

Applying to Psych Grad School

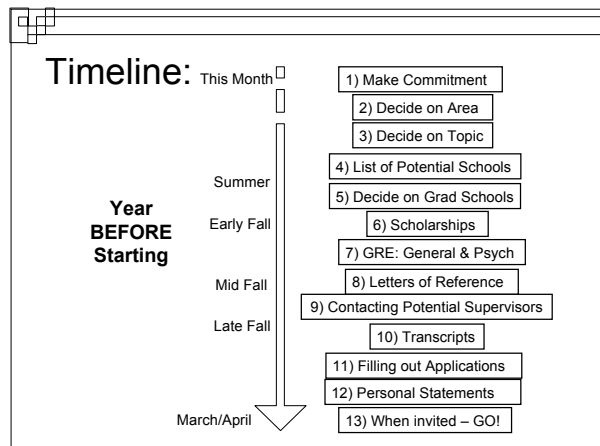
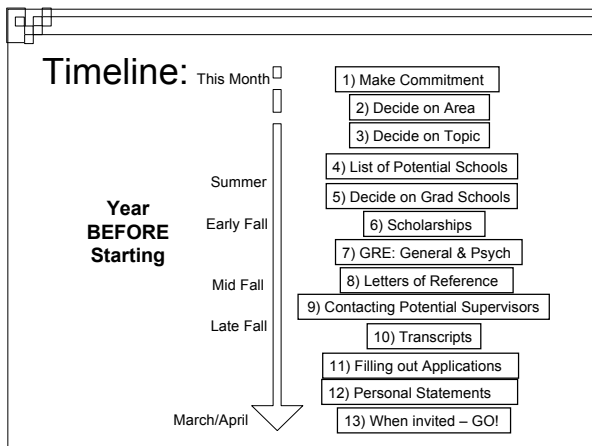
(when you have at least 6 months)

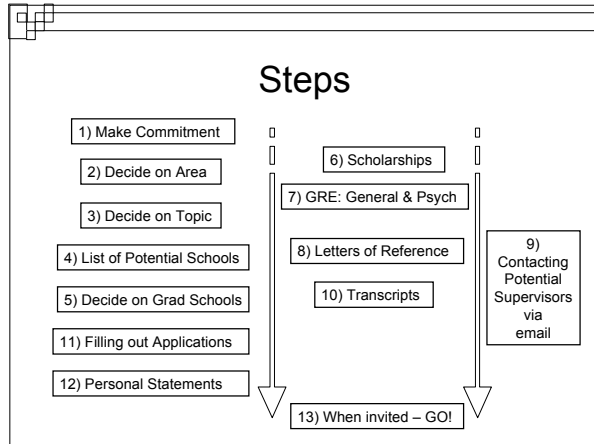
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www.psych.eudaimonia.ca → Planning Your Future

Today...

- A Time Line
- 13 Steps
- Improving Your Chances
- Q & A





1) Make a commitment to go to grad school

- Explore different areas of psychology, figure out what you want to do
- Is Grad School for you?
- Preparing
- Another year? 2007 start vs. 2008 start vs. Australia (February start)

2) Decide on Area

- Psychology Programs
 - How many?

Psychology Programs

from the APA Graduate Studies 2006 book

Adolescence and Youth ♦ Adult development ♦ Aging ♦ Applied ♦ Applied Development ♦ Applied Social ♦ Art Therapy ♦ Behavior Therapy ♦ Behavioral Analysis ♦ Behavioral genetics ♦ Behavioral medicine ♦ Behavioral neuroscience ♦ Behavioral science ♦ Behavioral science - applied ♦ Child Development ♦ Child psychology ♦ Clinical ♦ Clinical Assessment ♦ Clinical neuropsychology ♦ Clinical specialization ♦ Clinical-child ♦ Clinical-community ♦ Clinical-school ♦ Cognitive ♦ College Counseling ♦ College Counseling and administration ♦ College teaching ♦ Community ♦ Community rehabilitation counseling ♦ Community-clinical ♦ Community-school ♦ Comparative ♦ Computer applications ♦ Conditioning ♦ Consulting psychology ♦ Consumer ♦ Counseling ♦ Counseling and guidance ♦ counseling-colleges and universities ♦ counseling-elementary school ♦ counseling-secondary school ♦ curriculum and instruction ♦ developmental ♦ developmental-comparative ♦ Ecological ♦ Educational ♦ Educational measurement ♦ Educational research and evaluation ♦ Engineering ♦ Environmental ♦ Experimental psychopathology ♦ Experimental-animal behavior ♦ Experimental-general ♦ Forensic ♦ General ♦ Health Psychology ♦ History and systems ♦ Human development and family studies ♦ Human factors ♦ Human relations ♦ Human services administration ♦ Human sexuality ♦ Humanistics ♦ Industrial/organizational ♦ Law and psychology ♦ Learning ♦ Learning-animal ♦ learning-human ♦ life-span development ♦ Marriage and family ♦ Marriage and family Therapy ♦ Mental Health ♦ Mental retardation ♦ Minority mental health ♦ Neuropsychology ♦ neuroscience ♦ Organizational ♦ Other ♦ Pastoral counseling ♦ pediatric ♦ personality ♦ Personal and guidance ♦ Phenomenological ♦ Physiological ♦ Preclinical ♦ Primate Behavior ♦ Professional ♦ Program evaluation ♦ Psychobiology ♦ Psycholinguistics ♦ Psychological assessment ♦ Psychology of women ♦ Psychometrics ♦ Psychopharmacology ♦ Psychotherapy and psychoanalysis ♦ public policy ♦ Quantitative ♦ Reading ♦ Rehabilitation ♦ Research methodology ♦ School ♦ Sensation and perception ♦ Social ♦ Sociocultural perspectives ♦ Special education ♦ Sports ♦ Statistics ♦ Substance abuse ♦ Supervision

