

Timeline for Graduate School Application

Freshman Year

- ❖ Take Psychology 181 (Intro), Psychology 100 (Career Planning for Psychology Majors), and 2 other 200-level Psychology courses.
- ❖ Join the Undergraduate Psychology Organization (UPO) by simply attending meetings and special functions.
- ❖ Tentatively map out your psychology course sequence, paying special attention to requirements for the department.
- ❖ Attend any colloquiums, workshops, discussions, or functions sponsored by the Psychology department and begin to familiarize yourself with faculty members and fellow psychology students.
- ❖ Periodically check announcement boards (UPO/Psi Chi) for any upcoming events or items of interest.
- ❖ Be sure to meet with your advisor to answer any questions.

Sophomore Year:

- ❖ Take Psychology 350. (If you plan to take Psychology 450, take it immediately after 350. **If you are considering a Ph.D. research oriented graduate program, Psychology 450 is highly recommended.**) Psychology 450 is only offered in the fall semester. Psychology 451 is offered in the spring.
- ❖ Continue your involvement in UPO and think about becoming involved as an officer or committee chair.
- ❖ Look into requirements for PSI CHI, the Psychology honorary. Apply to this organization as you meet the requirements.
- ❖ Become acquainted with several faculty members in the psychology department above and beyond simple classroom interaction. This may help you build contacts that may later provide sources for letters of recommendation.
- ❖ Begin to explore research opportunities with faculty.
- ❖ Begin to explore Internship Opportunities. Go to the Internship Office, 345 Nebraska Union. You should begin internships (if interested in clinical or counseling psychology) during your 2nd semester or over the summer. One internship letter may be used when applying to some graduate programs. Any type of volunteer work is also helpful for gaining practical experience in your field and making important contacts that may help you later. (Remember sometimes it's not what you know but WHO you know).
- ❖ Continue to attend programs sponsored by the department especially The Nebraska Symposium on Motivation.
- ❖ Continue to meet regularly with your advisor and keep your program plan on track.
- ❖ Visit the Career Services Center, 230 Nebraska Union, and write a preliminary resume using the Resume Expert service available there.
- ❖ If you are looking at a career in human services, begin volunteering.

Junior Year

- ❖ Continue working on the psychology major. Begin to take 400-level course work. Remember, now is the time period that you should be taking the bulk of your solid and difficult psychology courses to prepare for your GRE. Avoid taking psychology classes Pass/No Pass, and keep in mind that most schools look for mainline courses.
- ❖ Begin focusing your interests in a particular departmental emphasis (ex: social, developmental).
- ❖ Continue to develop your relationships with departmental faculty. You will usually need 3 or more letters of recommendation for graduate school applications. Make sure you are not just a face in the classroom.

- ❖ Explore opportunities for joining professional organizations (Psi Chi, the student affiliate of the American Psychological Association), and become an active member.
- ❖ Redraft your preliminary resume (at the Career Services Center). Keep it as up-to-date as possible.
- ❖ Continue doing internships and volunteering at service agencies or other organizations.

Second Semester, Junior Year

- ❖ Begin work on a paper on your previous research ideas (for possible publication or presentation). Look into using this as an opportunity to do an honors thesis for Graduation with Distinction from the College of Arts and Sciences (information packet is available in 107 Oldfather).
- ❖ Pick up the GRE Packet (107 Oldfather or Room 230 Nebraska Union).
- ❖ Buy study guides for the GRE. Begin studying.

Summer Between Junior and Senior Years

- ❖ Begin researching graduate programs that interest you. Write to those programs and ask them for a list of their department faculty and research interests, and all needed application materials (including information on financial aid). The Graduate Study in Psychology book published by the American Psychological Association is a great source for locating prospective schools.
- ❖ Seriously investigate prospective graduate programs. Make a note of any programs that have earlier than usual deadlines. Most schools look for “fit” between interests of faculty and what you want to do.
- ❖ Through the application materials, find out about any additional requirements or tests needed by individual graduate school programs.
- ❖ Continue updating your resume for schools as well as your recommenders.
- ❖ Prepare a draft Statement of Intent. Have several faculty look it over and help you revise as needed. It should be tailored to each program you apply to.

Senior Year

- ❖ Complete all impressive degree requirements, research, and fieldwork by December. Continue the research and fieldwork into the second semester, however.
- ❖ Late August- Apply for the October GRE.
- ❖ September- November- Decide which schools to apply to and write for application forms (of you haven’t already done so).
- ❖ September-November – Retake general GRE test if you need to.
- ❖ November or December- Take advanced psychology GRE; retake General GRE is desired.
- ❖ December-January- Submit application materials way ahead of deadlines. Request transcripts by early January (this could change, based on application deadlines of various programs). Just before deadlines, call each school’s admissions secretary and ask if your file is complete. Make a chart listing each school and its attributes that are important to you. Think about financing.
- ❖ March- April- Most schools will make their decisions during this time, and will expect a decision from you a few weeks later. You will most likely receive an acceptance letter first, and funding offers will come later. You may want to visit schools or call them and talk to professors and current graduate students to find out more about the school before making your decision.
- ❖ Remember- some schools may start calling in Mid-February. Watch for messages.

This information was compiled and updated by Cindy Nash (1998 graduate) and Cathy Oslzly, from various sources, especially from the book, Is Psychology the Major for You? published by the APA and from Dan Leger’s Graduate School in Psychology: Application Procedures. Revisions were made with special reference to the Complete Guide to Graduate School Admissions by Patricia Keith-Spiegel.