

## Advisor-Advisee Matching Questions

Welcome to RI! As you embark on your graduate studies, finding the right research advisor is vital. Your meetings with potential advisors offer a valuable opportunity to discuss their research interests, expectations, and working styles. To facilitate this, we have compiled a list of questions for you to consider. Many of the questions go both ways! It is a **conversation** to have with your potential advisors. This list was written with PhD students in mind, though it should still be helpful for MSR students as well.

Before you start, here are some questions to think about for yourself. Make sure you also discuss these with your potential advisor!

1. What are your goals for the PhD? Longer term? In what ways do you want support from your advisor for these goals?
  - a. For example, general project visions, funding, weekly discussions
2. What is your expectation of an advisor's role in the PhD?
3. What are your research interests? What problems are you excited about solving?

## Potential Questions to Ask Potential Advisors

1. What are your long-term research interests? For the next few years? Longer?
2. What are your expectations from your students?
  - a. Most valuable traits of a good PhD student?
  - b. Research output – How often is a student expected to publish in conferences, journals etc.?
  - c. Time spent on research – normal work hours, weekends, around deadlines?
  - d. Mentoring - Are students expected and/or given opportunities to mentor others (junior PhDs, Masters, Undergraduates)?
  - e. Typical timeline – What do you expect a student to have achieved to defend?
3. How would you describe your general approach to advising?
  - a. How often do you meet with your students? For how long? Individually or in groups?
  - b. Is there anything you expect students to prepare in advance of each meeting?
  - c. How often would you like research updates? Through which medium?
  - d. Progression through PhD – How does your advising change as students mature? For example, do you initially pair junior with senior PhDs/postdocs? Shorter meeting?
  - e. What are some good ways for students to get your feedback? On a project? On future careers? For example, discussion questions during 1-1.
4. In the next few years, how large do you expect your lab to be?
  - a. How many simultaneous projects? What is the usual project size?
5. Funding: How are students generally funded?

- a. How does it affect project choice?
  - b. What are the student's responsibilities for the sponsored project (e.g. research, report writing, demo)?
6. What does a typical research project cycle look like?
    - a. How do students come up with research ideas? How much freedom do students have to explore research problems and ideas?
    - b. How long does a typical project last? What are the usual deliverables e.g. research paper, technical report, presentation, open-source code etc.?
    - c. What is your view on missing paper deadlines? When is a good point to decide to drop a paper deadline? Or a project completely?
  7. What are your thoughts on collaboration between students within/outside the lab?
  8. Which students of yours would you recommend me to speak to? Any other professors I should speak to?
  9. What are the general career paths of your lab's alumni?

Thank you to Alex LaGrassa for some of the questions!

*These questions are compiled by the RI Climate Committee.*