

Applying to Graduate School

Preamble

The Scientific Affairs Committee and the Section for Students in Psychology, of the Canadian Psychological Association, have collaborated on an important project to better inform undergraduate students about the process of applying to graduate school. Together, we have developed a Powerpoint presentation (along with text) that may be presented at your university. We envision that this Powerpoint presentation could be used by CPA campus representatives and/or faculty and presented in different universities across the country.

The purpose of this presentation is to disseminate information to undergraduate students about the applicant-to-acceptance ratio in different sectors of psychology, the varied career paths in psychology, and future job prospects. We hope that this presentation will serve to attract graduate students into all areas of psychology (both experimental and applied).

Slide 1: Introduction to the CPA Student Presentation on *Applying to Graduate School*.

The purpose of today's talk is to provide undergraduate students with information about getting into graduate school and to discuss some of the career options that might be available to you once you graduate. By the end of today's talk, I hope that you will be well informed about the process of applying for and getting into graduate school, the applicant-to-acceptance ratio in different sectors of psychology, the varied career paths in psychology, and future job prospects.

This presentation was developed by the Scientific Affairs Committee and the Section for Students in Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Slide 2 – An overview of the presentation

Let me begin with a brief overview of what I hope to be able to cover today

- Where do I begin? (is graduate school for me?)
- How do I best prepare myself for graduate school?
- What things should I know in order to apply to graduate school?
- What are the odds of getting in to graduate school?
- What are the demands of graduate school? What will be required of me once I enter graduate school?
- What different career options are available once I graduate?

Slide 3 - Where to Begin

What is graduate school?

- Graduate school consists of advanced training in a specific area of psychology, depending on which area you are most interested in. Typically, students spend from 4 to 7 years at graduate school (1-2 years for an M.A. degree, consisting of courses, project/thesis; and 3-5 years for a Ph.D. degree, consisting of courses, qualifying/preliminary exams, thesis, defense).
- Graduate study can provide both a deeply enriching intellectual experience at the personal level, and a disciplined preparation for a meaningful professional career, not

only in university teaching and research, but also in the public sector (both government and the health professions) and in the private sector.

- Some students pursue a master's degree because they are not certain they want to spend the time and resources for a doctoral degree. Others consider a master's program as an intermediate step in their education towards eventually obtaining a doctoral degree in psychology or another field. A master's program prepares individuals for entry into doctoral programs of study.
- While employment in research, teaching, and human service positions are possible for those with a master's degree in psychology, the doctoral degree is generally considered the entry-level degree in psychology for a broader array of employment opportunities, such as becoming a professor or an independent, licensed practitioner of psychology.
- For those wishing to provide psychological services to clients, at least one additional year of internship and supervision is required. Thus, the Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology requires both research and practitioner expertise. A Psy.D. degree is offered in the US (and now in some parts of Canada), and is often referred to as a "professional school" program (similar to the M.D. in medicine). There is a greater emphasis on training and professional practice. Therefore, students usually take a more structured series of courses and receive considerable practical experience. There is more emphasis on preparing graduates for professional practice and less on research training.

Is it for me?

- If you are finding yourself deeply engaged in and challenged by the intellectual problems and issues raised by your undergraduate study in psychology, then you should give serious consideration to continuing your study at the graduate level.
- Graduate students work closely with faculty and are often treated like junior colleagues. Graduate students assume greater responsibility for directing their own education and training. The graduate supervisor, if there is one, is there mostly to keep the students on track and to serve as a resource.
- Graduate students will be expected to speak out in class and express their own ideas and challenge those of others. They will have to present and defend their thesis or dissertation in a public forum. It's often stated that graduate students need to be "passionate" about their area of research.

What is your interest?

- The study of behaviour is so vast that the field of psychology is divided into many subspecialties, such as clinical, social, cognitive, behavioural neuroscience, developmental, and industrial/organizational psychology. Undergraduate programs typically require you to sample from different areas to fulfill your coursework requirements. Use this opportunity to understand not only the breadth of psychology, but also to narrow in on the area that holds the most interest for you and fits your unique skills or talents.
- During your third year of your undergraduate degree you should begin thinking about which area interests you the most. It helps to think about which subspecialty consistently stands out for you in your psychology classes (e.g., which chapter in your text is most fascinating). If you find that a particular area is intriguing to you, then that would be a good place to start with regards to looking into graduate programs.

