Getting Ready to Apply to Graduate School

Natasha & Adina
Psychology Undergraduate Mentorship Program (PUMP)

- PUMP is a graduate student organization designed to provide mentorship to undergraduate students interested in graduate studies in Psychology. Please find more information about this program at our website:
  - https://pumpyork.wixsite.com/pumpyork
  - https://psyc.info.yorku.ca/undergraduate-program/student-success/upsa/
1. Application Timelines
2. Gaining Research & Volunteer Experience
3. Choosing the Right Program
4. Contacting Supervisors
5. Taking the GRE
6. Question and Answer Period/Panel
Poll: What year are you in?
A) 1st year
B) 2nd year
C) 3rd year
D) 4th year
E) 5th year
Poll: Are you applying to a graduate school in psychology?
A) Yes, this year
B) Yes, but not this year
C) No, just curious right now
Application Timeline
Choosing your program

Approaching referees

Getting GRE’s done

Starting applications

Application and CGS-M due

Formal interviews, CGS-M results, etc.

May

September-October

September

October

October-November

December

February-April
Application Timelines

- **Application deadlines for school**
  - York’s Psychology program deadline: December 15th, 2020

- **Funding deadlines:**
  - CGS-M Deadline: December 1st, 2020
  - OGS Deadline: December 1st, 2020
Types of Degrees in Psychology

- Experimental PhD (social, developmental, cognitive, etc.)
- Clinical PhD (child stream, adult stream, or both)
- PsyD (Doctor of Psychology – focuses more on clinical aspect of psychology)
- Social work, counselling
- Other (industrial/organizational, quantitative, history & theory, etc.)
- If interested in clinical, make sure the program is accredited by APA or CPA:
  - CPA accredited (30)
    http://www.cpa.ca/accreditation/CPAaccreditedprograms
  - APA accredited (240)
Find Schools & Supervisors

- What type of degree do you want to do?
- Which schools offer this?
- Research supervisors whose research aligns with your interests
- Make a list of who you will apply to
ORGANIZE YOURSELF

• EXCEL is your best friend!

• Create multiple sheets for:
  • Information on different graduate programs
  • Referees
  • Potential supervisors
  • How many reference letters each school requires
  • What kind of personal statement the school requires
  • Funding information for each school
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Potential Advisors</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Deadline &amp; Fee</th>
<th>Reference Letters - #, how to submit</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| York U     | Clinical Psychology | Dr. Rosenbaum       | 1) Personal Statement  2) CV  3) Online Forms | Dec. 15, $150 | • 2  
• Submit online | • GRE General  
• Psychology GRE |              |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referee</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Earliest Deadline</th>
<th>Initial Ask</th>
<th>Made Package</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Rosenbaum</td>
<td>York University</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>August 15th</td>
<td>October 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Keough</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
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Gaining Research & Volunteer Experience
One of the most important points on your graduate school application is your laboratory research experience.

But if you’ve never volunteered or worked in a lab before, how do you get involved in research??
Gaining research and volunteer experience

- Look up different labs that are researching areas of the field that you are interested in and see if their research seems like work you’d like to contribute to.
- Check out their lab website to see how you can get involved – this may mean emailing the PI of the lab, the lab manager, or a graduate student.
- Ask your TA’s about their research and if there is an opportunity to get involved in their lab!
Gaining research and volunteer experience

- The email that you send to a potential lab should include:
  - An introduction about yourself (your university, what your major is, what year you’re in, etc.)
  - Explain why you’re interested in the lab’s current research and how you’d like to contribute to their studies
  - Any previous research experience (if you have)
  - Related courses you’re taking that are associated with their research
  - Include your CV and unofficial transcript
Hello Dr. Rosenbaum,

