

Timeline for Graduate School: How to Begin Preparing Early

Freshman and Sophomore Years

Determine Interests

- Investigate career choices
- Explore volunteer opportunities in clinical settings

Coursework

- Take core courses in psychology (i.e., introduction, statistics, research methods, personality, abnormal, etc.)
- Take courses helpful for graduate school (i.e., biological sciences, math, etc.)
- Learn to use library and electronic resources, such as PsycInfo
- Consider participating in honors program

Networking

- Find out about faculty interests and research
- Make preliminary contact with faculty members whose research interests you
- Join psychology organizations and become an active member
- Attend departmental colloquia and social gatherings

Junior Year

Coursework

- Take more advanced psychology courses (300 and 400 level), especially classes tailored to your specific area of interest

Clinical & Research Experience

- Begin volunteer clinical or other applied work
- Volunteer for research with faculty and begin researching potential honors thesis or independent research project
- Ask faculty and graduate students to become involved in conference presentations
- Try to focus your specific interests in a particular research area, theoretical orientation, and clinical population

Networking

- Continue contact with faculty
- Become student affiliates of professional organizations, like Ohio Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, or the American Psychological Society
- Apply for membership in your Psi Chi Chapter (psychology honor society), if not already done so
- Consider serving as an officer in one of the student organizations on campus
- Attend state or regional psychology convention

Preparing to Apply

- Draft a curriculum vitae
- Begin a new file for your curriculum vitae and place reminders of your activities and accomplishments in it
- Peruse graduate school bulletins to acquaint yourself with typical requirements, offerings, and policies
- Surf the web - become comfortable with websites on graduate school

Senior Year/Application Year

June - August

- Gather information from program websites
- Begin to narrow down potential schools
- Prepare for the GREs – STUDY!!!
- Set aside money for cost of the GREs and applications

August - September

- Continue to refine list of potential schools
- Request information packets and applications from programs
- Consults advisors regarding graduate programs, faculty of interest, etc.
- Investigate financial aid opportunities

September - October

- Take or retake the GRE General Test (if necessary) and request ETS forward your scores to the appropriate institutions
- Choose a faculty member at each school that most interest you, especially if applying to doctoral programs
- Write to graduate faculty expressing interest in their work, especially if applying to doctoral programs
- Begin first draft of your personal statement
- Contact potential letter writers

October – November

- Take the GRE Psychology Subject Test and request that ETS forward your scores to other appropriate institutions
- Update your curriculum vitae
- Prepare your letter of recommendation packets
- Request letters of recommendation
- Arrange for Registrar to send transcripts
- Finalize personal statement

Senior Year/Application Year

November - December

- Complete applications to programs
- Complete financial aid to applications
- Submit applications
- Verify with letter writers that all letters of recommendation have been sent
- Verify with the various programs that applications and all necessary materials have been received

January - March

- Send thank you notes to faculty who wrote letters of recommendation
- Wait patiently... be proud of yourself for all of the hard work you put into the application process!
- Travel to interviews as invited
- Develop a contingency plan if not accepted into any program

April - May

- If other programs make early offers, call your top programs to determine the current status of your application
- Promptly turn down less preferred offers, but make sure you always have at least one offer on the table while waiting to hear from other schools
- Send official transcript with spring term grades to the program you plan to attend