

## ***Suggestions for Gaining Admission into Ph.D. Programs in Psychology***

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\*Get involved in research: Most Ph.D. programs in Psychology, including Clinical Psychology, are designed to train students to become "researchers." Consequently, having research experience is highly beneficial when applying to programs. Suggestion: Come up with an idea you'd like to investigate and find a "mentor" who will agree to guide/supervise your project. Or...ask a mentor/professor if s/he could use a "helping hand" on one of their on-going research projects (try to choose one in which you'd be interested...). Not only will this provide you with real experience conducting research, but your mentor can write favorable letters of recommendation on your behalf.

\*Take advanced Statistics/Research Methodology courses. Selection committee members for many Ph.D. programs are impressed by your demonstration that you can successfully complete these courses.

\*If you earned less than a "B" in Introductory Statistics, take it again. This will show programs that you are persistent, and...that you can do statistics!

\*In your application to graduate programs, discuss any unusual abilities/experiences you may have. Are you bilingual? Traveled a lot? Interesting (and possibly relevant) work experience (e.g., have you worked in a clinic, research center?...); Irrelevant work experience (work that isn't directly related to Psychology, but clearly reflects leadership skills on your part, or creativity, responsibility...). Volunteer work? Be sure to explain (briefly) how these abilities/experiences are strengths and/or assets.

\*Take the GRE several times (if necessary).

\*Join APA (or SEPA): It's fairly inexpensive for students, very informative, and gives others the impression that you are committed to the profession (you'll find them on the internet).

\*Apply to at least ten different graduate programs (if you're applying to Clinical Programs, make that twenty!). Consider alternatives also (e.g., if you want to specialize in Social Psychology, consider General Experimental or Personality Programs. If you want Clinical Psychology, consider Counseling Psychology Programs (Consult with your professors about this)

\*Apply to a few Master's Degree Programs as backups. A "General-Experimental" Master's program is best if you'd like to eventually earn a Ph.D. (even if in Clinical Psychology) because you'll acquire additional research experience through an Experimental Psychology Master's Program (note: if you go this route, I suggest you do a thesis if you have the option: it conveys to the world that you can write, conduct research, and you might even get it published...!)

\*Try to establish a "research niche" (an area on which you'd like to focus) For example: Child abuse and parenting skills. Or, coping and stress. Or, alcohol and substance abuse. The list is endless.

\*Last, establish a professional relationship with a professor who will serve as a "mentor" for you and help guide you through all of this. Consult with other professors also. That's what we're here for. Good luck!