



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
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GRADUATE STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY
SUMMARY REPORT

Admissions, Applications, and Acceptances

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
EDUCATION DIRECTORATE
OFFICE OF GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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GRADUATE STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY SUMMARY REPORT: ADMISSIONS, APPLICATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCES

The 2019 Graduate Study in Psychology Summary Report reflects data collected from nearly 500 departments and programs offering master's and doctoral degrees in psychology and related training. Participating departments and programs are listed in the annual *Graduate Study in Psychology* book and online subscription database, *Graduate Study Online*, both of which were published in September 2018. The 2019 report features aggregate data from the 2016-2017 academic year that are summarized in the following areas: survey participation; admissions review, application fees, and applications and acceptances by level and subfield. The report shows meaningful, descriptive statistics by type of department (e.g., university-based, professional school) and/or institution type (e.g., public, not-for-profit), as reported by the department.

Tables and figures contained in this report reflect the self-reporting of participating departments. As such, this report draws analyses from the subset of those departments and may not be generalizable to the population of graduate departments with psychology offerings. Where indicated, some data are reported at the departmental level and others at the program level. Information on master's programs housed within doctoral departments or that are part of doctoral degrees (i.e., non-terminal master's degrees) is included in doctoral department data. Master's-level information in departments where the master's is the highest degree offered and some terminal-level master's program information are presented by that level of training. Tuition and financial data are reported in the local currency; U.S. dollars for departments in the United States and Canadian dollars for Canadian departments. Please direct any questions to Daniel Michalski, PhD dmichalski@apa.org or Caroline Cope, MA ccope@apa.org with the APA Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Education & Training.

The Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Education and Training within the APA Education Directorate produced this report. We are grateful for the support of Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD, chief executive officer of APA, and Catherine Grus, PhD, interim executive director of the APA Education Directorate. Most importantly, we recognize the department chairs, program directors, faculty, and staff who take the time each winter to participate in the Graduate Study in Psychology survey and assist prospective psychology students with selecting programs.

METHOD

Each January, the APA Education Directorate contacts chairs of graduate psychology departments regarding the upcoming annual Graduate Study in Psychology survey. In February, chairs (or their authorized department contacts) receive a secure URL to access and complete the survey. The 2019 online survey was hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform, unlike prior years in which a proprietary platform was used. Revisions to the survey instrument were minor, but the look and feel of the survey experience was noticeably different. Anticipating that the change in platform could result in lower participation, up to five reminders were sent to departments to encourage survey completion.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Of the 475 departments supplying partial information for the 2019 survey, 21% offered only master’s-level-training, 42% offered only doctoral, and 37% offered both master’s and doctoral programs. Table 1 shows the self-reported type of college, school, or institution in which the departments are housed. A substantial majority of departments (58%) were located within comprehensive university colleges of arts and sciences, and 18% were located within university colleges/schools of education. These departments represent 1,473 programs in 2019 as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 1.

DEPARTMENTAL PARTICIPATION IN 2019 GRADUATE STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY SURVEY BY DEPARTMENT LOCATION

Type of Department	N	%
University College of Arts and Sciences	276	58.1
University College/School of Education	85	17.9
Free-standing Professional School	40	8.2
University-based Professional School	25	5.3
Medical School/Health Sciences University	10	2.1
Other	39	8.2
Total	475	100.0

Notes. N=475. Values may total to greater than 100 percent due to rounding. Departments not identifying an institutional location were excluded from analysis.

TABLE 2.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IN 2019 GRADUATE STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY SURVEY BY DEPARTMENT LOCATION

Type of Department	N	%
University College of Arts and Sciences	897	60.9
University College/School of Education	245	16.6
Free-standing Professional School	147	10.0
University-based Professional School	69	4.7
Medical School/Health Sciences University	24	1.6
Other	91	6.2
Total	1,473	100.0

Notes. N=1,473. Departments not identifying an institutional location were excluded from analysis.

ADMISSIONS REVIEW

Departments were asked to rate the importance of 10 criteria in their application review process on a three-point scale (low-medium-high). Figure 1 summarizes the relative importance of each criterion by type of psychology department and across all departments. The filled-in area of the icons for each cell increases commensurately with the level of importance; thus, completely filled in circles represent the highest level of importance (e.g., most all departments reported undergraduate GPAs were of high importance) while fine-weight circle outlines correspond to the least level of aggregate importance for that criterion and department type.

Consistent with recent survey years, across all departments, Undergraduate GPA (GPA), recommendation letters (LETTERS), and statement of academic/career goals (GOALS) consistently scored as the most important admissions review criteria across all department locations. Importance of GREs scores (GRE) was consistently reported as of highly importance, except for freestanding professional schools, which typically housed programs that prepare graduates for professional/applied careers. Results indicate that in comparison to other departments, preparation in psychology (PSYCPREP) is notably important for those housed within university colleges of arts and sciences and both freestanding and university-based professional schools; perhaps reflecting training offerings within the scope of APA accreditation in which there is greater focus on training in discipline-specific knowledge and profession-wide competencies as part of the recently implemented [Standards of Accreditation \(SOA\)](#).

