

Department of Psychology

Procedures for applying to graduate school

You may need our help in clarifying your plans for graduate school and in completing your applications. We are happy to be of assistance and hope that you will help us reduce the confusion and frustration often associated with the process. Please read the material below and try to follow our procedures.

1. Find out about schools, deadlines, etc., early enough so that our letters of recommendation can be sent out on time. You can obtain detailed information about graduate programs in psychology in the United States by consulting Graduate Study in Psychology, 2016 edition. It provides information about degrees, programs, requirements, financial assistance, deadlines, and addresses. There is a copy in the bookcase inside the department office, for use in the lounge. If you want to borrow one for a few days, ask our AA in the main office (Whittier 101) and leave your name.

2. Discuss your plans with faculty members before asking them to write letters for you. Usually a brief discussion is sufficient to give the faculty the information they need and for you to secure permission to use them as recommenders.

3. Please complete the following steps as early as possible and at least a month (excluding vacations) before letters are due to graduate schools or fellowship offices. (Additional lead time is necessary if sealed letters are to be returned to you for mailing with your application.)

1. Talk with everyone from whom you are requesting a letter.

2. Turn in the following to your recommenders:

a. A copy of your resumé or some background information and a copy of a draft personal statement, if it is ready.

b. A log sheet listing the programs to which you're applying, the addresses, deadlines, and the names of the faculty members writing on your behalf.

c. It has become routine for recommendations to be “uploaded” by a web tool. It’s important to have this on the log sheet so that we can keep track of what’s been requested by the schools and what we’ve completed. For recommendations to be mailed, provide one stamped, addressed envelope for each recommendation. Frequently, you are requested to collect recommendations in sealed envelopes and return them with your application. Please get this started as soon as possible. It is very difficult for us to complete large batches of recs under extreme deadline pressure from multiple students.

