

Best Recruitment Practices for Qualified and Diverse Graduate Students

There are two primary steps in recruiting: Encouraging applicants to apply to your program and then encouraging acceptance of admission.

Encourage applicants to apply to your program. Recruiting for success means you will want to attract students from diverse backgrounds that have the potential to succeed in your program. Having successful graduate students means identifying prospective students who are not only academic prepared for your discipline but also likely to thrive in your departmental culture, university environment, and specific locale.

1. **Promote your Program:** Use multiple forms of publicity but make sure that information is current in any printed material and on your web site. Make good use of your department web page and/or department newsletter to highlight student/faculty accomplishments and collaborations, faculty research interest and successful grants, professional development activities and other things that help the prospective student identify you as a department dedicated to cutting-edge research, student success, diversity and the development of graduate students as colleagues and professionals.
2. **Provide timely responses to inquires from prospective students and then establish a follow up practice to assure that questions are addressed.**
3. **Networking:** Work with colleagues nationally and internationally to identify promising students and encourage application. Keep in touch with alumni and ask current students to refer prospective students to you.
4. **Current Undergraduate Students:** Encourage current undergraduate students that show promise and interest for your graduate program to apply. Take part in undergraduate research programs to develop opportunities to mentor outstanding prospective students.
5. **Maximize involvement of Faculty and Current Students:** Develop recruiting materials that can be taken with faculty and current students to professional conferences, visits to other campus', and during research travel. Encourage them to use opportunities within their professional networks to recruit students.
6. **Consider Other Activities:** Host receptions or break-out sessions at conferences. Encourage faculty when giving talks at other universities to arrange informal meetings with students who may be interested in your program.
7. **Assess Activities:** Assess how the practices above impact your applications and modify as necessary.

Encourage Acceptance of Admission. Once you have admitted a prospective student focus on converting them to matriculated students.

1. Follow up with prospective students by email or phone to make sure they do not have any additional questions. Assure that they have a point of contact if additional questions or concerns to come up.
2. Fund Competitively. Make sure funding questions are clarified and that prospective students understand what they are being offered. Provide information about other forms of funding that may be available and how or when to apply.
3. Assess to see what works for your program: Keep records of acceptances and what seemed to be effective in attracting them to your program.
4. Bring prospective students to your campus and make their stay informative by doing the following:
 - Show them your department culture; have them stay with a current graduate student for at least a portion of their stay if possible.
 - Make sure their visit is centered on the student and not the department. Although faculty may be interested in meeting prospective students do not make the entire visit one interview with faculty after another. Make sure there is time for the prospective students to mingle with other graduate students and post docs in social situations.
 - Give lab tours so they can see your faculty accomplishments and involvements
 - Try to arrange a current student showcase or poster session while prospective students are visiting
 - Arrange for the prospective students to attend a class that is indicative of one they would be taking if they are admitted
 - Arrange for something social during the prospective student's stay that gives them time to socialize with both current students and faculty. Something that shows off your local region can be helpful as well. Activities such as a hike can incorporate many dimensions of the local atmosphere.
 - Work with the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) to organize a packet that demonstrates the benefits for graduate students at the University of Arizona. Information on the active GPSC organization as well as our extensive research library, parental benefits and leave policies, grievance processes, and local information on the Tucson community can be very helpful.

- Provide a simple description of your program with requirements, average time-to-degree, and employment statistics for graduate students.

Other Resources:

Council of Graduate Schools: Chapter 4: Attracting the Right Applicants

<http://www.cgsnet.org/cgs-occasional-paper-series/university-georgia/chapter-4>

ICEF Monitor: Preferred recruitment strategies of US graduate schools for international students

<http://monitor.icef.com/2012/08/preferred-recruitment-strategies-of-us-graduate-schools/>

University of Georgia: Best Practices for Recruiting Underrepresented Students

<http://gradschool.uga.edu/forms&publications/faculty/recruiting/Underrepresented.pdf>