Across most department types, clinical experience is rated as less important, except at both university-based and freestanding professional schools. Work experience is considered more important at freestanding professional schools compared to all other types of departments. In addition to GPA, LETTERS, and GOALS, university colleges of arts and sciences place high importance on candidates' research experience as would be expected in departments conferring primarily research doctorates (PhD) and master's of science degrees. Respondents had the opportunity to provide text explanations for OTHER, and when supplied, responses predominantly related to fit with the program and/or faculty mentor.

FIGURE 1.

IMPORTANCE OF ADMISSIONS REVIEW CRITERIA BY DEPARTMENT LOCATION

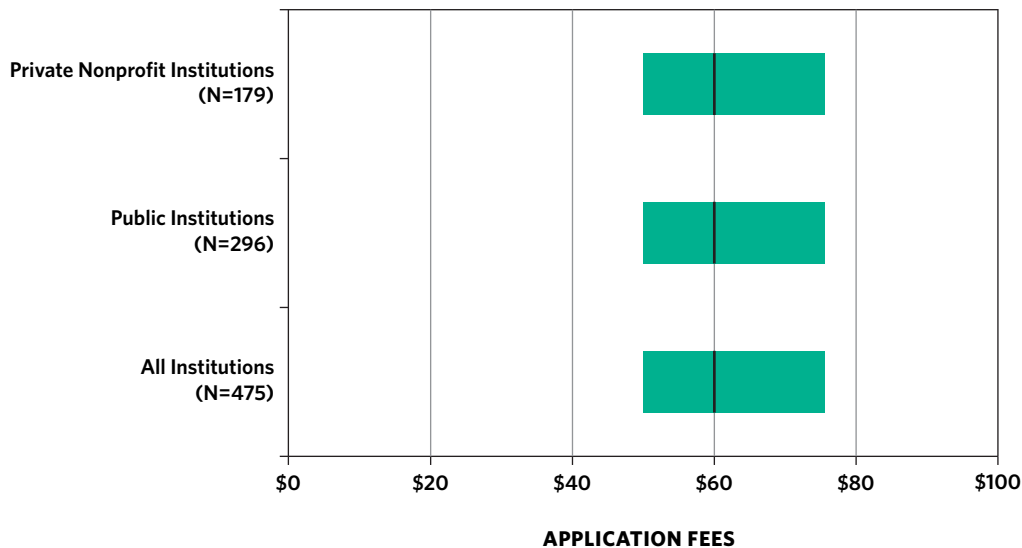
	GRE	RESEARCH	WORK	CLINIC	GPA	LETTERS	INTERVIEW	GOALS	PSYCPREP	OTHER
University Arts and Sciences	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	○
University College/ School of Education	●	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	○
Professional School; Freestanding	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
Professional School; Comprehensive University-based	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
Medical/Health Sciences School	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	○
Other (e.g., Business, Engineering)	●	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	○
All Departments	●	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	○

N=417. Notes. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 3-point scale: Low; Medium; and High. Responses missing across the entire question block were excluded from analysis. Missing responses to individual criteria were coded as having zero importance to admissions review for that department. Filled in area of circle increases commensurately with the importance of criteria based on aggregate mean values.

APPLICATION FEES

A total of 475 departments provided information about application fees required of prospective students by the institution. These fees ranged from \$0 to \$125 per application in 2018, with a mean of \$58 (SD= \$23.68) and a median of \$60. Figure 2 presents the interquartile ranges for application fees across all participating departments and split by public versus private and not-for-profit institutions.

