



SQUARE ONE

CHOOSING A CAREER IN PSYCHOLOGY

Graduate Programs in Psychology

Clinical and Counseling Psychology

The Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy) degree in clinical psychology is the traditional doctoral degree, symbolizing graduate training in both the science and practice of clinical psychology. These programs educate students about issues related to mental health and mental health treatment. Many programs emphasize research and will require you to take courses in statistics and experimental design. You will be expected to conduct experimental research, which will culminate in your dissertation.

The Psy.D. stands for Doctor of Psychology and is similar to the Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) in academic standing. The Psy.D. is designed primarily to train psychologists to be clinicians able to work in a wide range of clinical settings. Generally the emphasis is on clinical work and focuses less heavily on research than Ph.D. programs. Psy.D. clinical psychologists usually work in hospitals, clinics, and private practice. Psy.D. programs tend to have more students per class than Ph.D. programs as many as 30 or 40, as compared to 5 or 10 in the Ph.D. programs.

Master's degree - A Master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed., M.S.W.) can be suitable training for many industrial positions and for clinical or counseling positions. While admission to a Master's program is much less competitive than admission to a Ph.D. program, career opportunities are more limited.

School Psychology

School psychologists are training to do counseling and psychological testing in a school setting. Their strength, therefore, is their understanding of school systems and education. They may work with the children in the school or the staff. Some school psychologists may also have a private practice. Some school psychology programs offer the Ed.D. Others, which may place more emphasis on research training, will offer the Ph.D.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Industrial Psychology majors study psychology as it applies to the workplace: attitudes of employees and employers, organizational behavior, workplace environment and its effects, and much, much more. The program of study includes topics such as personality, cognition, perception, and human development. You might be given the option to take relevant business courses, such as management, since you will focus on organizational settings.

IS GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHT FOR ME?

Quintessential Careers:
Considering Graduate School? Answer These Four Questions Before You Decide
by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

Deciding to seek one or more graduate degrees is a major commitment of time and money; a decision not to take lightly. You will face several years of intense work and research -- a much more demanding course load than in your undergraduate program. Before deciding your next step, you should take the time to honestly answer these five questions.

Why are you considering a graduate degree?

Career Goal: You need to have a clear understanding of what you want to do with your career -- and how earning a graduate degree will help you reach that goal. If you have any doubt at all about your professional goals, consider putting off graduate school and, instead, spend some time working on some self-assessment and career planning. If you go to graduate school without a clear goal, you will probably end up wasting both time and money.

While certain careers definitely require an advanced degree -- doctors and lawyers, for example - many other careers offer plenty of job opportunities for job-seekers with just an undergraduate degree. In fact, in some situations having an advanced degree can actually hurt you in a job search if you also have little or no job experience.

Compensation: Most studies show that people with advanced degrees earn more on average than people with bachelor's degrees. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1998 the average worker with a bachelor's degree earned \$40,478, while a worker with a master's degree earned \$51,183, and a worker with a doctorate earned \$77,445.

Staying Marketable: While a graduate degree is not required for many "entry-level" jobs, you may need to earn an advanced degree to keep your training and skills current -- and make you more marketable for career advancement.

Career Change: A graduate degree can often make sense for a job-seeker who is looking to make a career change. In this case, you would be earning the graduate degree in the field you plan to enter.

When should you consider obtaining a graduate degree?

One of the questions most often debated is when is the best time to consider a graduate degree. Is it better to attend graduate school right after you complete your bachelor's degree, or is it better to wait a few years and gain some work/life experience first. As mentioned above, certainly do *not* consider going immediately to graduate school as a default move -- or to avoid getting a job.



APPLICATION STATION

Overview: Application Requirements

Since admission and application requirements will vary for different fields and institutions, be sure to read carefully what is required for each individual program.

THE APPLICATION PACKET usually includes...

The application form	Submitted by you
Application fee	Find out if you are eligible for a waiver
A statement of purpose	Prepared and submitted by you
Transcripts	Requested by you, but submitted by Registrars' Offices
Financial Aid application	Submitted by you. Check deadline, may be earlier than application deadline.
Letters of Recommendation	Submitted directly by recommenders OR may be returned to you in sealed envelopes for you to include with your application materials.
Standardized test scores	Submitted directly by ETS etc.

Application Fee Waiver Programs

If you are currently receiving need based financial aid, you may qualify for the application fee waiver program that many institutions have. You should contact the admissions office at the institution to which you are applying to find out what you have to do. Usually, you will need a letter from the undergraduate financial aid office.