What are your goals?

- Look at the big picture. What do you hope to accomplish as a graduate student? Do you have a passion for research, or do you want to work in a clinical setting? Is there something that you feel strongly about and would like to explore in more depth? Answering these questions can help you determine which direction to take when choosing a psychology graduate degree, as well as whether or not becoming a graduate student is the right choice for you.

Undergraduate courses

- Get good marks in your undergraduate courses, especially in your last two years. Since potential supervisors might not have very much information on which to base their decisions, marks will play a substantial role.
- Schools vary in their prerequisites for admittance into (and graduation from) an honours program. That's why it is so important to do your homework as soon as you begin contemplating graduate school, since most graduate programs in psychology require an honours degree.
- It's never too early to begin interacting with professors and looking for practical hands on experience in a lab and/or clinical setting.

Slide 4 - Experience and References

Research Experience

- One of the main things that professors look for in potential graduate students is whether students have had experience as a research assistant or, even better, have conducted their own research project (especially an honours thesis). Completing an honours thesis is one of the very best ways to prepare for graduate school in psychology.
- Working in a lab gives you a unique opportunity to see research in action. Although you will obtain skills through this work (e.g., entering data, organizational tasks, running complex experimental protocols), you will also have a chance to really understand the theory and methods that dictate the area you are studying. Simply having the experience on paper will not mean as much to a prospective graduate advisor as will knowing that you took an interest in your research activity. Once you have been involved in a lab you may also want to ask if there are opportunities to author or assist in writing a paper about the project with which you are involved. Publications are not necessary for getting into graduate school; however, even one publication will help you stand out from the rest of the crowd, especially when it comes to applying for scholarships.
- With regards to an honours thesis, you don't necessarily have to have specific ideas about the content of your project when you first approach a professor to discuss the possibility of doing one. It doesn't hurt to come prepared with ideas regarding a general topic that you want to explore (and, of course, that topic area should be one that is of interest to the faculty member), but what matters more is that you present yourself as a bright, conscientious person who wants to do a project with that faculty member. Your potential supervisor can help you find a suitable focus for that project.

Human Service Experience

- Clinical experience is not necessary for you to be admitted to a graduate program in clinical psychology. Counseling psychology places a greater emphasis on human service experience and a video of a mock counseling session is usually required as part of the application process. For those students who think they might want to pursue a career in a clinical direction it will be useful to understand what happens in these settings. You may wish to volunteer for peer-to-peer counseling hotlines. Volunteers may be welcome in hospitals, community outreach programs, and university clinical programs (although opportunities like this may be hard to come by, especially if you live in a rural town). While your duties won't usually involve clinical activity (e.g., counseling clients), you may be intimately involved in the project and gain a greater understanding of what it means to work with clients in a clinical setting.
- You may want to point out to students interested in getting into clinical programs that research experience is often deemed more important than clinical volunteer experience (the opposite tends to be true of counseling programs).

Extra Curricular Activities

- There are many other ways to add to your academic resume if you can't find experience in a lab or your community. The simplest place to start is to become a member of a professional community (i.e., CPA, APA, etc.). Membership usually offers many perks for students, such as access to journals, cheaper annual fees, travel grants for conferences, and the ability to present your work to the rest of your psychology peers.
- Most universities have psychology clubs/societies that consist of enthusiastic students wanting to engage, inform, and support other psychology students about the joys and opportunities that come from a psychology degree. Becoming an active member not only shows your passion for the field, but also can give you more opportunities to interact with professors, which is especially important when looking for references.

