To get connected with a further education support, fill out the booking form, linked below. You're able to share as much context as you'd like to in the booking form, and we'll match you with a corresponding support.

https://uwaterloo.ca/career-action/further-education-one-one-support
Things for Reflection and Questions for Conversation

The questions below are a compilation of the most frequently asked questions that folks ask us in appointments and workshops, as well as questions from our own personal experiences thinking about, researching, and or applying to graduate or professional school. We are by no means experts and often must scour program webpages for information, as well as reach out to programs directly. So, they represent a starting point (potentially!) of aspects you could ask a recruiter, and if you have questions that are different from what’s listed below, that’s ok! Use what feels helpful.

Unsure if you should apply to a certain institution or program. It may be helpful to reflect on the values and characteristics of different institutions and programs...

Schools / programs might centre a particular focus / area of research / population subset / etc. Sometimes the admission process factors in this focus to assess whether or not the applicant jives with the school’s / program’s mission.

Schools / programs feature a specific curriculum; course format and learning objectives; academic schedule; grading system; etc. Reflecting on your own learning style; the environments you’ve been successful in, in the past; your interests; etc. can help you identify what programs you may want to apply to based on your needs and wants.

- Do my goals and interests match up with the school’s / program’s mission?
- Is their education style a good fit for me?
- How can I tell if a faculty member is accepting new students?
- What course of action would you pursue if I haven’t heard back from a faculty member I’d like to work with?
- What’s unique about your program’s curriculum?

Thinking about what type of support different programs have to offer for your personal growth or well-being. It may be helpful to reflect on what you need to feel your best self when selecting a program or institution...
Schools / Programs may offer many different opportunities for a student to grow during their time with them. This can range from a variety of things like professional development courses and guest speakers and workshops.

Schools / Programs have different policies and processes that may apply to a student's wellbeing or their mental health. This can include academic leaves of absence, disability accommodations, mental health considerations, health and wellness benefits and more. We encourage you to reflect on what has helped you be successful in the past, what types of support you’ll need, and what will make you feel good during your academic journey!

- What support do you offer to students who need to take a leave of absence?
- What mentorship opportunities are available to students?
- What sort of professional development and or career planning supports does the program / university offer to its graduate students?
- What resources and supports does the program / university offer to students with children and or students with caregiving responsibilities?
- How does the program / university support the well-being of its students?

Are you an international student? It may be helpful to reflect on how different graduate programs will view international applications...

Some schools / programs may not accept international applicants or out of province applicants. Or, if they do, sometimes there’s a limit to the number of international or out-of-province applicants they will admit. Sometimes this is because the school / program is dedicated to training folks who will stay and practice their profession in the community or region.

- Do they accept international or out-of-province applicants?
- Are international students eligible for institutional funding?
- What is the amount of the institutional funding package?
- What additional funding support is offered to international students?

Location, location, location. It may be helpful to reflect on where you want to live and what support’s you’ll need while doing your graduate program...

The location of your program might be important to you! If so, it could be helpful to reflect on what you might need or want in relation to your
location. For example, proximity to your support system; access to public transportation; affordable housing; etc.

The location of your program might be important to meeting standards for regulated health professions like occupational therapy, nursing, audiology, as well as regulated non-health professions like psychotherapy, law, and teaching. It might be helpful to reflect on the accreditation status of the program(s) you’re interested in applying to. It might also be helpful to reflect on what processes you might have to go through to get your degree recognized by the occupation-specific regulatory body should you choose to study abroad but want to practice your profession at home after graduation.

Identifying what supports the school / program offers can be helpful in assessing whether the school / program can match your needs. For example, childcare supports; disability considerations; counselling and therapy supports; mental health supports; crisis intervention supports; permanent housing supports; etc.

- Where do I want to live?
- What housing is available to graduate students? Is it affordable?
- Where do I want to work after graduation?
- What supports does the program have and do they match your needs?

**Graduate school costs money. It might be helpful to reflect on what finances will look like for you...**

Schools / programs offer different types of funding or financial aid. This could include scholarships, government loans, bank loans, and different types of payment option supports. There may be different options based on a student's status being domestic or international. Understanding how much the school / program costs and your living expenses, will help you understand how to navigate your finances during your time in the graduate program.

Schools / programs will have specific websites that share this information or may invite you to contact them if you have specific questions about finances.

- How much will tuition cost you?
- Who is eligible for institutional funding?
- What is the amount of the institutional funding package?
- How is institutional funding dispersed?
- What formalized job protections are in place for graduate student workers?
• What additional funding support is offered to international graduate students?
• What financial needs funding does the university or program have?
• What government loans are you eligible for? Could bank loans or a student line of credit be options for you?
• What application support and mentorship do you offer to students applying to tri-agency scholarships and or external scholarships?