Getting into Graduate School and Life After

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Overview

• What criteria do graduate schools use to make decisions?
• What are personal statements?
• How to write and get good letters?
• How to prep for the GREs?
• How to research schools?
• What is the difference between Master’s and Ph.D. programs?
Which criteria is most important?

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<thead>
<tr>
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## Research and your perceptions

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Norcross et al., 2005 & Landrum et al., 1994
Why Do You *Need* to Write a Personal Statement?

- Assessment of *communication & writing* skills
- Get to know you *beyond your “stats”*
  - Interest
  - Enthusiasm
  - Why this *particular* program
- Assessment of the *fit* between their program and you!
How Do You Write an *Impressive* Personal Statement?

• Get their **attention**!
• Focus on **specifics** and examples, not generalizations.
• Typical themes:
  – Career goals, Why graduate school?, Why this program?
• **Tailor** each statement to the school/program
• **Follow** any **instructions**
• **Edit, edit, edit!**
Letters of recommendation

• How many do you need?
• Who should you ask?
• How should you ask?
  – Give plenty of notice *(2 weeks +)*
  – Be clear about addresses, instructions, and deadlines
  – Provide statement, GRE scores
  – If asking professors in the Psychology Department, fill out the “Letter of Recommendation Form” at: http://www.uis.edu/psychology/students/forms/index.html
Letters of recommendation

• The strongest letters of recommendation:
  • Include personal knowledge of you
    • Academic skills
    • Clinical skills
    • Research skills
    • Any honors or awards you have received
    • Your career interests and qualifications for that career
  • Are of good quality
    • Have an established, positive relationship with the writer
GRE: The Graduate Record Exam

• GRE website: www.ets.org/gre/
• General Test and Subject Test (Psychology)
• Information about the GRE computer-based General Test
  – Test revised in August 2011
  – 3 hour, 45 minute exam
    • Two 30-minute Verbal Reasoning sections
    • Two 35-minute Quantitative Reasoning sections
    • Two 30-minute Analytical Writing sections
    • “Research” questions are also included
  – Scoring system has changed with the new revision
    • Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores fall on a 130-170 point scale (average is about 150)
    • Analytical Writing scores fall on a 0-6 point scale
    • Check the ETS website for most recent percentile information: http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/scores/understand/
Taking the GRE

• Where do I take it?
  – Prometric Testing Center

• How much does it cost to take?
  – $175 for the General Test, $150 for the Subject Test

• How do I study for it?
  – Career Development Center
  – GRE practice test books
  – Sample questions can be found at the ETS website:
    • http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/verbal_reasoning
    • http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/quantitative_reasoning
    • http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/content/analytical_writing
  – ETS HAS SOFTWARE YOU CAN DOWNLOAD FOR FREE
How to research schools?

• Which programs should I apply to?
  – Explore your career options
  – Look up information on the web
    • Be careful to use only “reputable” sources!
    • See Handout on “List of Graduate Programs”
  – Talk to a professor or professionals in the community
  – Consider both Master’s and doctoral programs
  – Consider a mix of desirable and back-up programs
Why Pursue a Master’s Degree?

• Advantages:
  – Provides multiple training and career opportunities
  – Less time to earn (2 to 4 years, vs. 4 to 7 for doctoral)
  – Good option for those who are uncertain about pursuing doctoral degree, or don’t feel as prepared or competitive for doctoral degree (less stringent admission requirements)

• Disadvantages:
  – Career options may be somewhat limited by state licensing and certification regulation
  – Lower salary ceiling
  – Master’s students are less likely to receive financial support compared to doctoral students (45% vs. 90% in public settings)
## Percentage of Students Who Apply & Are Accepted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Areas</th>
<th>Masters Programs</th>
<th>Doctoral Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General/social/personality</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/Organizational</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physio, neurosci, biological</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychometrics/Quantitative</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Programs</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying to Doctoral Programs Following Master’s Degree

• Master’s terminal vs. non-terminal degree

• To increase your attractiveness as a doctoral applicant:
  – Obtain research experience
  – Establish good relationships with professors
  – Obtain broad training and good foundation in core subjects
  – Maintain good grades
  – Obtain internship experiences in concentration areas
Does this all sound intimidating?

• The Career Development Center can help!
• The Career Development Center can...
  – Help you create a Grad School application timeline with all of the schools you are interested in
  – Help you research schools and programs
  – Offer help with resumes, applications, and personal statements
  – Offer mock interviews for job and school interviews
  – Help you find valuable experience opportunities (including ASTs) that may help you get into Grad School
Additional Resources


• *Applying to graduate school in psychology* (Kracen & Wallace, 2008; published by APA)

• *Graduate study in psychology* (2009, published by APA)

• *Insider's guide to graduate programs in clinical psychology* (Norcross, Sayette, Mayne, 2009; published by Guilford)

• *Psychology major: Career options and strategies for success* (Landrum & Davis, 2003; published by Prentice Hall)

• *Complete guide to graduate school admission: Psychology, counseling and related fields* (Keith-Spiegel & Wiederman, 2000; published by Lawrence Erlbaum)
Questions?
Want to make an appointment at the Career Development Center?

- Must use Career Connect on the Career Development website
- [http://www.uis.edu/careerservices/](http://www.uis.edu/careerservices/)
- Create an account
- Follow the directions on the website
- Fill out questionnaire about interests, and purpose of appointment
- Schedule an appointment
## Doctoral Degrees

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Ph.D.</th>
<th>Psy.D.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Training Model</strong></td>
<td>Scientist-Practitioner</td>
<td>Scholar-Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>Research and Practice (can vary by program)</td>
<td>Clinical service, less on research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance Rates</strong></td>
<td>• 17% for practice-oriented programs</td>
<td>41% (accepts 3 to 4 times more students than Ph.D. programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 11% for research-oriented programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>• 57% fully funded for equal emphasis programs</td>
<td>6 to 38% (20% average) receive full financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 84% for research-oriented programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accumulated Debt</strong></td>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>$53,000 - $60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Completion</strong></td>
<td>6.1 years</td>
<td>5.1 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internship Match</strong></td>
<td>96 – 98%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
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Norcross et al. (2004)
Primary Employment Settings of 2001 PhD and PsyD Recipients in Psychology

- University Settings
- Four-Year Colleges
- Medical Schools
- Other Academic Settings
- Schools and Other Educ. Settings
- Independent Practice
- Hospitals*
- Other Human Services*
- Business or Government
- Other
- Managed Care

*Disproportionately high percentages are represented in these categories as many recent graduates are still gaining experience in these organized settings prior to licensure.

Salaries

• Salaries are dependent on many factors, including:
  – Degree and program/school attended
  – Field and specialization
  – Experience
  – Type of position
  – Place of work
  – Location in the U.S.
  – How many hours you are willing to work
  – Luck
### Median Yearly Salaries 2007

(NOTE: **Not** starting salaries)

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>$54,000</td>
<td>$71,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$52,000</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services – Clinical</td>
<td>$69,000</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services – Counseling</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services – School</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services – Other</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied (I/O)</td>
<td>$86,000</td>
<td>$122,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: [http://research.apa.org/salaries07.html](http://research.apa.org/salaries07.html)
Overview of Financial Support for Master’s Students: 2007-08

• Master’s students are less likely to receive financial support compared to doctoral students (45% vs. 90% in public settings)
• Master’s students in private institutions get less financial assistance than public institutions
• Teaching and research assistantships are most common
• Average number of hours/week worked were similar for master’s and doctoral students