Reference Letters

- Graduate school applications include letters of recommendation (typically 3 of them, usually written by university professors). These letters play a significant role in admissions decisions.
- You should begin to lay the ground work for such letters a year or more in advance of when you will need them, by getting to know several of your professors. If the people who write for you know nothing about you except what marks you received in their courses, they will be unable to add much that isn't already communicated in your transcript. At minimum, be an active participant in your courses and occasionally go to your professor's office hours to discuss course material.
- Don't be afraid to ask your potential referee if they feel that they are able to write you a strong reference letter. Remember, you never get to read your references, as they are mailed directly to the institutions.
- Create a mini information package about yourself to give referees a more accurate portrayal of your experience, abilities, and goals. The more detailed and concrete the information that you provide is, the more detailed and concrete (and hence convincing) the professor can make the letter. Include things such as a copy of your transcript, your CV, a personal statement, a copy of your GRE scores (if possible), and an envelope for

each application, appropriately addressed (with the universities standardized rating form described above either in the envelope or paper-clipped to it, as well as deadlines by which each should be mailed). Typed addresses look more professional than written ones, and how you present your information, as well as how early you approach your professor (at least a month before the application deadline), may add to their opinion of you and may set the tone for your reference letter (especially if the professor is not very familiar with you).

Slide 5 – The Application Process

Do your research early!

- Starting early usually means beginning your graduate school search at the end of the summer or beginning of the fall term, the year before you wish to attend graduate school. Giving yourself a lot of time helps to ease the stress of the application process, especially if you are taking classes and/or writing an honours thesis at the same time!
- Researching programs can be extremely time-consuming. Most don't realize how long it takes until they begin searching through various universities and programs, and contacting numerous professors for their availability with regards to taking on additional graduate students for the following year.

When to Apply?

- Schools vary with regards to application deadlines, some as early as December 1st to as late as March 1st. Keep this in mind especially when it comes to writing entrance exams (i.e., GREs) since it can take many weeks to get your results sent to the schools of your choice.
- Starting to put together application package(s) early on (around September) is key to a less stressful application process. When applying to multiple schools, keep in mind how long it will take to obtain reference letters, and transcripts.

How many schools to apply to?

- In general, it is a good idea to apply to several graduate schools in order to increase your chances of being accepted into at least one of them. This is particularly true for applied programs, such as clinical psychology, where there is high demand. Even if your undergraduate marks are outstanding (e.g., A+), it is not advisable to limit your application to a single school. Many factors, in addition to marks, typically enter into decisions about admitting students to graduate programs. Thus, even for the A+ student, there may not be a supervisor available, or the student's research interests may not be compatible with the program, or there may be limits on how many students can be accepted into a given program. Be aware that outstanding academic credentials are not a surefire guarantee of admission. Thus, you should maximize your possibilities by applying to more than one school.
- How many schools you apply to is entirely up to you. Some constraints are the number of programs of interest to you, the work load and cost of making an extremely large number of applications (along with getting letters of reference for each application). As a very general guide, it may be possible to come up with a list of four or five programs that you would like to apply to (or perhaps a few more if you are interested in clinical).

- Apply to a range of programs that vary in their level of competitiveness. For any number of reasons (e.g., number of faculty taking students, competition level in the pool of applicants, funding) admissions to top-tier schools may vary from year to year. It's a good idea to apply to a couple programs that are below your ability (lower cut offs), a couple that meet your capabilities, and a couple that exceed your abilities (higher cut offs).

Contacting Schools

- Most graduate programs now have dedicated webspace that contains information to help students navigate their application process. Further, many have a graduate coordinator who can answer any further questions you may have about the application process.
- This is a great place to start when looking for a good-match with a supervisor, since research interests and current projects for faculty are usually provided within departmental websites. Download any application forms and read through the materials thoroughly before contacting the graduate coordinator or faculty of the university.

Potential Supervisor(s)

- Identify which faculty members you are most interested in working with. Professors are interested in students with good academic and experience records; however, they are also often interested in the "fit" of students within their program. For example, many programs have moved toward admitting students to work with a particular faculty advisor or advisors. So, when choosing programs, your interests should closely match the interests of one or more of the faculty in the department to which you are applying.
- Often students contact professors by email or phone in order to simply introduce themselves, request a face-to-face meeting or try to establish email exchanges in anticipation of applying to their graduate program. Do your homework, have a purpose, and be specific. Many faculty members will not grant face to face meetings or prolonged phone interviews with prospective applicants simply to discuss the structure of the program.
- It is perfectly acceptable, and highly recommended, for you to contact faculty to find out whether they are taking students for the upcoming year.