Application Deadlines:

Application deadlines will vary. Most are between January and March, but some are as early as December. Many schools have a rolling admissions policy and will act on applications as they are received.

Apply Early!

Here are some important reasons to encourage you to submit your applications early:

- They are often read in the order they are received even if there is an application deadline.
- Since it is your responsibility to be sure that all supporting materials are submitted by the deadline, it will give you time to re-submit any documents that might be lost the mail.
- Early applications suggest that you are an organized individual with a special interest in the program.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

CV vs. Resume:

Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)?

What's the difference between a resume and a CV? The primary differences are the length, the content and the purpose. A resume is a one or two page summary of your skills, experience and education. A goal of resume writing is to be brief and concise since, at best, the resume reader will spend a minute or so reviewing your qualifications. A Curriculum Vitae, commonly referred to as CV, is a longer (two or more pages), more detailed synopsis. It includes a summary of your educational and academic backgrounds as well as teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honors, affiliations and other details.

In the United States a Curriculum Vitae is used primarily when applying for international, academic, education, scientific or research positions or when applying for fellowships or grants. As with a resume, you may need different versions of a CV for different type of positions.

What to include:

Like a resume, your CV should include your name, contact information, education, skills and experience. In addition to the basics, a CV includes research and teaching experience, publications, grants and fellowships, professional associations and licenses, awards and other information relevant to the position you are applying for. Start by making a list of all your background information, then organize it into categories. Make sure you include dates on all the publications you include.

How to write a CV:

Consider the following points:

- Clear - well-organized and logical
- Concise - relevant and necessary
- Complete - includes everything you need
- Consistent - don't mix styles or fonts
- Current - up-to-date

Samples:

It's always helpful to look at samples when preparing a CV. Please see our sample portfolio located in the Application Station booth.

From: <http://jobsearch.about.com>

Letters of Recommendation

According to a recent survey of graduate school admission committees, the three most important graduate school admission criteria are one's GPA, Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, and letters of recommendation (Keith-Spiegel, 1991; Norcross, Hanych, & Terranova, 1996). While many students understand the importance of letters of recommendation, many don't realize how to get a good letter of recommendation. Let me give you four tips that should help: make a face-to-face request for the letter of recommendation, give faculty enough time to write the letter, provide lots of information, and be organized.

How Many?

- Graduate schools will usually request three.
- If you can obtain four very good letters, do it.

Who Do You Ask?

- Professionals who know you best.
- Professionals who will be able to say good things about you.
- Professors are best.
- Employers are good if the work is related to your field.
- Supervisors of volunteer work are good if the work is related to your field.

When Do You Ask?

- At least 1-2 months before the first graduate school deadline.
- Plan to spend a few minutes with each recommender to share (with enthusiasm) your career goals.

What Do You Give the Recommender?

- Your name and your major/ minor.
- Class(es) you took with the professor, along with the grade(s) received.
- Description of any projects completed for the course(s).
- Cumulative GPA, psychology GPA, GRE scores.
- Description of work/volunteer and research experience, including presentations and publications.
- List of organizations (e.g., Psi Chi, etc.) and leadership positions.
- List of conferences attended.
- Brief description of each graduate program to which you are applying.
- Any forms provided by each graduate school (with the waiver signed).
- A stamped and addressed envelope for each graduate school.

Am I Done?

- No. 1-2 weeks before the deadline, check with each graduate school to verify that your application is complete.
- If letters of recommendation are missing, check with each recommender to verify that they have sent the letter.

Financing graduate school: How am I going to pay for all of this?!

Federal Loans

The Department of Education is the largest provider of student aid in America, by far. College students receive some 60 billion dollars a year in financial aid from the federal government. This mostly comes in the forms of loans, and grants that don't have to be repaid.

If you 1) can show a need for financial aid, 2) are a US citizen, or eligible non- resident 3) have registered with Selective Service if you are male, and 4) have a valid social security number, you are eligible to apply for Federal Financial Aid.

The first step is to apply for a Department of Education PIN at <http://www.pin.ed.gov>. Once you have your PIN, the next step is to complete the FAFSA, which stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. You can do this at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>. You'll want to do this as quickly as possible, and set aside several hours to fill the form out completely. If you still live at home, you'll want your parents' or guardians' tax returns handy. It's probably a good idea to have your parents or guardians help you fill it out. The FAFSA is like your passport to federal aid, and most state and college aid, too. It's much faster and easier to fill out the FAFSA online rather than on paper, which is why you'll need a PIN. You're allowed to file the FAFSA on paper, but it slows the process down considerably. And keep in mind that you must file the FAFSA between January 1 and June 30 of the year you intend on enrolling in graduate school.

