What are the characteristics of the successful graduate student?

**Student Answers**

A good graduate student is usually well focused on his/her lab work while, at the same time, taking classes, participating in seminars, journal clubs and fulfilling all other grad students requirements. (S)he also needs to be able to manage to find time to relax, since the program is intensive. I think that to be able to carry on well enough throughout the 4-5 years, one needs to also adequately equilibrate work with personal life.

A grad student needs to be goal-oriented. she or he must organize these goals as short- or long-term and REALLY work towards their completion. A great deal of independence is an asset. Previous research experience is becoming more a necessity than an optional activity (at least in the sciences).

A nose for free food, and the ability to grovel for money

enthusiastic, SELF-motivated, hard-working, attention to detail, organized

Independent but capable of working in a team; self-motivated; enthusiastic; well-rounded; good communicator

A successful graduate student is self-motivated, efficient, and logical.

**Faculty Answers**

Characteristics of a good graduate student are a passion for scholarship, originality and the ability to make creative decisions. The student must start with a professional goal, not appear in a graduate program to "look around" for something interesting, i.e. to go shopping. There is some shopping necessary in finding the right people for his/her program and graduate committee, but not to see if a subject turns up! It is assumed that an undergraduate has already some exposure to the discipline prior to coming to a graduate program.

Someone with a lot of self-motivation and a driving curiosity to understand how nature works. This person should have a good critical mind; that is, they should not accept everything they are told but also think before they question anything. A good graduate student feels personal responsibility for learning, for understanding the science behind the research, for making and recording careful observations in the laboratory.

Intellectual curiosity; Ability to work independently; High level of personal motivation

Intelligence; self-motivation; creativity; enjoyment of the scientific process; ability and willingness to see both on the fine-detail scale and The Big Picture

passionate about a particular field or set of questions, self-starter, independent, dedicated, and a personality that can withstand the emotional roller-coaster of grad school

The prime index of success is motivation. Test scores and grades are secondary, although C and D students will have trouble getting into graduate school without personal interviews and demonstration of major offsetting factors.

consistency of effort and self-motivation is key; willingness to work through repetitive protocols and difficulties. thinks about his/her project both from technical viewpoint and in context of field.