Slide 6 – Putting Together the Pieces

Application Fees

- Your application will not be processed (or considered) unless you pay the mandatory fee. Schools and programs vary in their application fees, but they range considerably.

Grades

- Most schools provide minimum requirements on their program websites. However, given the nature of the competition it is important to keep in mind more realistic admissions criteria. A low "B" average (70-75%) may be the posted cut-off, however it might not be sufficient for admission to most good graduate programs. Instead, a more realistic lower cutoff is an average of 78-80%. For most applied areas, such as clinical, an overall average of A is usually required (about 85% or better). However, these are just cut-offs

and you should aim to be well above these to compete with the other applicants, especially if applying to a clinical program.

- However, grades are not the only thing that selection committees look at (i.e., GREs, research experience, etc.). Everyone varies in their strengths and weaknesses and it is your job to make yourself stand out from the crowd.

GREs

- Almost all North American graduate psychology departments will ask that you submit Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores with your application. The GREs consist of a set of tests given by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. There are three tests of general knowledge and ability (verbal, quantitative, and analytical), and an advanced test in psychology. Not all schools require each test, so check in advance in order to know which schools you should send your marks to.
- Taking the tests isn't cheap (\$130 US for the General if written in the US, or \$160 US if written in Canada) so it should not be taken lightly. There are numerous preparatory books that can help you study and practice writing timed tests. The more you practice, the more confident you will be when it comes to the real thing. Also keep in mind when and where you will write the test. Since they are offered on certain dates and in select cities, you may have to travel to another city to write one or both tests.
- Visit www.gre.org/ for more details

Transcripts

- Often students forget to do this until the last minute. University registrar offices and exam reporting facilities are extremely busy at the end of the fall term and often close for extended holidays, which can cause delays in the reporting of your scores or transcripts to the programs to which you are applying. Incomplete applications may cause delays in your application being considered by the faculty, and in some cases may cause your application to not be considered. Get these in!
- Original transcripts are usually required, although some schools will accept copies. Not only should you keep in mind the time it takes to order them from each undergraduate institution that you attended, but also take into consideration the shipping time required to reach each school that you're applying to.
- Transcripts also add to the total cost of the application, and range between \$4 and \$10 per copy. Some schools require more than one copy.

Statement of Interest

- Your application essays are one of the only ways that faculty have access to you. How you organize and communicate your experience and your interests are vital. Although these essays are often referred to as "personal statements," this does not mean you should reveal your most personal information. This is a professional application and the personal statement pertains to your experiences, goals, and future interests that have led you to apply to the program.

Scholarships/Funding (Research Proposal)

- Each school varies in how many internal scholarships they offer per year, and how much they are capable of giving. Most psychology departments also have teaching or research

assistantships available for graduate students. Full time graduate students may work up to 10-12 hours per week, and receive additional funds for this.

- For each program that you apply to you should determine the details regarding financial support (some programs automatically consider you for financial support whereas others may require further application).
- Since many times funding isn't guaranteed, it is highly recommend that students apply on their own for external sources of funding.
- Provincial and federal scholarships represent a second major source of support for graduate students. These scholarships typically range in value from \$12,000-\$18,000 per year. The scholarships you should apply for are dependent upon your field of interest and your grade average over the last two years of study. Students with "A" averages are strongly encouraged to apply for scholarships in the Fall of their fourth undergraduate year, in order to support their graduate studies the following year.
- In Canada, psychology students typically apply for scholarships from one of the federal tri-councils NSERC, SHHRC, CIHR, (depending on your area of research) and/or for provincially funded scholarships, such as OGS (Ontario only), or AHFMR (Alberta only).

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- A CV is an academic resume and is a detailed synopsis of your background and skills. It lists your publications, research and teaching experience, presentations, affiliations, awards, etc.
- A CV isn't always required as part of your application, but it's a good idea to start building one in your fourth year and keep it handy in case someone would like to see it. For example, sending a copy to your potential supervisor(s) when you initially contact them is recommended.
- Tips for preparing your CV can be found on some of the web links presented at the end of this presentation.

