



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Thinking About Grad School?

What is Graduate School?

- Grad school is *not* like undergrad
 - Focus is more on research, less on coursework
- Classes are typically small, discussion-oriented
- Work with individual faculty members

Is Grad School for Me?

- Think seriously about this question.
- Do I enjoy and do well at academic activities?
- Consider time involved (5-7 years)
 - MA: 1-2 years
 - PhD: 3-4 years (~5 total; ~6 for clinical)
 - PsyD: ~5 years
- Consider other psych-related jobs

(Source: Jim Clark)

What Area Interests Me?

- Clinical
 - Specializations (e.g., forensic, child)
- Experimental/Research
 - Do you get excited about research?
 - Do you like writing papers?
 - What questions could hold your interest for 5-6 years?
- Other psych-related areas
 - Community Health Sciences, School Psychology
- *What area = What people* interest me?

What Do Grad Schools Look For?

- Very Important:
 1. Letters of recommendation
 2. Personal statement/goals & objectives
 3. Research Experience
 4. GPA*
 5. Graduate Records Examination (GRE) Scores*
 6. Interview
- Less Important:
 7. Clinically-related public service
 8. Work experience
 9. Extracurricular activities

(Norcross et al., 2005)

How Much Will It Cost Me?

- Apply to *many* programs (5-6 for experimental; 7-10 for clinical)
- Application Fee: \$30-100 per school
- GREs: \$150-200 per test
- GRE score reports: \$15 per school
- Transcripts: \$8 each (1-2 per school)
- Postage: \$10-30 per school
- Apply for U of W application-fee bursary

Graduate Records Examination

- GRE General
 - Verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing sections.
 - Guidebooks: Princeton Review, Kaplan
 - Start early! Study and write during summer.
- GRE Subject (Psychology)
 - General psychology knowledge
 - Intro/2nd year level
 - Easier, also less important than the General.
 - Try to write in November. Register early!

What GRE Score Do I Need?

- Median Scores:
 - Verbal: 570
 - Quantitative: 630
 - Psychology: 640
- Often, the top Canadian schools look for scores above the 80th percentile.
- Combined 1100 is okay, 1200 is good, 1300 is better.
- Check the CPA's guide to graduate schools
 - <http://www.cpa.ca>

(Norcross et al., 2005)

2+ Years Before Applying

- Take a breadth of courses & get good grades
 - i.e., try for an A- average
 - especially statistics and methodology!
- Make connections with faculty
 - seminars, independent readings, TAs, social events
- Get research experience
 - RAs, NSERC, USRA-HS
- (Clinical Students) Get relevant volunteer experience

Application Year: Summer

- Investigate schools/programs
 - Note deadlines!
 - Consider contacting potential advisors to ask whether they're taking students
- Take the general GRE
- Register & study for the subject GRE
- Get a research-related job
- Save money!

Application Year: August

- Select schools (i.e., people).
 - Read their research.
 - Gauge their reputation, as a researcher and advisor.
 - Find students and professors who know them.
- “Nominal” and “Actual” processes
 - Nominal: Forms, committee
 - Actual(?): Is someone willing to supervise you as a student? Is there money to pay for you?

(Source: Jim Clark)

Application Year: Fall

- Be organized and aware of deadlines.
 - US deadlines are typically 4-6 weeks earlier.
- Request reference letters well in advance (i.e., at *least* three weeks)
 - Provide information package to your writers.
- Write and re-write your statement of purpose. Get feedback. Re-write again.
- Request transcripts early (they take a week).

Apply for Fellowship Funding

- SSHRC (\$17,500)
 - personality, social, developmental, history, educational
- NSERC (\$17,300, x 2 years)
 - physiological, perception, cognition, neuroscience
- CIHR (\$17,500)
 - health sciences, applied clinical research
- OGS (\$15,000)
 - Any topic, but only tenable in Ontario

Tips While Applying

- Keep copies of everything you send to a school.
- File all email correspondence.
- Consider sources of funding
 - Is there a separate funding application?
 - i.e., fellowship, department, advisor, TAs
- (After acceptance) Ask if you can contact current students.
 - Investigate your program & advisor!

UofW's Advantages

- Small size
- Close relationships with faculty
- Excellent stats training
- TA/RA opportunities

Canadian Psychological Assn.

- Consider joining CPA (\$55/year)
- Hard benefits:
 - Two journal subscriptions
 - Substantial discount on annual conference
 - Discounted insurance
- Soft benefits:
 - Shows you're committed to psychology
 - Support psychology advocacy in Canada
 - Access to e-mailing list