FAQs during PhD Interviews

General Questions You Will be Asked:

Tip: Ask early on: What the interviewing faculty is working on? (this gives an idea of what he/she sees as a possible alignment to your own research work).

Read up on their recent work and ask relevant questions or pose possible extensions. Ask good questions.

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. Why'd you apply here? Or What drew you to this program?
   a. Research fit, what is that they are doing that excites you?
   b. Interdisciplinary, collaborations, etc.
3. Why do you want to work with ___?
4. What's something you want to study? Tell us about your interests, and what you wish to work on?
5. What do you hope to do after?
6. What are your strengths & weaknesses?
   a. Strengths: Good at collaborations, perseverance, hardworking, help others, learning, teaching, decent research experience.
   b. Weaknesses: improve my writing (I am getting better at it). Overcome this with experience and practice.
7. Questions for us?

Describe your research experiences.
>> Know the big picture/significance of the work, and also the finer details of what you specifically did experimentally.

What would you do if you could continue to work on the research project longer term?

Comments:
Be honest, positive, enthusiastic, have ideas, do not come across as rigid.

Your Story and Todos:

- Read your SOPs
- Research Interests
- Read all your papers and make notes. Key contributions, your role, shortcomings, future work.
- Have a short sales pitch presentation on your work (~10 slides). Keep backup slides in case you might have to go into more details.

Questions to Ask the Faculty:

- What are the current projects that your group is involved with? Or possible newer projects?
  - What are some of the projects that you and your students are currently working on?
- What is the lab structure? (how collaborative/disjointed are lab members' projects?)
  - Ask about collaborations, training grants, the campus, the city, etc.
- Are there lab meetings? What are other meetings you will see your advisor in a group with other people?
- What progress does the advisor generally expect from a student in the course of a semester? (Submission/Publication pace)
- How much freedom do you think I'd have in selecting my own projects?
- What other expectations does the advisor have for their students: time/vacation/paper/project/experiment wise etc.
- Where does their funding primarily come from? (If military / industry-focused funding bothers you, figure this out).
  - Is there a TA requirement? / How often would I be expected to TA?
- What have previous lab members done after getting their PhD?
- How many students are in the group? (Number of undergrad/masters/phd/post doc)

NOTE: Most of these might seem generic, but tailor them according to your research area, and speak with confidence on the work you have done.

Technical Interview Questions:
https://github.com/Sroy20/machine-learning-interview-questions

References:

1. Grad School Interview Questions and Answers!: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt1YP1Th4ZE
2. PhD Interview Questions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t51IEfiSMg
3. PhD Admissions Visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OugQPPVM-wc