Slide 7 – Additional Things to Consider

Total Application Cost

- Applying to graduate school can be extremely costly. Expect to spend about \$100 in total per school (depending on each individual application fee). The best thing to do is to create a budget for your self. Decide which schools are priorities for you, and then apply to others if funds permit. Consider the cost of the following: sending transcripts (about \$8), sending your GRE scores (\$15 US), mailing your package (\$10-25), and the dreaded application fee (about \$75). This of course does not include travel costs to write the GRE, the fee for writing one or both GREs, printing all of the discussed parts of your application, and your time!

An Error Free Application

- Most schools have an application checklist that will help you make sure that you have completed all the necessary tasks. Once your application is received, graduate coordinators often send a notice that your application has been received and let you know whether the application is complete or is missing particular components. If you are

concerned about receipt of your application or its completeness, you may contact the graduate admissions officer of the department.

- Get a professor or current graduate student to look over your CV, Statement of Interest, and Scholarship application to make sure that there are no embarrassing errors that you have overlooked. Rewrite these as many times as necessary to ensure a polished and professional application.

Competition

- Since graduate admission is very selective, and competition for scholarship funds even more selective, only very strong students should consider applying to graduate school. Don't be afraid to apply to the most prestigious graduate schools of your choice.
- Overall, the competition is tough, and you have to have a very good undergraduate record to get in to a graduate program. Your record has to be especially good to be admitted into an applied area, such as clinical psychology. Thus, you should be realistic when considering graduate school. Assess very carefully what your qualifications are, and how they will compare to others who may apply.
- Each school varies in how many students apply per year, however there are roughly between 5-8 students accepted yearly. Most institutions provide this information on their program websites.

Slide 8 -- Number Ratio of Applications to Offers Made

This table is based on data acquired for the 2005-2006 academic year. We asked the Canadian Council of Departments of Psychology to forward our request for information on the number of applicants and the number of offers made. Eleven universities responded. As you can see in this table, the odds of getting into graduate school are about 15% overall. Experimental programs tend to have higher acceptance rates than do clinical programs (the number of offers in clinical programs is about 8%).

University	# Applied	# Offers	%
Western Ontario	216	42	19
Queens	172	29	17
Manitoba	140	21	15
McGill	NA	NA	5-8
Dalhousie	150	9-11	6-7
Memorial	38	12	32
New Brunswick	53	7	13
Ottawa	180	21	12
Laurier	167	26	16
Windsor	179	38	21
York	311	33	11

Slide 9 -- % of Offers by Area of Psychology

Area of Psychology	% Accepted
Neuroscience	28
Clinical	8
Developmental	20
Social/Personality	25
Industrial Organizational	22

Slide 10 – Additional Things to Consider (continued...)

The Waiting Game

- After all of your work, waiting can be the toughest part of the whole process. Faculty members usually begin reviewing graduate applications shortly after the admission deadline passes. The length of time for any faculty to review applications varies by school, but you will usually be notified by April 15th. For programs that conduct interviews, these are generally granted on an ongoing basis within the first month post-application deadline and beyond. Keep in mind that interviewers will certainly ask about the research you have been involved in; thus, you should prepare by organizing your ideas about the purposes and implications of this work. Interviews can continue for some time. If you have not heard back from a program, you may want to contact the admissions officer to ask the status of applications.
- If you have offers at other schools but have not heard from a program that still interests you, you may want to contact that program to inquire about the status of your application to their program and let them know that you have offers at other institutions.

Rejection!

