

**APPLYING TO
GRADUATE SCHOOLS
IN PSYCHOLOGY
ESPECIALLY FOR JUNIORS**

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METROPOLITAN AREA GRADUATE PROGRAMS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following information was updated in January 2006. While the list of programs is extensive, caution is advised as it may not be exhaustive of all programs available. Of course, there are a host of programs outside the metropolitan area to which you can apply, but traditionally most of our students choose to remain in this area. Ideally, you should apply to a mix of doctoral (PhD or PsyD) and master=s (MA or MS) programs to maximize your opportunities to advance. Graduate schools provide specialized professional training, so you need to select programs for the type of psychology you want to do - clinical, counseling, school, industrial, experimental, etc.

Doctoral programs are the most desirable, providing the highest level of professional training and status. They also are the most challenging, typically requiring three or four years of full-time course work, publication of a doctoral dissertation (original research), and a supervised internship of at least one year. Completing the dissertation also can take several years beyond the course work and internship. Generally, PhD programs place more emphasis on research skills and PsyD programs place more emphasis on clinical skills. These programs are the most competitive, receiving far more applications than they can admit. Usually, only the most outstanding undergraduates are able to gain admission directly into a doctoral program. But there are always surprises! Finally, make sure any doctoral program to which you apply is APA approved. A degree from a non-approved program can limit employment opportunities following graduation.

Master=s programs are the more likely option for most good undergraduate students. While they do not have the status of doctoral programs, most provide excellent training in specific fields and they are preparatory for later admission into doctoral programs. Typically, they involve two years of full-time course work, although many do permit students to enroll part-time. Most programs will require a comprehensive exam at the end and completion of a master=s thesis. The distinction between MA and MS programs is not as important as in the past. Today, their difference is one of emphasis. MA programs more strongly focus on preparing students to continue on to doctoral programs, while MS programs more strongly focus on preparing students to enter applied fields directly upon graduation. Both types can be used as a stepping stone to the doctoral level, but those from MA programs tend to be better prepared for the demands of the next level.

I also have included master=s programs in social work (MSW) and educational counseling (MSED) in this listing. While these are not psychology programs, many of our students opt for training as social workers who can provide counseling services and administer community based mental health programs, or as guidance counselors in educational settings. Admission to MSW and MSED programs tends to be less competitive. Their structure and training requirements, however, are very similar to those of MS programs in psychology.

THE PROGRAMS

LONG ISLAND

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY Garden City

www.adelphi.edu

MA - General Psychology - School Psychology - Mental Health Counseling
PhD - Clinical Psychology
MSW - Social Work

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY Hempstead

www.hofstra.edu

MS - Gerontology
MA - Industrial Psychology - Marriage and Family Therapy - Creative Arts Therapy
PhD - Applied Organizational Psychology - Clinical/School Psychology
PsyD - School/Community Psychology
MSED - School Counseling - Creative Arts Therapy

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY multiple sites

www.liu.net.edu

Brooklyn Campus

MA - General Psychology
MS - Counseling Psychology
PhD - Clinical Psychology
MSW - Social Work
MSED - School Counseling

Brentwood Campus

MS - Mental Health Counselor
MSED - School Counseling

C.W. Post Campus Brookville

Certificate - Applied Behavioral Analysis
MS - Mental Health Counselor
MA - Experimental Psychology
PsyD - Clinical Psychology
MSED - School Counseling

Westchester Campus Purchase

MSED - School Counseling - School Psychology

NY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Old Westbury

www.nyit.edu

MS - Mental Health Counseling

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY Oakdale Campus www.stjohns.edu

MS - School Psychology

SUNY STONY BROOK Stony Brook www.sunysb.edu

PhD - Biopsychology - Clinical Psychology - Social/Health Psychology - Cognitive/
Experimental Psychology

MSW - Social Work

NEW YORK CITY

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NY multiple sites www.cuny.edu

Baruch College Manhattan

MS - Industrial Psychology

Brooklyn College

MA - Experimental Psychology - Industrial Psychology

MSED - School Psychology

The Graduate Center Manhattan

PhD - Biopsychology - Quantitative Methods - Clinical - Cognitive - Developmental –
Educational - Experimental - Environmental - Forensic - Industrial - Social/Personality