My name is Jane Doe and I am in my second year here at York pursuing a B.Sc. (Hons.) in Psychology. Throughout my studies and experiences thus far, I have become interested in cognitive neuroscience, brain, and behavioural sciences. I chose to take courses like Biological Basis of Behaviour in addition to biology and chemistry courses because I am passionate about learning how neural functions on the scientific level translate to human behaviour. I was recently reading about the work done at your lab and became extremely interested in your research. I understand that your research focuses on brain and behaviour-based rehabilitation with data leading to guide assessment and treatment methods. This area of research, which you termed cognitive rehabilitation neuroscience, especially intrigues me. This, combined with my interest in the field of neuroscience, is why I am drawn to translational research which specifically focuses on healing people with brain injuries. I am currently fortunate enough to be doing research at Baycrest Hospital in a Cognitive Neuroscience and Memory Lab where I am assisting a Ph.D. student in a study that also focuses on cognitive rehabilitation.

I would appreciate the opportunity to get involved with research here at York. I wanted to inquire if perhaps you are taking any undergraduate students/volunteers in your lab at this time or in the near future. If so, I would greatly value the opportunity to participate in your research and gain a better understanding of how experimentation is carried out in the field of Psychology. I have attached a copy of my CV and my unofficial transcript to date. Please let me know if there is anything else you need from me. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Gaining research and volunteer experience

- If you can’t find a lab at York that you’re interested in/is currently taking students, check out other research centers!
- E.g., University of Toronto, Ryerson University, different hospitals in the GTA such as Mount Sinai Hospital, Holland Bloorview, Rotman Research Institute etc.
Choosing the Right Program
Poll: what program in psychology are you interested in applying to?

A) Clinical psychology
B) Research in Psychology (e.g., social, neuroscience, personality etc.)
C) Social Work
D) Counselling and psychotherapy
E) Neuropsychology
F) Developmental (child) psychology
G) Not Sure Yet
Choosing the Right Program

• There are a host of programs that fall under the umbrella of psychology graduate programs (e.g., clinical psychology, social psychology, neuroscience etc.)
• Therefore, it’s very important to look into each program to determine if it’s a good fit for you!
• In addition to your interest in the field, take into account: location, tuition, length of program etc.
Choosing the Right Program: example

- Clinical Psychology at York University (MA/PhD)
- Program focus: Engaging in clinically-relevant research in psychotherapy process and outcomes, neuropsychology, health psychology and personality.
- Location: Toronto, ON
- Tuition: Depends on funding, roughly $1800/semester
- 2 year MA, 4 year PhD, 1 year internship (=7 years total)

Resource: https://psychology.gradstudies.yorku.ca/areas-of-specialization/clinical/
Choosing the Right Program: example

- Social, Personality and Developmental Psychology at Western University (MSc/PhD)
- Program focus: Research training concentrates on the psychological theories, principles, and research methods relevant to understanding developmental processes, individual differences and the behaviour of individuals and groups in social contexts
- Location: London, ON
- Tuition: Depends on funding, MSc: $25,874 CDN/year for domestic students and $36,874 CDN/year for international; PhD: $26,874 CDN per year for domestic and $26,428 for international, both groups pay domestic tuition
- 2 year MSc, 3 year PhD (or 6 terms of full time study), ~5 years total

Resource: https://psychology.uwo.ca/graduate/program_information/spdp_program_requirements.html
Choosing the Right Program: example

- Neuroscience Graduate Program at McMaster University
- Program focus: Covers a spectrum of neuroscience: cellular and molecular; clinical and health; cognitive; computational; neurotech; and systems and behavioural.
- Location: Hamilton, ON
- Tuition: Depends on funding, roughly $2,102.40 per term for full time students
- 1 year Master’s, 4 year PhD, = 5 years total

Resource: http://www.neurosciencemcmaster.ca/
Contacting Supervisors
Contacting a Supervisor

● Many programs involve direct supervisor/supervisee relationships
● Check on each program’s website to see which faculty member’s are taking on a student during the year you are applying
● Once you have determined who you would like to work with, we recommend emailing that faculty member to introduce yourself and express how you are interested in their research
Approaching potential supervisors

