

# Strategies for Applying to Graduate School (Even During a Pandemic)

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# Finding Fit: A Roadmap to Graduate School

<https://www.apa.org/members/content/finding-fit-series>

# Modular On-Demand Series

## Types of Degrees and Programs

Learn about the differences between graduate psychology degrees and types of training, the different types of training environments, the primary training outcomes and goals of different types of programs, and APA accreditation.

[VIEW WEBINAR >](#)

## Getting in and Getting Through

Learn about the general data on applications, admissions, enrollments and completion. Find out what programs are looking for, how they determine a good fit and what programs require for you to graduate.

[VIEW WEBINAR >](#)

## Personal Statements

Learn how to write personal statements describing your past research/volunteer experience.

[VIEW WEBINAR >](#)

## Letters of Recommendation

Not all letters of recommendation are created equal. You'll need good ones to help you get in. Also, plan ahead and submit early.

[VIEW WEBINAR >](#)

## Preparing for the Interview

Learn about the different interview formats, how to make a good first impression and how to follow up after the interview.

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# Today: Focus on Highlights

Today will be major themes and highlights of the series.  
You should find time to watch each module over the months  
as you find yourself moving through the Application Process.

# Why Go To Graduate School?

What is your primary interest in going to graduate school?

1. Interest in establishing the psychology knowledge base, by doing research & conducting experiments and asking questions of how behavior works;

OR

2. Interest in providing services to solve problems by applying psychological knowledge and helping people to understand psychology's impact in health, learning, business, and policy;

OR

3. Interest in both: Engage in research to improve or refine existing knowledge in health, learning, and behavior, and apply these principles

# Graduate School = Good Fit

Applicants need to search for programs that are a good fit for their professional goals, academic preparation and what they want to 'learn' in graduate school.

Graduate programs need to search for applicants that are a good fit for the type of training they offer, the course requirements and course work required, and the type of professional/career development they offer.

# Disciplinary Research Training



- Most disciplinary research training programs offer a PhD degree, with a few offering a MS.
- Primary training outcome is to produce researchers that pursue fundamental or critical questions (i.e., think professor).
  - Cognitive Sciences & Decision Making
  - Developmental Psychology
  - Social Psychology
  - Experimental Psychology

# Professional Practice and Service



- Most professional practice and service training programs offer either PsyD or PhD degrees, although there are many MA and MS degrees too.
- Primary training outcome is to produce individuals that provide services based upon psychological principles. Most common is health service psychology.
  - Clinical Psychology
  - Counseling Psychology
  - School Psychology



# Applied Research and Application



- Applied research programs offer predominantly PhD and PsyD degrees, with some MS.
- Primary training outcome is to produce individuals to research and/or apply psychological principles in many settings or fields, such as business, law, and public policy.
  - I/O Psychology
  - Forensic Psychology
  - Sports Psychology

# Finally, APA Accreditation

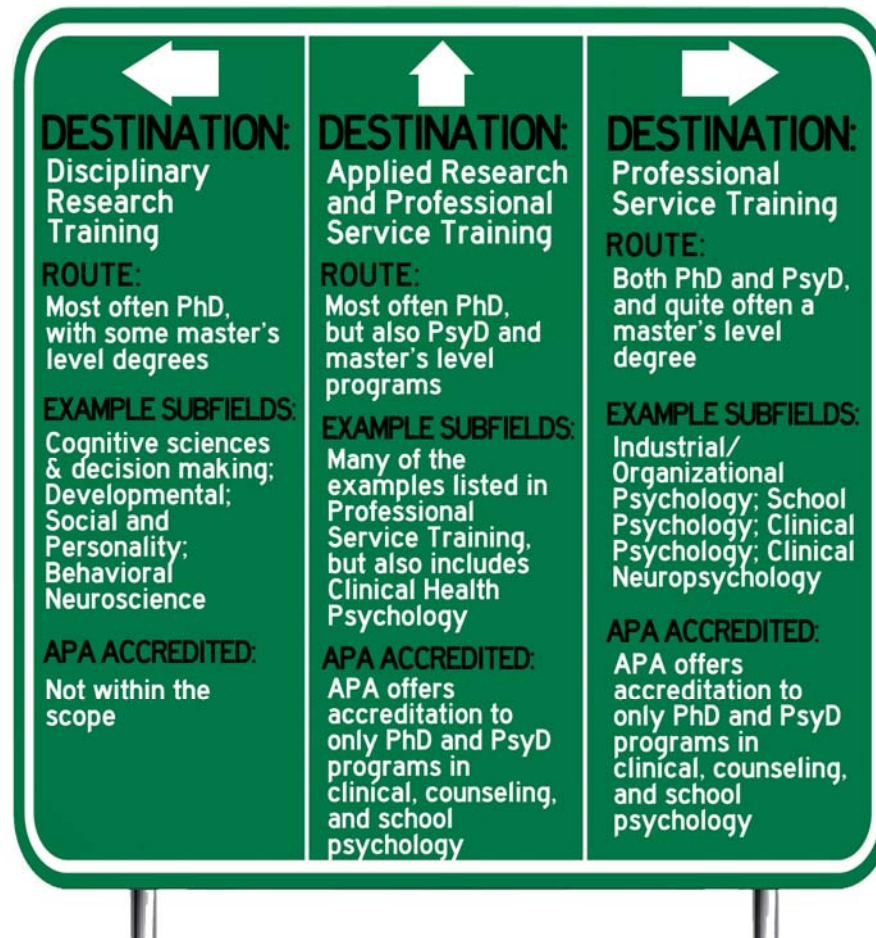
APA Accreditation is a voluntary process, meaning the faculty of the program elect to undergo APA review to achieve accreditation status.

