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Thesis advisor

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**Grad school**

In the psychology department at Guelph, thesis is for getting into graduate school

* If not thinking about grad school, don’t need thesis
* If thinking about grad school, but not sure, the thesis is a good way to test waters and see if you want to do research

Thesis is a step towards grad school

In order to get into grad school need:

1. **Good grades (at least an 80)**
* If don’t have the grades, take courses that have more control over grades, look into other programs/grad schools/postgrad programs
1. **GRES**
* Summer before start applying
* General more times available, Psyc GRE hard to schedule because limited in number, so check for availability in advance
* When applying, they will see all attempts (depends on the prof what they think about it)
* Course is expensive, but has helpful tips (may find online), not substitute for studying
1. **Thesis**
* With honours thesis you work one on one with faculty
* You get support from prof, peers, and graduate students in the lab
* Incorporating everything you learned so far into an independent project
* In honours thesis you complete research proposal (with review of literature, research questions, plan methods) run study, analyze results
* 1st semester: written proposal, oral presentation
* Research proposal about 15-20 pages includes literature review, plan, methodologies, reason for methodologies
* Put together ethics protocol – very clear methods, very clear what you are doing
* 2nd semester: results, data
* End: thesis on poster and explain to everyone who comes by
* In order to get into thesis you need:
* average of at least 80% over last 9 psyc courses
* psyc 3370 and 3380,
* a supervisor
* In third year start thinking about who you want to be your supervisor
* Usually professors take between 1-2 students
* To have a competitive advantage, know the professor by volunteering in their lab or taking 3900/3910
* Try to volunteering in diff labs to have more chances to getting with a supervisor
* Don’t have to do thesis with supervisor on same topic want to study in grad school
* Thesis about developing research skills, not expertise on topics
* No disadvantage asking outside of psyc department – can ask faculty from business (I/o), nutrition, fran, neuroscience
* Give idea of interests but mention very open about researching new idea
* Being open, you will have easier time getting supervisor
* Enrollment in thesis
* Not though course selection, can’t get in without waiver by honours thesis advisor
* Complete intention to enroll by FEBRUARY 28
* If on exchange/coop during winter semester, hand in early
* Waivers not until may
* Register in thesis by last day to register in September
* Register for other course and drop if don’t get into thesis
* Time commitment:
* class is 3 hours a week, some weeks don’t meet, plus 10 hours supposed to be working on project outside of class
* Winter semester counts as 1.0 credits, so spend 20 hours a week working on project
* Meet with supervisor 2-3 times (poster, data session, check in)
* You can take full course load with semester 1, semester 2(1.00)
* Depends on professor and project
* Will also be volunteering in the prof’s lab
* Out of sequence:
* don’t have class, just work with profs, come to office hours
* Usually more alone working with prof
* Hard to get out of sequence finding a prof
* Winter-summer, winter-fall, summer-fall, winter-fall - have to agree upon with supervisor
* Instead of thesis can have equivalent experience (4500/4510)
* Advantage of thesis: structured experience. The process and learning outcomes gets you prepared, master skills of research. Get well rounded perspective of what research will be like
* Apply for thesis at end of winter for the fall semester
* Exception for not having completed by winter semester before is if you are in coop or going semester abroad
1. **Between 2-3 reference letters**
* Fall 4th year provide 2-3 reference letters
* Reference letter needs to talk about oral skills, written skills, critical analysis, perform projects on time, how well work in team environment – profs need to know you to write strong letters of reference
* Would this prof be able to write a strong letter? Do they know enough about me?
* Give as much info to prof 🡪 your strengths, contributions = make the letter personalized
* Hard for professor from a class you took to write a good reference letter on your skills
* Start volunteering second year winter semester. This can open doors for internships, supervisor and references
* Volunteering, 3900/3910, Thesis, 4500/4510, URA 🡪 These experiences helps with reference letter
* 3900/3910
* Spend about 10 hours a week on the class
* Get signed into class by professor
* You might need transcripts, resume, sample of writing, interview – depends on prof
* Volunteer: great way to figure out your interests, gain important skills, learn a lot about research
* Consider your interests and the interests of the prof you want to work with
* How do I get into a lab?
* Email profs, but make sure its personalized for each prof
* Approach prof and ask if they have any room in their lab, ask if they need help with any tasks?
* I want to work in this lab because (talk about their research, your interests)
* Ask to come by their office hours
* Sarah (undergraduate student) went to her office hours, interested in her topic, since interests aligned she volunteered for a year than did her thesis
* Find commonalities between your interests and faculty interests/resources

When applying to grad school

* coop not huge advantage, but shows professional skills, and time management balancing good grades with placement
* look at the whole application
* if GRE quantitative is low, but statistics classes have high grades, don’t worry about GRE quant score
* Apply to at least 5 schools = competitive!
* If don’t get, don’t take personally. Get in contact with school and ask for feedback

Some of the best applications take year to off after graduation to work on applications, scholarships

* Taking time on applications can look nicer than rushing
* This way schools will see that your thesis complete (gives you more to talk about during the interview)