• Suggest sending these ‘feeler’ emails out around September–November, start sending out ‘feeler’ emails
• These emails will help determine if they are in fact taking students (some sites are not updated), as well as whether they would like to meet before applications are in
• This will also help put you as a potential candidate on their radar
Email to Potential Supervisors

What to include in your email

- **Main body of email**
  - Introduce yourself
  - Offer to meet, include contact information

- **CV**

- **Unofficial transcript(s)**

- **Cover letter OR add to body of email**

- **GRE scores (if completed already)**
Body of Email

- Make **very** brief (unless you are adding your experience here)
- State your name, year of study (i.e., fourth year), and school you are currently at
- Want to say that you are interested in the program of choice at the school they work at
- One/two lines about your interests in their research (e.g., specific facet of their research and maybe how it relates to your current work)
- Offer to meet with them, but be clear you understand if they’re too busy or if it’s not possible
Hello Dr. Katz,

I am a fourth year student at the University of Ottawa in psychology. I'm going to be applying to the clinical psychology program at York University in the coming months to begin in September 2021. Before I begin my application, I would just like to inquire as to your availability as supervisor for the coming year. I've read several of your papers regarding chronic pain and related treatment, and have found that your research interests align with my own fairly well. In fact, being a scribe in the emergency department, I am fairly familiar not only with patients who experience chronic pain, but also with the various ways that this pain can be presented as well as handled by the health care staff.

I understand that most professors will not meet or consider applicants prior to the application deadline; however, for your interest I have attached PDFs of my CV, GRE scores, and transcripts. I have also attached a personal cover letter, which goes into detail regarding my related interests and experience with your research.

Thank you very much and have a fantastic weekend!
Poll:
What is the best (sentence?) way to explain your research (rework this):

a) “I like …”
b) “My passion for research revolves around …”
c) “I find the interaction between ... and ... truly fascinating”
d) “I want to be the principle investigator in ... field”
Unofficial Transcript

- Can download this from York Website – available in PDF format because of COVID
  - Go to: yorku.ca > Current Students > Registrar’s Office > Order a Transcript > 2B in COVID Section
  - Resource: https://registrar.yorku.ca/transcripts

(b) Unofficial personalized version – A copy of your personalized transcript will be sent to the email listed on your student account to check this click here. To submit your request, fill out the Unofficial Transcript Request - Fall 2021 form.

- It may take up to 10 business days to process your request.
- Starting October 1, 2020 students who had previously ordered an unofficial transcript may now submit one for Fall/Winter 2020-21 (please note: once you have requested an unofficial transcript for Fall/Winter 2020-21, the next time you will be able to order is February 2021).
• If you have other undergraduate marks from other schools make sure to attach these as well
• Make sure it is not password protected
• Attach this screenshot to your email
• They want to see your undergraduate marks (or any other post-secondary marks)
• Make sure this is clear and in depth
• CV
• Resources: Career Centre at York, Career Foundations
• CCV
  • https://ccv-cvc.ca/loginresearcher-eng.frm
  • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4OGkRx4zhw
• Ensure all of your outlined information has an associated year or year-span
CV sections

1. Name & contact Information

1. Education background (previous degrees) & current level of study

2. Research & laboratory experience (and brief descriptions)

3. Thesis/publications, working papers, conference/poster presentations, and workshops

4. Scholarships/academic awards, other awards, honours & distinctions you have received

5. Professional and employment experience

6. Volunteer work/community service, university involvement

7. Additional skills, certifications, languages (only if you speak more than one language)
**Cv Research and Employment history**

- Make your history relevant to what/who you’re applying
- SELL YOURSELF!