Hunter College Manhattan

MA - General Psychology

MSED - Rehabilitation Counseling

MSW - Social Work

John Jay College Manhattan

MA - Forensic Psychology

Lehman College Bronx

MSED - School Counseling

MSW - Social Work

Queens College

Certificate - Applied Behavioral Analysis

MA - General Psychology

MSED - School Psychology

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY Manhattan www.columbia.edu

MA - Quantitative Methods

PhD - Cognitive Psychology - Behavioral Neuroscience - Sensation/Perception –
Social/Personality Psychology

MSW - Social Work

COLUMBIA TEACHER= S COLLEGE Manh. www.tc.columbia.edu

MA - General Psychology - Applied Psychology - Developmental Psychology -
Organizational

Psychology - Applied Behavioral Analysis

PhD - Counseling Psychology - Clinical Psychology - Developmental Psychology - Social/
Organizational Psychology - Applied Behavioral Analysis

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY Manhattan www.fordham.edu

PhD - Clinical Psychology - Psychometrics - Educational Psychology – Counseling
Psychology - Developmental Psychology

MSW - Social Work

MSED - School Counseling - Educational Psychology

MANHATTAN COLLEGE www.manhattan.edu

MA - School Counseling

NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY Manhattan www.newschool.edu

MA - General Psychology - Substance Abuse Counseling

PhD - General Psychology - Clinical Psychology

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY Manhattan www.nyu.edu

MA - General Psychology - Industrial Psychology - Educational Psych. - Counseling Psych.

PhD - Clinical Psychology - Counseling Psychology - Cognitive Psychology - Social Psych. -
Community Psychology - School Psychology - Developmental Psychology

PsyD - School Psychology

MSW - Social Work

MSED - School Counseling

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY Queens www.stjohns.edu

MA - General/Experimental Psychology
MS - School Psychology
PhD - Clinical Psychology
PsyD - School Psychology
MSED - School Counseling

TOURO COLLEGE Manhattan www.touro.edu

MS - School Psychology - Mental Health Counselor

PACE UNIVERSITY Manhattan www.pace.edu

MA - General Psychology
MS - School Psychology - Counseling Psychology (*Westchester campus only*)
PsyD - School/Clinical Psychology

INFORMATION SOURCES

There is a multitude of books and websites providing information on graduate schools in Psychology. They range from merely identifying programs to ranking them, offering advice on how to apply, exploring career paths, and providing information on standardized tests. This is just a partial listing of some of the most useful ones. Of course, you also should check the websites of any individual programs you are considering.

PRINT SOURCES

Career Paths in Psychology: Where Your Degree Can Take You (1997)
Sternberg, R. American Psychological Association (APA).

Describes a variety of specialties in Psychology and presents detailed evaluations of their positive and negative aspects from those working in these fields. Useful if you are not clear about what is available or what type of psychologist you want to be.

Getting In: A Step-by-Step Guide for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology (1997) APA.

Covers the entire process from planning your undergraduate courses and extracurricular activities to writing essays, securing recommendations and taking standardized tests.

Graduate Study in Psychology, 2006 Edition (2005) APA.

This is the big one. Provides detailed information on over 500 programs in the U.S. and Canada, including degrees offered, types of students accepted, admission criteria, application information, financial aid, and tuition costs.

Graduate Programs in Psychology, 2004 (Peterson's Decision Guides: Graduate Programs) (2003) Thomson Publishing.