Once you've submitted your completed FAFSA, in a week or so you'll receive an SAR, or Student Aid Report. This will show you what kinds and how much federal aid you qualify for, based on the difference between how much your college will cost, and how big your families EFC, or Expected Financial Contribution, is. The SAR will also be sent to the colleges you've chosen to apply at to help them design a total aid package based on your specific needs.

Forms of Federal Loans

- *Perkins Loans* – Can borrow up to \$6,000 per year, up to a lifetime maximum of \$40,000.
- *Subsidized Stafford Loans* – Can borrow up to \$8,500 per year, and no interest will accrue until you graduate.
- *Unsubsidized Stafford Loans* – Can borrow up to \$10,000 per year, but interest will accrue until you graduate.

Stipends

Students who are able to attain an position as a research assistant (RA), teaching assistant (TA), or extern often generate stipends that pay for most expenses. At some elite universities with large endowments, there may be a minimum stipend established for all Ph.D. students within their first five years, as well as a tuition waiver. At many elite universities, these stipends have been increasing, in response both to student pressure and especially to competition among the elite universities for graduate students. Because of this competition, increases tend to be concentrated on the beginning years of the program, not on the relatively poorly funded finishing students. At most universities, however, the level of available funding is much less and required work greater. Departments at these universities will often make yearly decisions with regard to graduate student funding on the basis of how well the students appear to be progressing through the program in pursuit of their degrees.



INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE

Tips for the Interview Process:

Pre-Interview:

- Be prepared.
- Make a list of strengths, achievements, and recognitions received.
- Know who your audience will be.
- Conduct research on the school, graduate program, and faculty before the interview.
- Find a list of common interview questions.
- Practice answering questions with friends, family, and graduate school advisors.
- Rehearse Answers but not to the point that it seems robotic or mechanical.
- Expect the unexpected questions.
- Be ready to answer personal and thought-provoking questions.
- Prepare a list of intelligent questions and ASK THEM when asked if you have any questions?
- Get enough rest the night before.

The Day of the Interview:

- Arrive early (at least 15 minutes early).
- Dress appropriately – Look neat and professional. (No Jeans, T-shirts, shorts, etc.).
- Bring copies of your CV, papers and/or presentations.
- Relax and be yourself.
- Be honest, confident, and friendly.
- Be polite. Shake hands with the interviewer or anyone else you meet during your visit.
- Address the interviewer by their title and name (e.g. Dr. Smith).
- Make eye-contact and be attentive
- Be respectful and courteous.
- Remember that body language and body posture can express a lot of different moods so make sure you look interested.
- Express your ideas and thoughts in a clear, intelligent, and straightforward manner.
- Demonstrate your interest in the school and program in a passionate and enthusiastic manner. Let the interviewer know that you are really interested in attending their school without stating it directly.
- Discuss your achievements and your goals (career and graduate school goals).
- Be consistent in your answers. (Additionally, make sure your answers on the application are consistent with your interview answers.)
- Ask intelligent questions. Knowledgeable and specific questions that show you have done your homework are a plus (e.g. questions about the school, program, or faculty).
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand the questions.
- Sell yourself.

Post-Interview

- Remember to send a thank-you note/letter or email after the interview.
- Relax and stay Optimistic.
- Use each interview experience to prepare for future interviews.

Research Experience: A Ticket to Graduate School

Applicants to graduate school encounter fierce competition for admission and funding in today's competitive market. How can you increase your odds of acceptance, and better yet, funding? Get research experience by assisting a faculty member conduct his or her research. As a research assistant you'll have an exciting opportunity to do the research rather than just read about it -- and get important experience that will make you stand out in the graduate admissions pile.

Why Become a Research Assistant?

Aside from the thrill of generating new knowledge, assisting a professor with research provides many other valuable opportunities including:

- gaining skills and knowledge that aren't easily learned in the classroom
- working one-on-one with a faculty member
- exposure to methodological techniques that will help you complete your senior thesis and later graduate work
- get writing and public speaking practice by submitting papers to professional conferences and journals
- develop a mentoring relationship with a faculty member
- get outstanding letters of recommendation

Engaging in research is a worthwhile experience, regardless of whether you choose to attend graduate school, because it provides you with the opportunity to think, organize information, and problem solve, and demonstrate your commitment, reliability, and capacity for research.

How to Get Research Experience

So, you're convinced of the value of research experience to your graduate school application. Now what?

How Do You Get Involved as a Research Assistant?

