

FUTURE IGNITED
GRADUATE
APPLICATION PROCESS

AGENDA

Making your list

Securing letters of recommendation

Understanding how funding works



MAKING YOUR LIST

FACULTY, PROGRAMS, THEN SCHOOLS

Are there at least 3 faculty that you would want to work with?

- Who authored papers that you find interesting?
- Who do your professors, advisors, and/or research mentors collaborate with? Who do they recommend?
- Where have graduates of your undergraduate program gone?
- How accessible are the faculty? What is the quality of the research facilities?

FACULTY, PROGRAMS, THEN SCHOOLS

Does the program match your interests?

- What courses will you need to take? Are you able to work with faculty across programs? Can you take time to do an internship?
- What is the reputation of the program?
- What are the career paths of those who have finished the program?
- Is there diversity, a strong social climate, and support systems in the program and at the university?

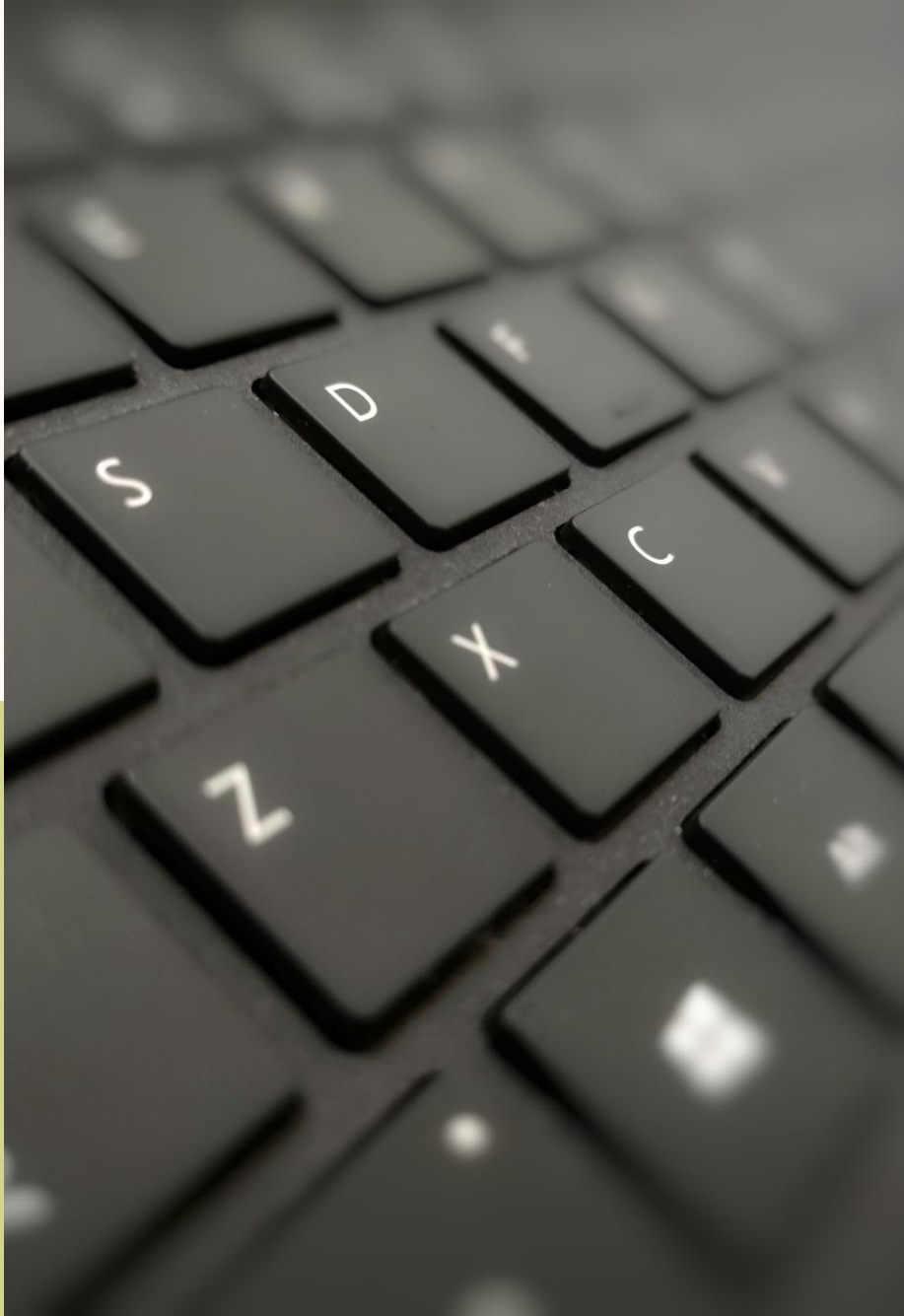
FACULTY, PROGRAMS, THEN SCHOOLS

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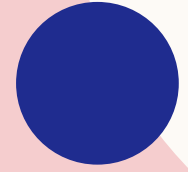
Location, location, location

- Where would you want to spend 5- 6 years? Snow vs sun? Ocean vs. mountains? Dry vs. rainy?
- Do you want to be near family or a significant other?
- Do you want to be near a particular industry? ie. SoCal for aerospace; or the Research Triangle for biotechnology?
- What is the cost of living and is there affordable/available housing?