Another comprehensive guide to programs providing comparative information for your selection process.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

www.apa.org/students/

American Psychological Association website provides a wealth of information on graduate programs, the application process, essay writing, letters of recommendation, career paths, and job prospects in psychology.

www.cgsnet.org/ResourcesForStudents/index.htm

Council of Graduate Schools website provides general information on choosing a program, the application process, sources of financial assistance, and links to other resources.

www.geocities.com/Heartland/Flats/5353/classes/graduatestudy.html

Provides extensive advice on applying to graduate programs in psychology and social work. Also provides rankings on the programs.

www.gradschools.com/psychologysearch.html

A search engine for locating graduate program websites by specialty and by state.

www.gradview.com

General information on graduate schools, not limited to psychology. Provides information on how to get in and how to succeed. Links to other relevant websites.

www.psychgrad.org/

Provides useful advice on applying to graduate schools, succeeding in them, pursuing your career following graduation, and links to other sources of information.

www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/amoebaweb/

The Amoeba website provides general information on choosing a program, the application process, sources of financial assistance, and links to other websites.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMS

PURPOSE

The Graduate Record Exams (GRE) are standardized measures of academic achievement for comparing students from different academic institutions. Most graduate schools and financial aid sources require GRE scores as part of their application process. If you expect to apply to graduate schools in the next two years, you should review the admissions requirements of the programs of interest to you. If even one of them requires GRE scores, then you will have to take the exams.

INFORMATION YOU SHOULD OBTAIN

Don't rely solely on the information in this packet. To get more details, you should obtain the latest **GRE INFORMATION BULLETIN** from the Career Services Office in Room N-311 and read it carefully. Also, review the GRE website at www.gre.org which provides a wealth of information on the structure of the tests, application materials, fees, test centers and dates, and very useful preparation materials. This is a must-visit website.

TEST STRUCTURE

The GRE involves a three section **GENERAL TEST** and a separate **SUBJECT TEST**. Check the admissions requirements of your intended programs to determine whether you need to take the former, the latter, or both tests.

GENERAL TEST - The **VERBAL** and **QUANTITATIVE** sections employ an adaptive testing strategy which you complete on a computer. Each starts with moderately difficult questions which then get harder or easier depending on your success. Consequently, each student gets a different set of questions to answer. They are presented in a rigid order so that you can't skip a question and you can't go back to a previous question. If you don't know the answer, you have to guess. The **VERBAL** section has 30 multiple choice items assessing understanding and use of language, evaluation of written material, and analysis of sentence parts. The **QUANTITATIVE** section has 28 multiple choice items assessing elementary math skills and problem solving in algebra, geometry, and statistics. The third section, **ANALYTICAL WRITING**, presents two writing tasks which you can complete on the computer or by hand. In the first task, you display your writing and critical thinking skills by defending a position on the presented issue. In the second, you must analyze and critique the strengths and weaknesses of a position paper presented to you.

SUBJECT TEST - The Psychology Subject Test is a paper based instrument consisting of 215 multiple choice items assessing knowledge in all areas of psychology. Since it is paper based, you can skip items and return to them at a later time. However, you must be cautious about guessing here because there is a 3 point penalty for each wrong answer.

SCORING

You will receive unofficial scores for the Verbal and Quantitative sections immediately after you finish them, and official scores for all three General sections in about 10-15 days. However, the score for the Analytical Writing section will be delayed for six weeks if you chose to hand-write your answers rather than use the computer. The Subject Test scores always take about six weeks. Verbal, Quantitative, and Subject scores each range from 200 (brain-dead) to 800 (perfect), and Analytical Writing scores range from 0 to 6. Percentile ranks are provided for each score as well. If you take the GRE multiple times (as some students do), all scores obtained within the past five years are reported to the selected schools. You do not get to choose which scores to report.

HOW TO REGISTER

You can register by mail, by phone, or online. Registration forms are provided in the GRE Information Bulletin and online at the GRE website. Because it is so slow, mail registration must be done at least four weeks prior to your desired testing date. Also make sure your testing date is well in advance of the application deadlines for your intended programs so there is adequate time for the test scores to reach them.

CAN I PREPARE FOR THESE TESTS?

You can and you must! Preparation is crucial to your success. At a minimum, you should familiarize yourself with the test formats and types of questions they present. Ideally, you should do extensive studying for the tests a few days a week for several months before you take them. Cramming just before the tests is useless. The GRE website provides a wealth of preparation materials including practice questions, test tutorials, a math review, sample writing topics, and an opportunity to practice with the GRE word processor. You can download these to your computer, or order them through the mail (which will take about four weeks). Unfortunately, these materials will work only on PC systems, so they will not help MacIntosh users. You should also use GRE preparation books for the General and Subject Tests which you can purchase from most local book stores or order online. Finally, you can enroll in commercial GRE prep courses which do claim to improve test performance. These courses tend to be very expensive. If you are self-motivated and a good organizer, save the money and do the preparation yourself.

