Content developed for the following presentation: Cristello, J.V. (Chair), Girouard Hallam, L., Sasser, J., Kapoulea, E. Academic life is a highway: How to kick your graduate admissions process into high gear (2022, August). Symposium presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Minneapolis, MN.

Academic life is a highway: How to kick your graduate admissions process into high gear

Resources for selecting a psychology graduate school program
List developed by Lauren Girouard Hallam, MA, MS

1. Dr. Echelbarger's Let's Talk Grad School is a weekly newsletter aimed at prospective graduate students covering topics across hidden curricula from selecting the program that's right for you to evaluating mentorship fit. Each week, you can be entered into a drawing to win a resource guide to help you navigate entering graduate school as well.

2. Dr. Yucel's research list is incredibly helpful from prospective student, to current PhD student in search of internships or post docs, to early career researcher. Use the list to navigate opportunities and compare options in research psychology.

3. Eight common questions to consider when applying to graduate school in psychology.

4. There's a lot of great reasons to go to graduate school, but it's not for everyone. This APA article provides an excellent gut check for making sure you're pursuing the career path that's right for you.

5. This excellent guide helps prospective and current graduate students navigate and maximize networking through Academic Twitter.

6. The APA Directory can help you find APA-accredited doctoral programs.

Contacting prospective mentors/labs: Psychology PhD email Templates
Template created by Erin Kaseda (erin.kaseda@my.rfums.org) and adapted by Jeri Sasser, MA (jeri.sasser@asu.edu).

These templates are meant to be a useful *starting point* for emails to potential advisors, but they are not the only way to approach this important step in the graduate school application process! Please continue consulting with your personal mentors and adapt these templates to fit your interests, personality, and any specific guidance you receive from supervisors or advisors.

General Tips on Reaching out to Prospective Mentors:

Don't get lost in the inbox!	*Stand Out by Doing Your "Homework"*
Clear subject line - Full name linked to email address - Professional email profile photo **Succinct** and **specific** inquiry - Genuine questions that cannot be answered using information available on the faculty/ lab webpage (e.g., whether they are accepting a graduate student or not.	- Make it clear that you know what current research the faculty member is doing *Note:* faculty can pivot interests/focus across the years, so it's important to be aware of their <u>current</u> line of research - Connect **your** own research (and interests) to the work that they are doing

Emailing a potential future advisor:
1) Double check that your email address, signature line, and profile photo are what you want them to be before emailing a potential advisor. Having your full name linked to your email account can help prevent your email from being bounced into a spam folder.
2) Use a clear and succinct subject line:
   a. "Potential applicant question"
   b. "Prospective PhD student question"
3) Briefly introduce yourself:
   a. "I am a senior at *Generic University* majoring in psychology with a minor in public health and am planning on applying to Clinical Psychology PhD programs this cycle. I am emailing because I am interested in applying to work with you."
   b. "I am a research assistant in the *Generic PI* lab at *Generic Institute* and am preparing applications to Social Psychology PhD programs for the upcoming academic year. I believe that my research interests may be a strong fit with your lab and would like to introduce myself."
4) State your specific interest in the advisor/their lab, using information from their lab website, recent published articles, or other online material to show that you've done your due diligence and have a specific interest in their work:
   a. "I saw on your lab website that you recently began implementing EEG into your study protocols, which is of great interest to me because I have worked with EEG throughout my undergraduate research with *Generic PI* in a study about cognitive control in individuals with sleep disorders."
   b. "I read your recent paper on cultural considerations in PTSD treatment, and it sparked many ideas for how to address bilingualism in the clinical context, which is of particular interest to me because I am bilingual in English and Punjabi."

  c. "I am familiar with your research examining sleep in the prediction of health behaviors in adolescence. I have experience working with objective sleep (e.g., FitBit) through my experience working with *Generic PI* at *Generic Institute*"

  d. "I read your recent paper on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on college student mental health. I spent the past two years helping lead data collection on a large project examining the transition to college during COVID-19 with *Generic PI* and would be very interested in continuing this work."

  e. I am particularly interested in the *Project Name*, due to my undergraduate research studying XYZ. I am also very interested in learning more about [*type of training you don't yet have but would be interested in learning that is focus of PI*].

5) Describe any personal connections that you may have:
  a. "I spoke to your current student, *Generic Name*, and they recommended that I reach out to you directly."
  b. "My current supervisor, *Generic PI*, collaborated with you when you were post-docs back at *Generic Institute*, and they said that you are a great person to work with."