SECURING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION



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KEY POINTS

- What they say and who they come from is important
- Letters should come from someone who knows you well and can evaluate your ability to be successful as a graduate student
- They offer an independent assessment of your preparedness

LETTER WRITERS ARE TYPICALLY ASKED TO PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF YOUR:

SECURING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Intellectual capability
- Experimental ability
- Fundamental training and knowledge
- Creativity and problem solving
- Motivation to be successful

SECURING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

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IN MOST CASES YOU SHOULD PREPARE TO SUBMIT LETTERS FROM 3 DIFFERENT FACULTY

- Research advisors
- Professors
- Academic Advisor

BUILD THOSE RELATIONSHIPS

- Go to class and participate
- Attend office hours
- Do research and/or write a senior thesis
- Meet regularly with your advisor
- Meet with faculty to discuss your academic and professional goals
- Be a TA
- Participate in campus academic organizations
- Attend campus seminars

FINAL TIPS:

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- **SECURING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

- Be sure to ask if they are willing to write you a supportive or strong letter of recommendation.
- Ask at least a month, or longer, in advance.
- Continue to follow-up until it is submitted.
- Consider carefully if you should submit a fourth letter.

- What can you do now if you don't have three letter writers?

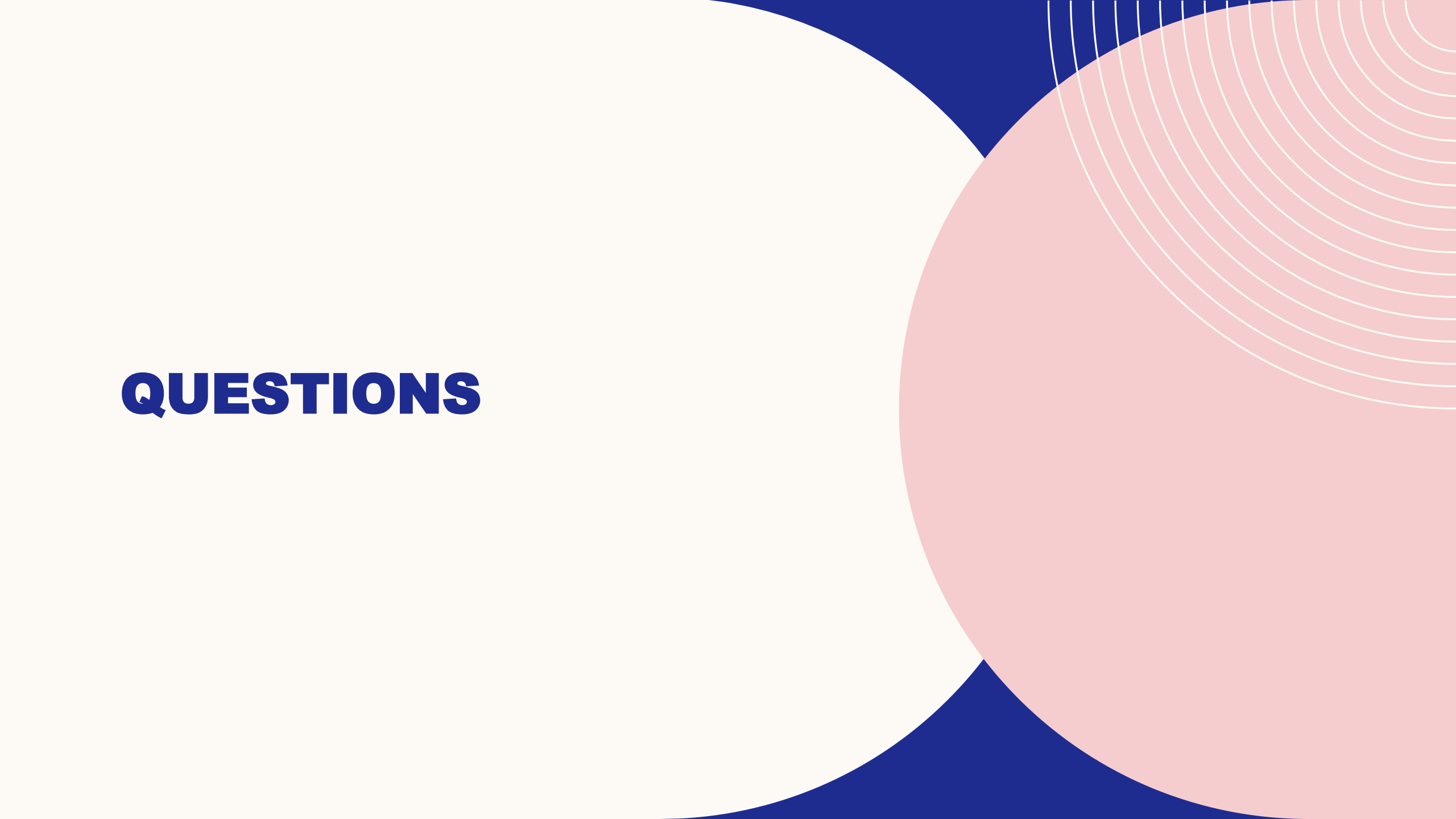
UNDERSTANDING HOW FUNDING WORKS



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1. In general, in the U.S., students doing a Ph.D. in a STEM field do not have to pay tuition. In fact, in almost all cases, Ph.D. students receive a financial package that covers tuition and provides a stipend. This differs from Master's programs where students typically pay tuition and do not receive a stipend.
2. Stipends differ depending on the school and its location.
3. In this current landscape, students should apply for fellowships
 - Federal fellowships: NSF, DOD, NIH
 - Private foundations: Ford Foundation; Fannie and John Hertz Foundation





QUESTIONS