FINANCIAL AID

For most people, the costs of graduate education far exceed their ability to pay out-of-pocket and thus financial assistance is a necessity. The three basic types of aid available include fellowships, teaching or research assistantships, and student grants and loans. Generally, fellowships and assistantships are limited to doctoral students, while master=s level students must rely on grants and loans.

FELLOWSHIPS

This is the most desirable type of aid as it typically waives all tuition costs and provides a reasonable stipend for living expenses. Most are awarded on the basis of academic merit, intended to attract the most highly qualified students to a particular program. As such, they are highly competitive. However, some programs provide special fellowships based on economic need to recruit under-represented groups such as women or minorities. You should review the websites of your intended programs to determine what they provide. In addition, there are some Aportable≅ fellowships awarded by independent agencies that can be applied to any graduate program. A partial listing of such fellowships can be found online at:

www.cgsnet.org/ResourcesForStudents/fellowships.htm.

ASSISTANTSHIPS

These are paid positions awarded by individual programs. Generally, you work for the graduate department 20 hours per week in return for partial or full tuition waiver and a reasonable stipend for living expenses. The assistant works with a particular faculty member who also functions as their mentor. Teaching assistants may lead discussion sections of a course, supervise a laboratory, grade papers, advise undergraduates, and do secretarial work for the faculty. Research assistants may supervise data collection in an ongoing research project, help with proposal writing, conduct literature searches, and even develop their own research projects. As with fellowships, most are merit based and highly competitive. Beyond the financial support, assistantships also provide valuable practical experience and a close mentoring relationship. Some programs also offer non-academic positions such as residence hall counselor which may provide tuition reduction and/or a stipend. Again, you should review the websites of your intended programs to determine what they provide.

GRANTS AND LOANS

Most grants and loans are provided by the state and federal governments. As most are need based, the applicant must demonstrate need in terms of limited income and personal assets. Fortunately, almost all graduate students are considered independent of parental support as long as they are not claimed as dependents on their parents= federal income tax return. Grants are more desirable as they do not have to be paid back. For loans, repayment is delayed until the student completes their education and the interest rates are much lower than those of conventional bank loans. Listings of the types of grants and loans available from government agencies can be found at

the following websites: www.hesc.com for state based and www.students.gov for federally based. Also, you should check with any community or fraternal organizations to which you or your parents belong, as some of these provide grants for continuing education. Finally, several employers, particularly in the mental health field, provide financial support for educational expenses as part of their fringe benefit packages.

A BIT OF DATA

If you are accepted to a graduate program, what is your likelihood of receiving financial aid? Pretty good for master=s level students and even better for doctoral students. The following data was provided for the 1995-96 academic year by the Council of Graduate Schools. You can expect that the average amount received has increased during the past years.

Degree Level	%age Receiving Aid	Average Aid Received
Master=s	51%	\$7,825
Doctoral	65%	\$11,431

How to Avoid the Kisses of Death in the Graduate School Application Process

Personal Statements

- Avoid reference to your mental health. Such statements could create the impression you may be unable to function as a successful graduate student.
- Avoid making excessively altruistic statements. Graduate faculty could interpret these statements to mean you believe a strong need to help others is more important to your success in graduate school than a desire to perform research and engage in other academic and professional activities.
- Avoid providing excessively self-revealing information. Faculty may interpret such information as a sign you are unaware of the value of interpersonal or professional boundaries in sensitive areas.
- Avoid inappropriate humor, attempts to appear cute or clever, and references to God or religious issues when these issues are unrelated to the program to which you are applying. Admissions committee members may interpret this type of information to mean you lack awareness of the formal nature of the application process or the culture of graduate school.

