

## Important Tips for Psychology Majors

Graduate programs in Psychology are extremely competitive. Here are some useful tips:

**MAINTAIN AT LEAST A 3.0 GPA**

**DO WELL ON THE GRE**

**CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVES:** If you are a senior and find yourself not having adequately met the criteria to successfully get into a graduate clinical training program, you may want to consider increasing your research or clinical experience after graduating. Another option is to explore similar fields; clinical psychology is not the only professional field for those who want to help alleviate psychological problems. **Programs in some areas of psychology are more competitive than others.**

**GET CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:** If you can arrange it, you should seek some on-the-job experiences during your undergraduate years, whether in part-time activities during the school year or in summer full-or part-time internships.

**GET RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:** GET AS MUCH RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AS YOU CAN. If a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology is your goal, then pre-graduate school research experience is a must. More successful candidates for graduate clinical training programs have spent time as undergraduates assisting professors and graduate students in their labs doing various psychological research activities. Seeking out a research lab early will be highly valuable experience and will provide you with some appreciation of what will be required as a graduate student. Working on a professor's research is also a good way to get high-quality letters of recommendation, because professors will get to know you better if you work in their labs

**USE THE "SHOTGUN METHOD" OF APPLYING:** One of the best ways to ensure that you are able to go to graduate school the first time you apply is to apply to as many graduate programs as you can, and to apply to a wide range of them

**USE BOOK RESOURCES:** There is a large annual volume published by the American Psychological Association (or APA), **Graduate Study in Psychology**. This book gives basic information on all graduate programs in psychology at both the masters and the doctoral levels. An additional recommended text, **Insider's Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical Psychology**, by Sayette, Mayne, and Norcross has more specific information about clinical graduate programs around the country.

**USE INTERNET RESOURCES:** There is a variety of information (including links to the various programs) that may be accessed under US Psychology Ph.D. Programs.

**KNOW ABOUT DOCTORAL AND MASTERS DEGREES:** One might choose to enter a masters level program with the plan to transfer later to a doctoral program. Doctoral level programs vary, however, in the extent to which they give credit for a masters degree earned elsewhere.

**COURSE SELECTION:** The undergraduate course selections made by a future clinical psychologist should be made thoughtfully. As you apply to Ph.D. programs you will find that the optimal undergraduate preparation will include some courses in research methods in psychology, mathematics through calculus, and multivariate statistics.

**USE YOUR FACULTY ADVISOR:** If your advisor is well known and thinks that it is important for students to publish and conduct independent research, then you will find your chances of pursuing a strong research career much improved. **GET TO KNOW YOUR PROFESSORS AS WELL AS YOU CAN SO THAT THEY CAN WRITE FAVORABLE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR YOU.**

Talk to graduate students, professors and practitioners about your intended career and about graduate school and make sure that the field you are interested in is really for you.

**INTERNSHIPS CAN GIVE YOU THE COMPETITIVE EDGE:**

ADHD Summer Treatment Program (Work with kids for the summer--earn \$ or course credit)

NIH Summer Internships (National Institutes of Health in Washington, D. C.)

NSF Student Internships (National Science Foundation)