PhD Programs in Clinical Psychology
Getting in and Succeeding

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Workshop

A Primmer on Graduate Training in Psychology
Lecture Overview

- Deciding on area of psychology
  - Clinical Program: Types & Pros/Cons
- Getting in
  - Improving your chances of acceptance
- Applying to graduate programs
- Interviewing
- Succeeding
- Additional resources
What area of psychology?

- Clinical psychology
- Counseling psychology
- PhD vs. PsyD
- Clinical health psychology
- Clinical neuropsychology
- Clinical adult and child programs
- Experimental psychology: cognitive, social, developmental, educational, forensic, industrial-organizational
- Neuroscience
- Options for MA level programs: MFTs, MSW, LCSW, MA in Clinical Psychology, MA in Gerontology, MPH.
Getting In

- Letters of recommendation
- Research experience
- Research presentations, publications
- Clinical experience
- GRE scores
- GPA
- The interview
Selecting graduate programs

- Reputation of the program, ranking
- Location
- Accreditation
- Funding opportunities, costs
- Match with a particular advisor
  - Very important for PhD programs
  - Contact potential advisors via email
- Apply for a range of programs, not just the top ones in your area of interest.
- A master’s degree may help you get into a PhD program, but is not necessary
Applying to graduate programs

- GREs and GPA are critical to get you through the first cut in a PhD program, especially in clinical.
- Prepare your CV
- You need solid letters of recommendation.
- Application essay: highlight your research interests and experience for PhD programs;
  - Mention potential mentors in your statement.
- Have faculty mentors read your essay
- “Is the gap-year for you?”
- Be aware of deadlines
  - Be very well organized (Interfolio, UCLA Career Center)
Interviewing

- Interviews are critical to acceptance into PhD programs, especially in clinical psychology.
- Interviewers estimate how you would interact with faculty, peers, and patients during training.
- Being “too intense” or “too passive” may lead to negative evaluations. You want to come across friendly, interested, and well-prepared.
- Students evaluate you too, not just the faculty!
- Be prepared to talk in depth about research
Succeeding

- Doing more of what you are good at
- Doing more of what you enjoy
  - Balance between clinical and research
- Match to the program
- Match to the advisor
- Approach training with professionalism
  - Transition from undergraduate to graduate
Additional Resources

Lots of great resources for UCLA students:

Career Center:
http://career.ucla.edu/Students/GradProfSchCounseling/Overview.aspx

PROPS:
http://www.psych.ucla.edu/undergraduate/specialprograms-events/props

- Great books available on the topic:
  1. Getting In: a step-by-step plan for gaining admission to graduate school in psychology
  2. Graduate Study in Psychology
  3. Career Paths in Psychology
Resources…