What do I look for in graduate students?

I believe it may be helpful for students to have some sort of educational background. This could involve formal education like that commonly conducted in schools or at least in what could be recognized as a classroom format, though this is certainly not required. Neither should any particular level or achievement of education or schooling, however formal or informal, be considered as anything approaching a requirement.

I have noticed that successful students typically possess some skills that fall under the heading of “literacy” (broadly defined), though I hesitate to specify any particular skills or thresholds that are preferred.

It may also be helpful for students to have some prior grasp of what it means to do research. That is, a familiarity with the definition of the word could potentially be considered beneficial. (If this is lacking, one may wish to consider spending some time in background preparation, for example, by looking up the word “research” in a dictionary. But if insufficient literacy skills prevent this, it certainly is not to be considered as anything approaching a critical deficiency.)

It may be desirable for prospective students to demonstrate some sort of work ethic, though I hesitate to suggest any specifics as to the quality or degree thereof. Any particular capability within a broad range of work ethics should be considered feasible. Similarly, some intangible notion of “capability”, such that the individual is able to successfully navigate typical obstacles encountered in life, is also potentially to be desired.

In the past, all students have been of the same species. I may even go so far as to suggest that being of this species is, to use an excessively strong term, preferred. But this should certainly not be interpreted as anything approaching a requirement.