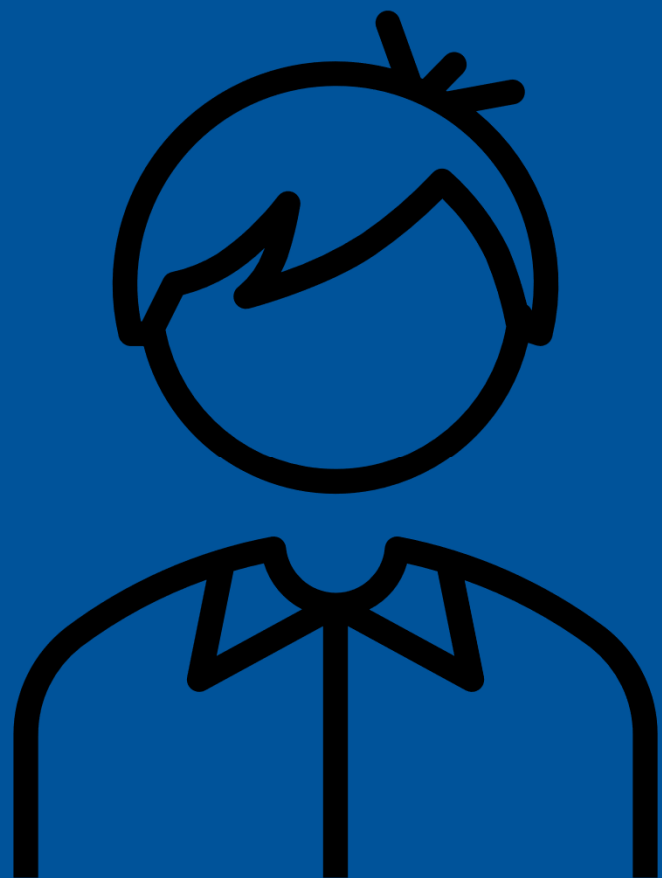
APA accreditation applies only to **doctoral-level programs (PhD or PsyD) that train health service psychologists**.

- Clinical Psychology
- Counseling Psychology
- School Psychology

Many states require you attend an APA-accredited program in order to receive a license to practice as a licensed psychologist in that state.







As an applicant you need to:

1. Understand different degree options and areas of emphasis
2. Understand what programs look for (i.e, assess fit) by reviewing the application requirements
3. Understand/ask what happens after graduation
4. Are a good fit – become a future colleague, contribute to department/program, etc.



Programs need to:

1. Make sure you understand what their program's goals are
2. Look for evidence that you have the necessary skills, knowledge and preparation to succeed
3. Have the resources to support you as a student (mentoring, lab/project space, TA/RA/Fellowships)
4. Are a good fit – will be a future colleague, contribute to the program, department, etc.

# Impact of COVID-19

## Grades



Institutions across the country provided students with the option for credit/no credit.

You're not alone.

GPA's might be lower than expected

## GRE



Many programs are waiving GRE scores for this cycle. Not all so verify with the program you are considering.

Test at home option announced in March 2020

## Offerings

**Practica may be more limited**

**Extracurricular activities less plentiful**

**Research labs inactive or limited**

# Ways to strengthen your application

- Follow the prompts given
- Acknowledge the pandemic-we will be expecting that
- Reach out but be patient
  - Programs may still be figuring things out
- Fit remains important, but take a chance
  - Grades
  - Scores
  - Experiences

# Interviewing during a pandemic

- Online interviews are a likely possibility
  - Work on your zoom etiquette
- Given the climate, be prepared to discuss how the pandemic impacted you personally and professionally
  - Talk about what you did to overcome challenges
  - Talk about how you structure your day
  - Talk about what you may have learned about yourself
- Given the climate, be prepared to discuss diversity issues





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