- If you do not get into graduate school the first time, do not be discouraged. Instead, you may want to contact the institutions to which you applied and ask about ways in which you could improve your application (e.g., get more research experience, retake the Graduate Record Examination). Talk to your faculty advisors, and consider alternatives or applying again.
- Many university graduates take a year off once they've finished their degrees. Most work to save up money for various reasons, or travel to see the world that they haven't had a chance to see during their undergraduate career. However, if you are serious about attending graduate school and getting into one of your top choices, it is highly recommended to continue studying hard and gaining research experience in the area that you're intending to specialize in. This is a great opportunity to volunteer in a lab or around your community. You could also take extra classes, and/or prepare yourself better to retake the GRE, if you didn't do so well the first time. Whatever you decide to do, don't give up on graduate studies if it is what you truly want to do. Being a grad student is one of the most exciting and rewarding times of your life, and once you do get accepted, remember to enjoy every minute (and work hard, of course!).

Slide 11 -- The Demands of Graduate School

Masters Degree Requirements

The Masters degree generally consists of a course or two in statistics and research design, some courses outside of one's field of specialization, some courses within the student's field of specialization, and a thesis. The typical course load during graduate school is 3 courses per term. There is a lot more reading required in these courses than in undergraduate work. Generally, the evaluative components of these courses involve term papers and oral presentations (in some courses, however, there are also examinations). Some departments of psychology do not have a master's degree and instead students work, from the beginning, towards their doctoral degree (although the time to completion of the doctorate tends to be the same). In applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical psychology), students may also be required to fulfill practicum requirements (e.g., students in clinical psychology would participate in assessment, diagnosis and treatment in hospitals, counseling centres or community centres).

Doctoral Degree Requirements

The emphasis of the doctoral degree is on the training of scientists, with students in applied areas trained on the scientist-practitioner model. The workload for the doctoral degree includes graduate seminars and courses, comprehensive examinations in the student's area of specialization, and a dissertation based on a research project. In applied areas of psychology, formal course work is again complemented by practicum training. Students in Clinical Psychology also complete a full-year (1,600 hours) predoctoral clinical internship.

In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the masters and doctoral degrees, graduate students also participate in teaching (e.g., sometimes supervising honours students; running laboratory sections of a course, leading tutorial sessions or marking as teaching assistants), committee work (e.g., participating as a student representative on departmental committees or committees of scientific associations such as CPA) and additional research (conducting empirical investigations, publishing book chapters and articles with one's research supervisor, presenting at scholarly conferences).

Slide 12 -- What Different Career Options are Available after Graduate School?

In every area of psychology there are careers in research. As I will discuss in a few moments, there are an increasing number of faculty positions available in Canadian universities and throughout the world. In addition to research careers, you may wish to apply your subspecialty of psychology toward other career paths.

Clinical Psychology

- Clinical psychologists are trained to assess and treat emotional, mental and behavioural disorders (e.g., depression, schizophrenia, anxiety). Many options are available for private practice, hospital-based practice and community-based practice. Clinical psychologists also engage in consultation (e.g., with companies on health and well-being or organizational consultation; with lawyers on child-custody arrangements or fitness to stand trial), supervision of practicum students, supervision of research, etc.

- Canadian Statistics (cited in Hunsley & Lee, 2006): Private practice 33%, Outpatient clinic 19%, General hospital 12%, Psychiatric hospital 10%, University 8%.
- There are also sub-specialties within these areas (e.g., health psychologists, forensic psychologists, rehabilitation psychologists).

Counseling psychology

- Counseling psychologists also work to alleviate intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural problems. A primary difference between clinical and counselling psychology, however, has to do with the type of clientele one is likely to deal with in one's training and career -- clinical psychologists are primarily trained to deal with the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, major depression or anxiety disorders). Counseling psychologists, on the other hand, typically work with people who have less severe problems (e.g., everyday stresses, career planning, academic problems, couple- and family-related difficulties). These differences between clinical and counselling psychology are, however, fading (see Hunsley & Lee, 2006).

Social psychology

- Social psychologists study how one's mental life and behavioral responses are influenced by interactions with others (e.g., how impressions of others are formed, how prejudicial attitudes develop, and how group dynamics influence individual decision making). Most social psychologists end up in university positions, but there are other career options available as well (e.g., advertising agencies examining consumer preferences, businesses and government agencies examining the organizational structure of staff or management).

Developmental psychology

- Individuals trained in Developmental psychology study psychological development, focusing on when, how, and why people change with age. Developmental psychologists usually work in university settings.

