
What Do I Need to Know to
Apply for Graduate School **in**
Psychology?

Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ STEP 1

- start thinking about what kind of psychology you would be interested in as a career
 - think in term of
 - applied vs research
 - although this doesn't have to be a strict dichotomy
 - content area



Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **applied psychology**

- clinical psychology, counseling psychology, social work
 - have a private practice
 - work for an organization
 - work at a university/college
 - educational/school psychology
 - work in a school setting
 - industrial/organizational psychology
 - work for a business or some other form of organization
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **research/basic psychology**
 - work at a research institution and/or teach
 - university
 - college
 - business
 - government
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- what “kind” of psychology would you or are you interested in?
 - ❑ clinical psychology – depression, antisocial behaviour, family dynamics, sex disorders, etc
 - ❑ biological/physiological/neuropsychology
 - ❑ social, developmental, personality psychology
 - ❑ sensation/perception, learning, cognitive psychology
 - ❑ evolutionary psychology
 - ❑ etc
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ STEP 2

- know what is required to apply to graduate school
 - application form
 - letters of recommendation
 - graduate record exam (GRE)
 - general test and the subject (psychology) test
 - research experience
 - excellent grades
 - getting into graduate school is competitive
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **application form**

- different universities, departments, programs will have slightly different requirements
 - e.g., some places will not accept applications without a certain GPA (3.3 or 3.5)
 - cost of applying
 - you should apply to as many programs as you can afford
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ letters of recommendation

- most programs want 3 (sometimes 2) letters of recommendation *from professors*
 - ideally, you want the letters to state that you are
 - intelligent
 - willing to learn
 - reliable
 - trustworthy
 - intellectually curious
 - good interpersonal and writing skills
 - research experience!!!!
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **graduate record exam**
 - this is so important that we will cover this in much more detail next semester
 - check the Psychology Program website for the Psyc Club link for information
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **research experience**

- I cannot emphasize this enough

- but what if I don't like research?

- what is research?

- developing a research issue to address

- reading the relevant literature

- designing and conducting experiments (or other forms of data collection)

- analyzing the data

- writing the results and presenting them

- conferences and manuscripts

Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **research experience**

- I cannot emphasize this enough

- but what if I don't like research?

- the best way to learn something is by doing it

- doctors

- lawyers

- dentists

- psychologists!!!!

- BE COMMITTED IF YOU DECIDE TO DO IT

Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **research experience**

- I cannot emphasize this enough

- but what if I don't like research?

- most departments of psychology require their grad students to conduct research plus takes courses

- thesis, dissertation

- includes most if not all clinical psychology programs in Canada

- if you want to be an applied psychologist, most likely you'll have to do research in grad school

Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- honours program
 - independent study course
 - you want to say that you've conducted "your own research project"
 - appropriate for 3rd and 4th year students
 - be a research assistant
 - appropriate for anyone
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **research experience**

- I cannot emphasize this enough

- but what if I don't like research?

- if you really don't want to do research look around for other options

- educational psychology, counseling psychology programs may have degrees not requiring research

- social work may be another option

- in most places in Canada you can have a private practice with a Ph.D. in social work

Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **excellent grades**

- usually interested in your last 2 years GPA of your undergrad career
 - realistically, looking at the A range for clinical psychology
 - perhaps a tiny, itsy-bitsy lower
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ STEP 3

□ know where to apply

- find professors who have the same research interests as you
 - contact them ahead of time
 - when application comes in, he/she should be looking for your application
 - are they willing to take someone when you apply
 - does the program offer the kinds of courses and research experiences you want
 - what kind of professor/student model does the program have
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

- **know where to apply**
 - this takes effort on your part
 - search the web
 - look at psychology department webpages for faculty and their research interests
 - look at educational psychology departments
 - look at social work departments
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ STEP 4

□ know when to apply

- everything needs to be sent to the programs by January to February
 - application form
 - letters of recommendation
 - GRE scores
 - transcripts
 - etc
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Graduate School in Psychology: What Does It Take?

■ STEP 5

□ prepare now!

- don't leave this until your final year
 - the earlier you start thinking and doing these things the better
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