First and foremost, you should perform well in class, and be motivated and visible in your department. Let faculty know that you're interested in getting involved in research. Approach faculty during office hours and ask for leads on who might be looking for research assistants. When you find a faculty member who is looking for an assistant, carefully and honestly describe what you can offer (computer skills, Internet skills, statistical skills, and the number of hours per week you're available). Let the faculty member know that you're willing to work hard (be honest!). Ask about specific requirements such as the duration of the project, what your responsibilities will be, and the length of commitment (a semester or a year?).

From: Your Guide to Graduate School

http://gradschool.about.com/cs/generaladvice/a/research_2.htm



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Central Florida offers numerous opportunities for undergraduates to pursue research in various disciplines under the direction of a faculty member. This intensive research opportunity enhances the academic experience and challenges students to strengthen their critical, analytical, and writing skills. You can find out more at the UCF Office of Undergraduate Studies (undergraduatestudies.ucf.edu/research).

Undergraduate Research Journal

During the Fall 2004 semester, founding editor Associate Professor Alejandro Brice, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and UCF's Texts and Technology Ph.D. program worked to produce the university's first undergraduate research journal. This multidisciplinary, faculty-mentored journal, collects and distributes student research online. UCF's journal follows a tradition of undergraduate scholarship found in many other schools, including Berkley, Clemson, and Harvard. Successful undergraduate journals, at universities such as these, were analyzed to shape the direction of UCF's journal.

- Journal Website: www.ejournal.ucf.edu
 - Alejandro Brice, editor, ejournaleditor@mail.ucf.edu
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Psychology Fieldwork Opportunities

Undergraduate Fieldwork provides an opportunity for advanced undergraduate Psychology majors to become involved, under supervision of a trained professional, in the application of psychology. The role of the student in the placement is not limited to passive observation, but rather to provide as complete involvement as appropriate for the student's level of training. These experiences can have several purposes: 1. The student has an opportunity to test the principles obtained in the classroom against the realities of delivering human services or counseling with agencies; 2. The student can explore vocational alternatives in light of further professional training that would be needed in the setting, or the student can utilize certain settings as a type of apprenticeship/internship looking towards immediate employment upon graduation; 3. The student earns upper level psychology credits.

Common Requirements for Fieldwork:

- Students must have senior standing with the majority of coursework completed.
- Students must have completed courses appropriate to the applied setting.
- Students must apply and be accepted for fieldwork by the Undergraduate Coordinator in their area of interest.

Faculty Fieldwork Coordinators:

Students must contact the appropriate coordinator well in advance of the semester in which they would like to do the fieldwork in order to apply and arrange for a placement.

- Clinical/Counseling: Dr. Tucker, 407-823-2566
- Industrial-Organizational: Dr. Wooten, 407-823-3478
- Human Factors: Dr. Bowers, 407-823-5607

Preparing for Grad School Admissions: What to Do During Your Junior-Year

Getting into to grad school can be tough. Get started early to improve your application and increase your chances of getting in! Here's what you can do as a junior, or even a sophomore:

- Start deciding where you'd like to apply. This entails gathering information. Look for programs. Browse through brochures and web sites.
- Request catalogs and applications from schools that you may be interested in.
- Meet with faculty and career counselors to discuss programs and your plans.
- Determine admissions requirements.
- Take extra elective courses that may aid your application. For example, in psychology, extra math, science, and statistics courses are good bets.
- Determine which standardized tests to take. Take practice tests. Consider a prep course.
- Take any required standardized tests towards the end of your Junior year. This ensures that you have time to retake them if needed.
- Get involved in your field. Assist professor with a project or do some volunteer work.
- Check your transcript for errors.

Timetable for Applying to Graduate School - Senior Year

It's finally time! You're a senior and can't wait to graduate and move on to graduate school. But first you need to deal with those pesky graduate school applications. Senior year is graduate admissions time. Here's how to go about it and what to do when to get into the graduate school of your dreams:

Summer/September

- If you haven't done so already, take the necessary standardized tests for admissions. You will either take the GRE, MCAT, GMAT, LSAT, or DAT, depending on what your program requires.
- Gather graduate program brochures (which you've collected over junior year and the summer or are working feverishly now to obtain) and narrow your choices.
- Consider which faculty members to ask for letters of recommendation.

September/October

- Research sources of financial aid.
- Carefully examine each of the program applications. Note any questions or essay topics that will require your attention.
- Write a draft of your statement of purpose.
- Ask a faculty member or the career/grad admissions counselor at your school to read your essays and provide feedback. Take their advice!