2) Decide on Area cont.

- 3 main areas:
 - Applied and Counseling (PhD or terminal MA)
 - Applied Psych Seminar
 - March 22, 3-6pm, psych lounge (Tentative)
 - Experimental/Research PhD
 - Slides available from February talk
 - Clinical PhD
 - Seminar – date tentative, but will be in March
- Career Exploration Booklets available from January 2006 Talk

3) Decide on Topic

- Area within
- E.g., social, aging, poverty, depression, consciousness...

4) List of Potential Schools

- Search by Topic:
- Some good websites:
 - www.gradschools.com
 - www.prospects.ac.uk
 - www.socialpsychology.org (not just Social)
- In Canada specifically: www.cpa.ca
- APA Grad Studies book**
 - Dr. Max Gwynn
 - Index available on website: www.psych.eudaimonia.ca

4) List of Potential Schools cont.

- Search by **Program Topic**
 - Topic → program listing → school
 - E.g., Cognition program, Health Psych
 - Lists: websites & APA grad studies book
- Search by **Topic** via **psycinfo**
 - Topic → article → authors → school
 - E.g., Memory for faces

5) Decide on Grad Schools

- Once you have the big list, Narrow it!

5) Decide on Grad Schools

- **Narrow by:** (Websites)
 - Specific Program of interest?
 - End Result (e.g., accredited for clinical)?
 - Faculty in interested area?
 - Courses taught in program?
- **Narrow further by:** (Websites & CPA guide & APA Graduate Studies book)
 - Requirements & Minimums*
 - Financial Considerations (APA)
 - Faculty of interest taking graduate students? (Contact)
- <http://www.cpa.ca/graduate/guide.pdf> OR APA guide

5) Decide on Grad Schools

- **Minimums and Averages**
 - Minimum = MUST have
 - Averages = mean accepted GPA (see APA guide)
 - Some people below this got in
- **In general need:**
 - Clinical = approx. A or A- (10.5 in WLU #s)
 - Counselling = approx. A- (10)
 - Social, Developmental, personality = maybe B+ (9.5), usually A- (10)
 - Brian, Cognitive & Neuroscience = often B+ (9.5) **
 - Applied = often B+ or A- ** (depends on area)

6) Scholarships

- Need transcripts & letters of reference
- 4 main scholarships when applying to Canadian Universities: NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, OGS (for Ontario)
 - Usually due in the fall
- Abroad – ask university & country's consulates

7) GRE = Graduate Record Exam

- GRE-General = book appointment (new: 30 dates)
- GRE-Psych = April, November or December
- Register online www.ets.org
 - Register in advance
- You CAN study for the GRE – books, courses, online
- When you get your confirmation – double check location & day/time
- Day of writing:
 - Show up early
 - you get to list a few schools for free to send results to, costs to send results later

7) GRE cont.

- **New GRE-General**
 - Starts September 2007
 - Summary:
 - 30 dates, linear (not computer adaptive)
 - Verbal: Less memorization, more comprehension
 - longer
 - More Information on website: www.ets.org

8) Letters of Reference

- Ask them early (at least 1 month before deadlines)
 - Remember professors are busy people!
- Choose someone who you know will give you a good reference

8) Letters of Reference cont.

- **Decide on a list of potential referees**
 - What types of references are required by your program?
 - Clinical = research letter, letter showing some work with clinical populations
 - Applied = research letter, letter showing work in area of interest
 - Research = research letters, academic/research
 - Who do you know who can write you a good letter?
 - People very familiar with your work
 - People who are well known within your field

8) Letters of Reference cont.

- Email potential writers/referees
 - Ask them if they will be willing to provide you with a reference letter for your graduate school applications.
 - Do this at least a month before ANY Deadlines
 - If they say yes, let them know that you will provide them with the relevant information once it is available. Try to give a date.

8) Letters of Reference cont.

- At least 3 weeks before: Give writers/referees who said they can the following information:
 - Any instructions each school gives (i.e., how the reference should be formatted, who to send it to, ...)
 - Addressed and stamped envelopes (if necessary)
 - A package of your relevant personal information (i.e., unofficial transcripts, C.V./Resume, a copy of sample writing, ...)
 - Make sure to include a condensed summary of your achievements and of any weak points in your application.