**Ex: Working as a cashier/sales**

→ “Handled money regularly, stocked shelves, spoke with customers, assisted customers with their needs, operated fryer”

VERSUS

→ “Completed transactions for customers while providing customer service through friendly interactions, ensured the safety of myself and other employees while operating machinery, maintained professionalism while providing efficient and effective service.”
Want to highlight your research and applicable background (or any other relevant information like your volunteer experience) and how that:

a. Relates to their research and lab, etc.
b. Influences your interest in their research
c. Any other avenue or ideas you would have for their research
(want to indicate or show what you could add to their lab)
Taking the GRE
The GRE

→ www.ets.org

• Standardized test used for many graduate and business schools

• A general and a subject test (Psychology)

• IMPORTANT: Make sure the program you’re applying to actually requires it
  • Only clinical programs require the subject test, and social work & counseling don’t need general GRE

• Good to get these done early in case you need to rewrite them

• NEED to be done by (approximately) November 15th if applying for Dec 1st

• Check admission requirements and statistics for ideal scores
• Two GRE’s: General GRE and the Psychology GRE
• Can take the general GRE on multiple dates throughout the year
• Psychology GRE is offered only 3 times a year, in September, October and April
• This year the Psychology GRE dates were: September 12, 2020, October 17, 2020, and April 10, 2021
• Register for the Psychology GRE well in advance – e.g., register for the September option during the summer
The General GRE

What is it?

- Comprised of 3 components
  - Analytical
  - Verbal
  - Quantitative

- Written on a computer

- With COVID, can be written at home or at a test center

- **Due to COVID, it’s not required this year if you’re applying to York!**
**The General GRE**

**Analytical Section**
- Essay writing section
- Measures critical thinking and analytical writing skills, including the ability to articulate and support complex ideas with relevant reasons and examples, and examine claims and accompanying evidence
- There is an emphasis on analytical writing skills

**Verbal Section**
- Measures the ability to analyze and draw conclusions from text, reason from incomplete data, summarize text, understand the meanings of words, sentences and entire texts, and understand relationships among words and among concepts.
- There is an emphasis on complex verbal reasoning skills

**Quantitative Section**
- Math sections
- Measures the ability to understand, interpret and analyze quantitative information, solve problems using mathematical models, and apply the basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis
- There is an emphasis on quantitative reasoning skills

Resource: https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about
Materials

- Check the Psychology Resource Centre at York for materials!
- Can get materials via Amazon or many local bookstores/campus bookstores
- Use the MOST UPDATED versions/editions of these materials
The Psychology GRE

What is it?

- Comprised of ~205 multiple-choice questions
- Questions surrounding:
  - Biological/Sensation/Perception
  - Cognitive/Neuro
  - Social
  - Developmental
  - Clinical
  - Measurement/Methodology/Other
Materials

• Use the MOST UPDATED version/edition of materials you purchase
Presenter’s experiences

Adina

- Undergraduate at York University in the Honours Psychology Program, Bachelors of Science
- Graduated 2019, started MA1 in 2019 in the adult clinical neuropsychology stream
- Worked between three labs during undergraduate years
- GRE experiences

Natasha

- Undergraduate at McMaster University in the Honours Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour Program
- Graduated 2019, started MA1 in 2019 in the neuropsychology stream
- Worked in one lab at St. Joseph’s for two years (and two summers)
- GRE experiences
• Speak to people in your program of interest, professors, people who have completed the program
• **Speak to your TA’s!** They’ve gone through the application process and provide you with valuable resources and advice
• LinkedIn; email and talk to or meet with people who are in your area of interest
• [https://pumpyork.wixsite.com/pumpyork/resources](https://pumpyork.wixsite.com/pumpyork/resources)
TIME FOR QUESTIONS
NEXT WORKSHOP:

NOVEMBER 12TH, 2020
6 P.M. - 8 P.M.

TOPICS COVERED:

1. Applying to Tri-Council Awards & Writing Proposals
2. Asking for References
3. CVs and Transcripts
4. Answering related questions
Don’t forget to fill out the emailed form about this workshop!