

Psychology Society Presents: How To Get Into Grad School

Speaker: Prof. Mark Fenske

Link to UoGuelph's Psychology Graduate program info:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/psychology/graduate>

Getting Into Grad School in Psychology

Graduate School

Psychology (4 here at Guelph):

- I/O
- Applied Social
- Clinical (with developmental focus)
- Neuroscience and Applied Cognitive Science

Counseling:

- Family Relations and Nutrition here at Guelph have a counselling program

Education

Social Work

- very much a helping profession if that's what you're interested in

Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy

- be aware of what you're interested in, and look for that across different universities and programs
- there is a big variety of what you can get into with a psychology undergrad
- think about what you're interested in, be honest about what you are not, pursue something you are interested in and will enjoy

Grad School in Psychology

- think about what program you're applying for
- Master/PhD or PhD only
 - o Here at Guelph, accept people who enter their masters and plan to continue on to getting a PhD
 - o Direct to PhD – don't get the Masters in between, think about what you want – talk to people (professors) and get information on these programs
- Research Intensive – do research and write a thesis
 - o Publishing
 - o Conferences
 - o Teaching (sometimes)
- Coursework
 - o Depends on school area
 - o E.g. Neuro – very few courses, more focus on research and publishing papers, compared to clinical – many courses, with research and practical on top of that – need to learn a lot of content to want to be able to diagnose and intervene

- Masters only programs – are course based
 - Not much research, decide if that is important to you

Applying (Four Parts)

- look specifically into what you want to apply (check websites etc.)
- application requirements differ based on program

Grades

- 'A' best but not required (stats!)/focus on the last 2 years of undergrad
- Depends on program (clinical, high grades, other programs – may care more about research experience)

References

- at least two
- what you're doing now is very critical for your ability to get into grad school later – want it to be someone who knows you well
- work in profs labs, go to office hours, make connections

GREs (<http://www.ets.org>)

- look carefully at the specific program you're interested in requirements
- not all programs require GREs
- General and Subject – book these early
- What are they? A test to predict how well a person will do in grad school

Personal Statement

- gives you a chance to talk about you – your research interests
- look beforehand, decide who you're interested in working with, and contact them, and then mention that person in your personal statement (if you can for your program)
- if you can contact the person you're interested in working with – make sure you ask if they are taking students
- honestly show how your interests fit well with what is going on in that faculty's lab – this can go a long way
- show your ability to communicate, write, sound like a potential grad student
- lay out your long term plan/ambitions

Internal Funding

- most grad schools have some form of funding – especially within psychology
- look into the minimum level of funding at programs you're interested in, and how is that funding delivered

Teaching Assistant

- get subsidized pretty well (\$40/hr)

Research Assistant

Supervisor's Grant

- depends on the amount of funding they have

Internal Scholarships

- really important to apply for scholarships

- looks good on applications if you have applied for them
- Teaching

External funding

Deadline Nov.1

- Ontario Graduate Scholarships

Deadline Dec. 1

- Social sciences and humanities research council
- Natural sciences and engineering research council
- Canadian institutes for health research

- look for “niche” scholarships
 - o depending on what your interests are
 - o potentially through where your parents work etc.

- OSAP
 - o For programs that don’t provide minimum levels of funding

What do you do with a graduate degree?

- academia – training people to do research and teach
 - o not a lot of current jobs in academia – but not impossible
- clinical practice
 - o private, in a hospital setting etc.
- research labs
 - o government – national research council etc.
 - o industry – new positions have been popping up in the past 10-15 years – behavioural science is becoming more valued
- consulting
 - o popular for I/O psych - hiring, assessing employees etc.
- start your own business
 - o apply skills that you’ve learned to start your own business
- highly likely you will find employment once you are done

Things to Think About:

DO

- speak to Profs and TAs
 - o PSYC 3900/3910, 4500/4510 or NEUR 4401/4402
- Get experience (see above, volunteer)
- Work towards thesis
- Study for GREs
- Pick an exciting topic – something you are genuinely interested in
- Read articles/book, work on writing skills!

DON'T

- generic applications
 - o tailor your application, make it clear you are interested in that specific program and what it has to offer
- be too modest
 - o present yourself with confidence, explain why you are capable, talk about what sets you apart
- feign interest
 - o if you're not really interested in a certain program, don't apply
 - o applying is a lot of work – don't waste your time if you're not really interested
- wait until the last minute
 - o start planning for your applications now
- ignore budgeting
 - o if a place you are interested in doesn't provide full funding, and you can't get loans/scholarships (afford it), don't apply
 - o think logistics through – where you will live, commuting etc.
- take it too personally
 - o profs are busy at this time
 - o try not to take rejection too personally

Timeline

Year before (AT LEAST)

- Research experience
- GREs
- Meet at least 3 profs
- Consider taking one of PSYC 3900/3910, 4500/4510 or NEUR 4401/4402

Summer/Early Autumn

- send a cover letter to schools
- review APA and CPA books
- talk to Profs about plans
 - o Profs know people – they can give you a lot of advice

Mid Autumn (November)

- final list of schools
- checklist for each school
- organized list to Profs – make it as easy as possible for profs to write you a reference letter
 - o stamps, checklists, dates, CV, special info
- order transcripts/GREs
- work on personal statement
 - o EDIT EDIT EDIT

February (Interviews)

- cheap travel and good outfit
- be honest and be yourself

- speak to the students (who work in the lab you're interested in, who are in the same program)
- get lots of info
 - o funding, switching advisors, course load...
- check out the city
 - o restaurants, cost of living, future spouses
- remember to interview them
 - o your chance to find out about them, you want to be selective

March

- make your lists with your choices
- it's YOUR DECISION
- can you be happy there?
- Financially okay?

April

- make your decision
- inform your places (ASAP)