Neuroscience

- Neuroscience: Two main training and career paths – neuropsychology and clinical neuropsychology. Academic neuropsychologists typically work in universities or hospitals where they study relationships between the brain and behaviour (in humans and animals). Clinical neuropsychologists also assess and treat people. They usually have a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and often work in hospitals where they help to diagnose problems in the brain and help people cope with and recover from insults to the brain.

Personality/Measurement

- Training in personality and/or measurement typically leads to a university-based career. These individuals often focus on developing methods for collecting and analyzing data (e.g., the development of personality, achievement or intelligence tests).

Cognition and Perception

- Cognition and Perception psychologists study perception, thinking and memory (e.g., answering questions such as how the mind represents reality, how people learn, language, reasoning, judgment, decision-making). The typical career path for these individuals involves academia.

Educational psychology

- Educational psychologists and school psychologists are either employed in university settings (conducting research related to teaching and learning) or in the school system working with school staff, students and parents (e.g., dealing with bullying, making recommendations to correct learning difficulties, providing interventions for behavioural problems).

Industrial/Organizational psychology

- Individuals who work as Industrial/Organizational psychologists study and develop ways to maximize job satisfaction and employee productivity. There are many career options in this sub-specialty including academia, work in government agencies, businesses and industry (e.g., personnel selection, strategic planning, coping with organizational change) or private consultation.
- There are many other types of specific careers in psychology as well (e.g., sports psychology, engineering psychology).

Slide 13 – What is the Job Market Like in Psychology?

For all areas of psychology, the job market looks very promising and will continue to be. There are more and more university positions opening up every year. Part of this trend has to do with the fact that a large number of professors are quickly approaching retirement age. U.S. data indicate that in 1987, 25% of full-time faculty were less than 40 years of age, 50% were between 40 and 54 years, and 25% were 55 years and older. A decade later, those numbers have shifted to 18%, 42% and 40%, respectively (Clark, 2004). Similar figures have been reported in our country. According to Statistics Canada, 31% of faculty members (35% in Psychology) are 55 years and older (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2006). The same trend appears to be the case in more applied areas of psychology.

The number of academic positions available now are considerably higher than they were before 2000. In addition, these numbers will likely rise dramatically within the next 10 years as more and more faculty hit retirement age.

The US Department of Labour Occupational Outlook Handbook states that psychology in the US has an above average employment horizon in the future and their projections go to 2114. Our anecdotal information through CPA leads us to the same conclusion. Factors include: the rate of employment in provinces that have high proportions of psychologists per population (Quebec and Alberta), the baby boom, the fact that demand is increasing, the growth of the Canadian population especially with immigration etc. In comparison to the US, there is less competition from psychiatry and other "therapists" in Canada than is the case in the US so job prospects should be even higher here.

A degree in psychology can also prepare you for a wide range of jobs outside of psychology.

The future looks very bright for careers in psychology!

Slide 14 – Helpful Resources

CPA Graduate Guide 2005-2006: Description of Graduate Psychology Programmes in Canadian Universities. <http://www.cpa.ca/students/cpagraduateguide/>

The [PsychWeb](#) site is a goldmine of a resource-useful in all sorts of ways; particularly handy is its extensive list of homepages of Psych Depts. www.psychwww.com/index.html

The American Psychological Association posts information about careers in psychology (for both academic and nonacademic careers), curriculum vitae dos and don'ts, interviewing tips, etc. <http://www.apa.org/science/careers.html>

“The Complete Guide to Graduate School Admission” by Patricia Keith-Spiegel is an excellent source of information about applying to graduate school

Dr. Margaret A. Lloyd's absolutely superb [Careers in Psychology](#) site includes a wealth of information about applying for graduate school. www.psychwww.com/careers/index.htm

Graduate School and Careers in Psychology. Rider University provides a great summary of psychology degrees and career opportunities. <http://www.rider.edu/suler/gradschl.html#edd>

College Grad.com has a nice overview of psychology degrees and career opportunities. <http://www.collegegrad.com/careers/proft71.shtml>

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