

### **Tips for applying to graduate school**

Your application will be reviewed by at least three ASU School of Life Sciences (SOLS) faculty members. Think about which faculty mentors you might like to work with, and on what types of projects.

Use the references cited in their journal articles to learn more about each faculty member's research and whether it appeals to you. Identify these faculty members in your statement of research interest, and on the application so we know whom you would like to review your application.

**1. Prepare your statement of research interest with care.**

This statement does not tie you to a specific research project. We use it to identify students who have a mature sense of the type of research they want to pursue in graduate school. We look for students who can think critically and write clearly about a research problem.

Be sure to mention the faculty members you might like to work with and the types of specific projects that interest you. *Hint: Don't begin your statement with, "Ever since I was a child..."*

**2. Email the faculty member(s) you are interested in working with.**

Tell them about your interests and reasons for wanting to work with them. Ask about the projects currently in progress in their lab, and ask whether they are accepting additional students in the coming year.

We like to receive these letters and usually answer them promptly. Realize that our application procedure relies in part on how well a student fits our research programs. It helps if a specific faculty member is excited to have you join our school.

**3. Visit the School of Life Sciences.**

We care about whether the fit between a student, a program, and a faculty member is a good one. That can be difficult to evaluate from an application alone. To give students the opportunity to get to know ASU, the School of Life Sciences, the faculty and the graduate student community, we invite the most competitive applicants to attend one of two recruitment weekends in February. We can provide funds to cover travel costs within the continental U.S. and we will cover

the cost of lodging for the duration of the event. Invitations to these events are sent out in January.

4. **Ask your potential mentors and our current graduate students the tough questions.**

Compare the places you are considering for graduate school. During the recruitment process, and particularly if you get to visit the ASU School of Life Sciences, make sure to discuss graduate stipends and quality-of-life issues with current graduate students and the Graduate Programs office staff.

Also, spend as much time as possible with potential faculty mentors and discuss your research interests. We are confident the more you know about us, the greater the chance you will select our program for your graduate studies.