9) Contact Potential Supervisors

- Know what their area is before contacting, look through their list of "recent" publications (use psycinfo) and visit their website
- By email introduce yourself briefly and ask if they will be accepting graduate students for a _____ start.
- Best to do before you apply but can be done afterwards
 - May save you time and \$

10) Transcripts

- Needed for Scholarship & School Applications
- Requires that you know: the schools & how many transcripts & what type each program requires
- Need to get from all universities you have attended
- Must be sealed and signed to be an "official copy". Do NOT open and reseal
- Spare!
- At WLU: www.wlu.ca → Office of the Registrar → Records & Registration → Official Transcripts/Documents → Transcripts
 - Fill out the online Transcript Request Form
 - Pick up at 202 Regina Street

11) Filling out Applications

- Take time for each application
- It is worth the effort!

11) Filling out Applications

- Take time to read through the entire package to see what they require
 - May not be in chronological order
- Think about your audience and answers
- Make a rough copy, have someone else edit
- Fill in good copy (online or on paper) neatly
- Each application is different so do NOT simply copy, you need to tailor

12) Personal Statement

- So...Tell me about yourself...
 - such that...
 - The University would be convinced you would make a good student
 - You highlight aspects & experiences not clear on the Application
 - A match between you and the program and potential supervisors is made clear
 - It is made obvious why you are great & will be even greater by going there
 - See what they value by looking at their description of their program and their aims etc.
 - Never lie

13) When invited to a school, Go!

- Important to meet your potential supervisors!

Improving Your Chances

- GRE
- Applications
- Experience

- Can help balance a so-so (but above minimum) GPA

Improving Your Chances

- GRE
 - Can Study for the GREs

 - Can improve your scores the first time
 - Note: If retake both marks on record

Improving Your Chances

- Applications
 - Take your time! This represents you!
 - Work on any written sections & get others to edit
 - Make sure you include **everything needed**
 - Type as much as you can, neatly write the rest
 - Personal statements are VERY important, make each fit the program, university & you!

Improving Your Chances

- Experience
 - Why?
 - Figure out what interests you
 - Build connections/References
 - Add to Applications/Personal Statements

Improving Your Chances

- Experience
 - Where:
 - **Research*:**
 - professors in psychology
 - Other researchers on campus
 - **Clinical:**
 - In Toronto: CAMH, The Hinck-Dellcrest Centre
 - In KW: CMHA distress Center, Planned Parenthood counsellor
 - Phone help lines, organizations who work with patients
 - **Applied:**
 - Researchers in the area
 - Organizations or volunteer opportunities in the area (e.g., for health psychology look into hospital, epidemiology researchers)

Improving Your Chances

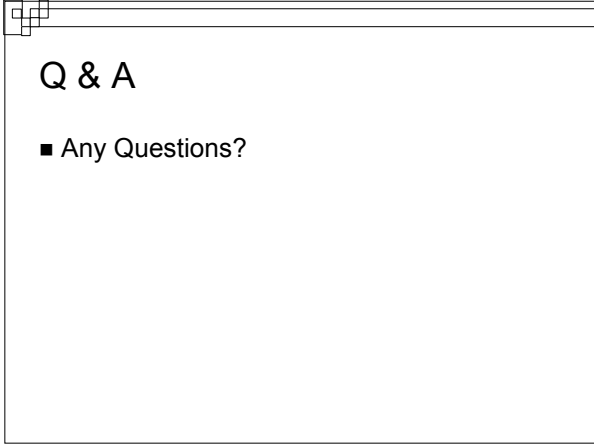
- Experience: How...for Research
 - **Email Psych Department faculty**
 - Look at their interests - their websites
 - **Email other faculty on campus in interest area**
 - E.g., business, social work
 - **Postings & announcements for RA positions**
 - **Honours Research Specialist**
 - Talk to Undergrad advisor
 - VERY Important if applying to research graduate schools

Improving Your Chances

- Experience: How...for Clinical
 - **In Toronto:** CAMH, Hincks-Dellcrest Centre, COTA, Toronto
Preschool Autism Service
 - **In Kitchener-Waterloo:**
 - St. Agatha's children village (assistant volunteer position)
 - CMHA distress center (free 40h training, promise 100h)
 - Planned Parenthood Counselor (30h training)
 - In-patient recreation - KW hospital (4 month entry process)
 - Through Community Service Learning in courses
 - Help phones, peer support groups, Big Brothers & Big Sisters
 - Contact organizations that work with the type of patients you are interested in (see the **Blue Book**)

Improving Your Chances

- Experience: How...for Applied
 - **Volunteer Opportunities**
 - CSL
 - Contact organizations that in the area/field you are interested in (see the **Blue Book**)
 - **Summer or Part-time jobs in organizations**
 - **Careers Services**
 - Resources & information
 - **Internet, Ask people, Phone Book**
 - Find organizations in your interest area



Q & A

- Any Questions?