Letters of recommendation

- Avoid letters of recommendation from people who do not know you well, whose portrayals of your characteristics may not be objective (e.g., a relative), or who are unable to base their descriptions in an academic context (e.g., your minister). Letters from these authors can give the impression you are unable or unwilling to solicit letters from individuals whose depictions are accurate, objective, or professionally relevant.
- Avoid letter of recommendation authors who will provide unflattering descriptions of your personal or academic characteristics. These descriptions provide a clear warning that you are not suited for graduate study. Choose your letter or recommendation authors carefully. Do not simply ask potential authors if they are willing to write you a letter or recommendation; ask them if they are able to write you a strong letter of recommendation. This question will allow them to decline your request diplomatically if they believe their letter may be more harmful than helpful.

Lack of information about the program

- Avoid statements that reflect a generic approach to the application process or an unfamiliarity with the program to which you are applying. These statements signal

you have not made an honest effort to learn about the program from which you claim you want to earn your graduate degree.

- Avoid statements that indicate you and the target program are a perfect fit if these statements are not corroborated with specific evidence that supports your assertion (e.g., your research interests are similar to those of the program's faculty). Graduate faculty can interpret a lack of this evidence as a sign that you and the program to which you are applying are not a good match.

Poor writing skills

- Avoid any type of spelling or grammatical errors in your application. These errors are an unmistakable warning of substandard writing skills, a refusal to proofread your work, or willingness to submit careless written work.
- Avoid writing in an unclear, disorganized, or unconvincing manner that does not provide your readers with a coherent picture of your research, educational, and professional goals. A crucial part of your graduate training will be writing; do not communicate your inability to write to those you hope will be evaluating your writing in the future.

Misfired attempts to impress

- Avoid attempts to impress the members of graduate admissions committee with information they may interpret as insincere flattery (e.g., referring to the target program in an excessively complimentary manner) or inappropriate (e.g., name dropping or blaming others for poor academic performance). Graduate admissions committees are composed of intelligent people; do not use your application as an opportunity to insult their intelligence.

From: Appleby, D.C., & Appleby, K. M. (2006). Kisses of death in the graduate school application process. *Teaching of Psychology*, 33. 19-24.

A SCHEDULING PLAN

Often it is claimed that fall of senior year is the most difficult semester in an undergraduate career. This claim is partly based on the reality that most students wait until then to begin their

preparations for the graduate school application process. With a bit more foresight and better planning, the application process can become less burdensome and the fall semester a bit less stressful. What follows is a suggested time table for distributing those burdens more evenly.

SPRING OF JUNIOR YEAR

- Λ Investigate different specialties in psychology and discuss them with your advisor. Decide which type of psychology you wish to pursue professionally.
- Λ Start browsing through guides to graduate schools, and college catalogues and websites to determine the programs to which you might apply.
- Λ Obtain the GRE Information Bulletin and identify the test dates you want for the General and Subject Tests as needed.

SUMMER

- Λ Write an initial draft of your goals/personal statement essay most applications require.
- Λ Register and begin preparing for the GRE General Test.
- Λ Finalize the list of graduate schools to which you intend to apply.
- Λ Investigate government and organization based sources of financial aid.
- Λ Contact intended programs to explore campus visits and meeting with students or faculty.
- Λ Take the GRE General Test in late August or early September.

SEPTEMBER

- Λ Have your advisor review your goals/personal statement essay.
- Λ Solicit application materials from your intended programs.
- Λ Register and begin preparing for the GRE Subject Test.

OCTOBER

- Λ Solicit letters of recommendation from faculty.

- Λ Complete the final draft of your goals/personal statement essay.
- Λ Complete the applications for your intended programs (make copies for your records).
- Λ Apply for any government or organization based grants or loans for which you may be eligible.

DECEMBER

- Λ Mail your applications, even for programs with later deadlines. Early submissions are fine.
- Λ Have the Registrar mail official grade transcripts to your intended programs.
- Λ Have faculty mail your recommendation letters.
- Λ Take the GRE Subject Test.

JANUARY

- Λ Begin anxious period waiting for the programs to decide your fate. In most cases, acceptance letters are received from mid-February through the beginning of April. Those accepted generally must formally commit to a particular program by mid-April.

- I wish you success -

Paul Hawryluk