1) PLAN AHEAD! Registering for the GRE's is not like buying tickets on Fandango.

- Schedule an appointment at least **2-3** months ahead of time.
- Check your schedule! Re-scheduling fees may apply for switching times.
- Due to limited testing centers, "good" time slots for taking the GRE fill up fast, especially in November, as many application deadlines fall in December.
- Remember, it may take 4-8 weeks for the scores to reach a university.
- If you have other scheduling concerns, such as classes to work around, or if you prefer a particular time of day, register as early as possible. (*Hint: If you are not a morning person, don't take the GRE at 7:30 am.*)

2) Start Studying.....NOW! Seriously, go make some flash cards.

- The GRE has 3 subtests, each of which has at least two subtests--including old favorites such as analogies and timed geometry problems. Need I say more?
- Many programs also require that you take the GRE Psychology Subject test in addition to the general test, so make time to study for that, preferably separately.
- A lot of material on the GRE involves memorization, such as definitions and mathematical formulas; there is no way to cram for this material.

3) Shop Around for Test Preparation Materials. Knowledge ain't cheap.

- If you opt to take a GRE Prep course, compare prices from 3 or more sources:
 - Kaplan Test Prep: www.kaptest.com
 - UCF Continuing Education: www.testprep.ucf.edu
 - The Learning Curve: www.thelearningcurvesolution.com
- GRE Prep books are a great alternative (and money saver) to prep courses:
 - *Kaplan GRE Psychology*, ISBN: 1419551426
 - *GRE: Practicing to take the General Test*, ISBN: 0886852129
 - *Passkey to the GRE Test*, ISBN: 0764117823
- Take advantage of all of the FREE resources on the GRE website (www.ets.org)
 - GRE Powerprep Software with 2 full computer-based general tests
 - Scored sample essays, a list of all possible topics for the Analytical test.
 - Reviews, tutorials, sample questions, test taking techniques, etc.
 - Downloadable Subject Test Practice books (just like the real test!)
 - *Hint: ETS charges you \$130 per GRE, so use the free stuff on the website!*

4) Practice taking the GRE on a COMPUTER! Think of it as a dress rehearsal.

- The computer version presents unique challenges, so be prepared for them.
- There is a timer in the corner of the screen showing how much time is left.
- You cannot go back to previous questions.
- You must read passages and then scroll through them for answers.
- You have to work out math problems using scratch paper so save room!



CHOOSING A PROGRAM

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION

Accreditation: There are two main types of accreditation: institutional and program-specific. You should determine the proper accreditation degree programs in your field require. While accreditation is not so much an indicator of quality as much as process, you could face negative consequences if the program does not have accreditation. For example, students who attend an unaccredited psychology school may not be allowed to get licensure (needed to be a practicing psychologist). P.S. UCF has accredited programs!

Admission Standards: You want a graduate program with tough admissions standards; it's better to be among the select few than with a larger group that may end up lowering the quality of your graduate education. Most schools publish this kind of information, so look for the number of applicants compared to the number of acceptances. You could also look at base requirements for admission, which usually include undergraduate grade-point-average and standardized test scores.

Career Assistance: One of your main goals for earning an advanced degree most likely revolves around career advancement -- either getting a new job or entering a new field. You should examine the amount of career development and placement assistance each program provides to graduates. While this assistance should just be a small part of your overall job search upon earning your degree, it's still an important one. You should also look at where each school's graduates are working (along with their salaries, if possible).

Cost/Financial Aid: If we all had unlimited resources, then cost would not be an issue; for most of us, however, this is usually a top issue. Make sure you examine all associated costs, including tuition, books and supplies, housing, and miscellaneous fees and expenses. Then review the types of financial assistance each program is offering you, including grants, loans, and fellowships.

Culture: Just as all organizations have corporate cultures -- "the way things are done around here" - so too with graduate schools. You need to identify schools with cultures that fit your style and comfort-level so that you'll have a better chance to excel.

Degrees Offered: Probably the most fundamental criterion; if a graduate school does not offer the degree or certificate program you seek, then it does not make any sense to investigate the program any further. Just make sure you know the specific degree/certificate you need to take you to that next career step you are seeking. Don't compromise or consider a lesser degree.

Faculty: A graduate program is only as good as the faculty who teach in it. It's important to work with faculty who are respected and known in your field. You need to establish a method to evaluate each program. The most basic measure is looking at the percentage of classes taught by full-time, terminally qualified faculty. But you could also investigate the reputation of the faculty by examining things such as the number of scholarly publications, the national or regional acclaim of faculty members, and/or the professional experiences of the faculty.