

Thinking about graduate school in Psychology...?

Is Grad School for You?

- Formal requirements (grades, GREs, writing skills, volunteering/experience)
- Informal requirements (personality, time, resources, interest)
- Applying for grad school is like taking a course - count on spending the time and energy to succeed

Choosing a Program/School: A 3-Step Process

Step 1: Decide on your area of interest

- What excites you?

Step 2: Decide on how you'd like to be trained in your area of interest

- What are your career goals?
- Research...practice...both?

Step 3: Evaluate the programs that offer the training you seek in your area of interest

- Do you have what they are looking for?
- Do they have what you are looking for?

Helpful Resources:

- Learn about different areas of psychology here:
<http://www.cpa.ca/sections/> AND <http://www.apa.org/about/division.html>
- Learn about Canadian graduate programs in psychology here:
<http://www.cpa.ca/students/cpagraduateguide/>
- For a list of Canadian universities and their links, visit:
<http://www.cpa.ca/students/canadianuniversities/>

Choosing a Supervisor

Once you've identified which schools & programs are most appropriate for your career goals & interests, identify which faculty you would be most interested in working with.

- look at faculty's profile on university website, including recent publications (and read one or two!) and current graduate students' research interests
- contact faculty member by email to introduce yourself and ask them if they are accepting new graduate students for the coming year
- if they are willing to meet with you, COME PREPARED! Treat it like a job interview. They are "interviewing" you, but you are also "interviewing" them.
- you are more likely to be admitted into a grad program if there is a faculty member there who had already agreed to work with you!

The Application Process

- Formal *university application* - usually available from department or graduate studies websites - it will list all the documents you need to include
- *Reference letters* - you'll need these - and you want to make sure you have POSITIVE letters. Ask early. Some tips can be found here: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Flats/5353/classes/letters.html>
- *GREs* - some schools require these. Plan ahead and budget time to study www.gre.org
- *Transcripts* - she who hesitates is lost (or has to wait in a very long line and worry). Order early!
- *CV* - it's never too soon to start building your academic vita

Writing a Statement of Interest: Another 3-Step Process

Step 1: Brainstorm

- List all instructions/rules provided (e.g., page limits)
- List main topics to cover (e.g., area of interest, career goals)
- List all you can think of that is relevant to your topics (e.g., experiences, skills)

Step 2: Write

- Turn your brainstorming into sentences and paragraphs
- Tell an original, clear and concise story that is free of errors

Step 3: Get Feedback & Revise

IV. Have respected people review your work

V. Take feedback seriously & revise accordingly

Helpful Resources:

- For some tips on writing, visit:
<http://www.write101.com/brainstorm.htm>
<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/writingskills1.html>
http://www2.actden.com/Writ_den/tips/essay/index.htm
- For some tips on writing statements of interest, visit:
<http://www.geocities.com/heartland/flats/5353/classes/purpose.html>
http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article_98.asp

Applying for External (& Internal) Funding

1. Applications for external funding are time consuming, so START EARLY!
2. Applications usually require a complete CV, transcripts, letters of reference, and statement of interest/ research plan.
3. If you are planning to start grad school in September 2008, you need to submit your funding applications by September/October 2007!

Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) \$15,000 /year

http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/not_secure/OGS.htm

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) \$17,500 to \$35,000 /year

<http://www.nserc.gc.ca/index.htm>

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) \$17, 500 to \$35,000 /year

<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/>

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) \$17,500 /year (less common)

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/>

Graduate School from a Prof's Perspective

- The experience from an undergraduate to a professor
- What do professors look for in a potential grad student?

Life as a Grad Student

- A few of our favourite (and not so favourite) things!
- Grad school is little course work, lots of research & writing!

Some other official and unofficial websites you might find helpful

- http://www.psychology.uwaterloo.ca/gradprog/preparation/grad_school_in_psych.html
- Van Bavel, J. (2002). Applying for graduate studies in psychology: A 12-step program. *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 24(2), 12. [http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24\(2\)i.pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24(2)i.pdf)
- Pillai R. (2002). One student's take on award applications. *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 24(4), 13. [http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24\(4\)i.pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24(4)i.pdf)
- Hovind, S. (2006). Advice for the ambitious undergraduate student. *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 28(2), 19. [http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis28\(2\).pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis28(2).pdf)
- Chambers, C.T. (2002). How to Succeed as a Student in Psychology. *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 24(3), 14. [http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24\(3\)i.pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis24(3)i.pdf)
- Smith, K.B. (2004). From undergraduate to graduate student: What I wish I had known. *Psynopsis: Canada's*

Psychology Newspaper, 26(3), 14.

[http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis26\(3\).pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis26(3).pdf)

- Paré, N. (2001). Things I wish I had known earlier: A look back on my journey as a graduate student. *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 23(4), 14-15.

[http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis23\(4\).pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis23(4).pdf)

- Badali, M.A. (2001). The big question: What is the meaning of graduate studies? *Psynopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 23(3), 17.

[http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis23\(3\).pdf](http://www.cpa.ca/cpaside/userfiles/Documents/students/Psynopsis23(3).pdf)

- Topics about Graduate School and Their Hot Links:

<http://www.psynt.iupui.edu/ungrad/docs/topicsgrad.pdf>