6) Make a specific request or ask a specific question. Be sure that this is not something that could have been easily answered by reading the faculty's lab website!
  a. "I am wondering if you would be available to talk over the phone or video conference about the current direction your lab is headed in, and whether my interest in geriatric medication adherence would be a good fit with your lab."
  b. "I am wondering if you are planning to take a graduate student for the 2023-24 academic year."

7) Attach your CV to the email
  a. "My CV is attached for your convenience."

8) Conclude
  a. "Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you."

NOTE: These email templates can be easily adapted to reach out to current or former graduate students (e.g., to inquire about what it's like to work with the advisor, general lab culture, etc.)
Email jeri.sasser@asu.edu if you'd like a handout with templates for contacting grad students

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Links to a few other web resources on writing emails to potential advisors:
1. https://theprofessorisin.com/2011/07/25/how-to-write-an-email-to-a-potential-ph-d-advisor/
2. https://contemplativemammoth.com/2013/04/08/so-you-want-to-go-to-grad-school-nail-the-inquiry-email/
3. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/grad-school-guru/201410/emailing-future-phd-advisors
4. https://www.science.org/content/article/dear-dr-neufeld

Tools for preparing application materials
List developed by Eleni Kapoulea, MS

 1. Examples of Personal Statements compiled by Drs. Craig Rodriguez-Seijas and Jessica Schleider:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11vTrJDNSXJR0w7SYhz_nYJ8oc6OA6DXAhStWr LxfaQ8/edit

2. Examples of successful application materials to the UBC-Okanagen Clinical Psychology program (includes 10 Personal Statements and 3 Tri-Council Funding Applications): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Uqy4vTOg1q74mk5evkCK_9JiR67xpNTEZjPBEb 4qruA/edit

3. Worksheet for Letters of Recommendation by Monica Aswani: https://www.dropbox.com/s/4p4qt42v7cn8jiv/LORworksheet.pdf?dl=0

4. Twitter thread with samples of application materials including cold emails, statement of purpose, CV, & interview prep by Sanya Jain: https://twitter.com/sjay_yayy/status/1436771550443622400?s=20

5. Sample personal and research statements and GFRP application materials from Cesar O. Estien: http://www.cesaroestien.com/resources.html

6. Open Academics Resources related to academic writing, including crafting your elevator pitch and writing personal statements and cover letters: https://www.oacommunity.org/resources

7. Advice on writing personal statements for grad apps: https://twitter.com/everosenfeldphd/status/1429140703003676678?s=21

8. University of Nebraska – Tips for Writing a Diversity Statement https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/connections/writing-diversity-statement

9. Vanderbilt University – Developing and Writing a Diversity Statement https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/developing-and-writing-a-diversity-statement/#write

Interview preparation for Psychology PhD Programs
Developed by Julie Cristello, MS

Possible questions to prepare for:
1. Why this program?

2. Why this lab?
3. Why are you interested in research on this topic?
4. How did you become interested in this topic?
5. Be able to speak about <u>all</u> papers/posters/presentation listed on your CV.
6. What are you hoping to learn in graduate school?
7. Describe a project that you would like to develop or work on.
8. Talk about your prior experiences.
9. What do you view as your strengths and weaknesses?
   a. You can always frame your weaknesses as something you'd like to learn more about in graduate school (e.g., advanced stats training, learning more about the literature on a specific topic).

<u>Possible questions to ask:</u>

Faculty
1. How would you describe your mentoring style?
2. How is your lab set up in terms of lab meetings and mentor/mentee meetings (e.g., frequency)?
3. Can you discuss your internal and external collaborations?
4. How would I earn my stipend? What would this entail/what would my responsibilities be?
   a. If I am an RA, are there opportunities to obtain teaching experience?
   b. If I am a TA, are there opportunities to work on research projects within the lab?
5. Could you discuss the statistics training in this program?
6. Are there opportunities for data collection as well as opportunities to analyze existing data?
7. What do you think makes a student successful in this program and in your lab?
8. On average, how many publications do students graduate with?
9. What are the strengths of this program and what do you students tend to find the most challenging?
10. What aspect of this program do you think should be improved?
11. Could you discuss diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that exist within the program?

Students
1. How would you describe your mentor's mentoring style?
2. What are the strengths of this program and what do you find the most challenging?
3. Where do you live? Do students have to have a car?
4. How do you earn health, vision, and dental insurance?
5. What do you like to do for fun?
6. How much is your stipend and what do students have to pay for fees?
7. Could you discuss diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that exist within the program?
8. How is student health and well-being valued within the program?