FIGURE 2.
APPLICATION FEES FOR GRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY ADMISSIONS

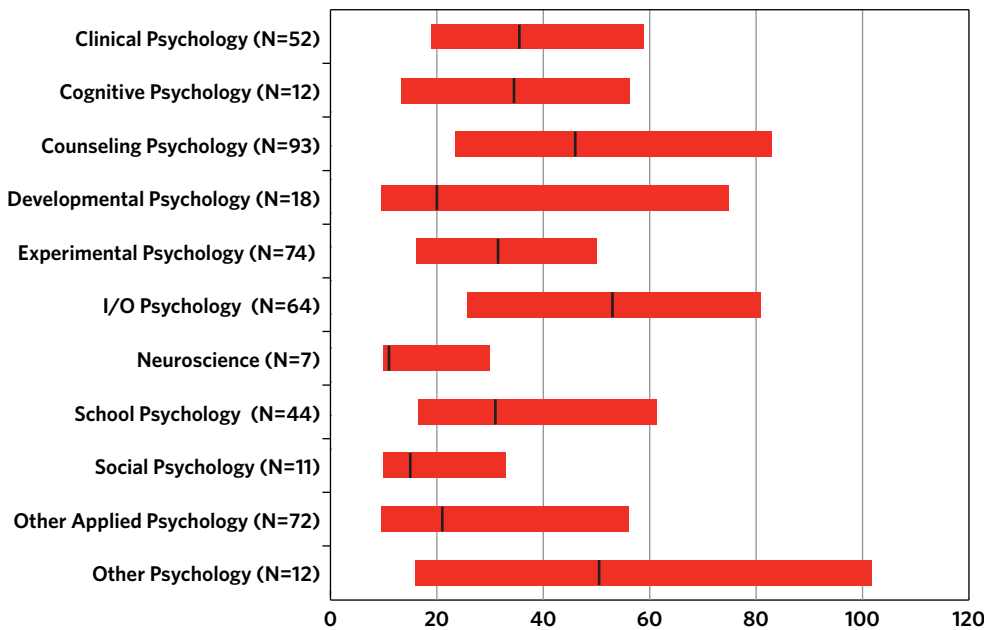


Notes. N=476. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. All: Mean= \$58 (SD= \$23.68); Public: Mean= \$61 (SD= \$21.94); Private: Mean= \$56 (SD= \$26.32).

APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES

Figure 3 presents the interquartile ranges of applications by broad psychology subfields; the appendix includes descriptions of these subfields. For nearly all programs offering terminal master’s degrees within these subfields, the median number of applications received ranged from 20 to 40. Programs offering terminal master’s degrees in counseling psychology, industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, and other psychology reported median applications near 50. Neuroscience and social psychology programs had medians of less than 20 applications, but program numbers for these subfields were low at seven and 11, respectively. Interquartile ranges varied, with the greatest fluctuations found in counseling psychology, developmental psychology, I/O psychology, and other psychology. Figure 4 shows acceptances and featured similar interquartile ranges, but with median acceptances falling between 5 and 20, except in counseling and other psychology, which had higher medians. Figure 5 plots the interquartile master’s-level acceptance rates (the ratio of acceptances to applications). Median acceptance rates for most subfields at the master’s level hovered between 35% and 65%, with social psychology showing the lowest median acceptance rate at 33%. The median acceptance rate for the other psychology subfields (78%) was highest in comparison, but encompassed one of the widest interquartile ranges extending from 54% to 99%.

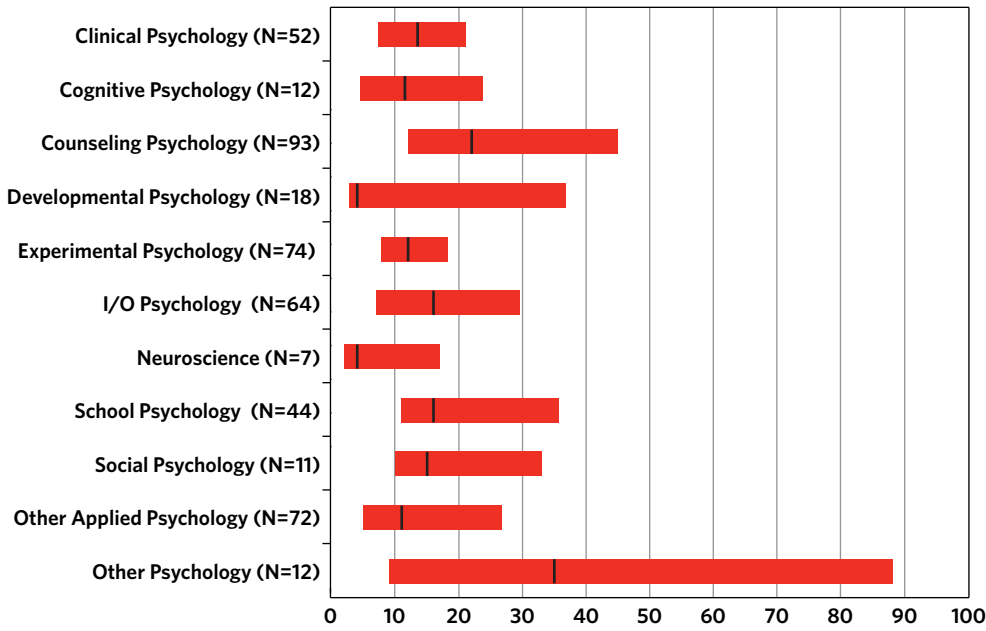
FIGURE 3.
MASTER’S APPLICATIONS BY BROAD SUBFIELD



Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

FIGURE 4.

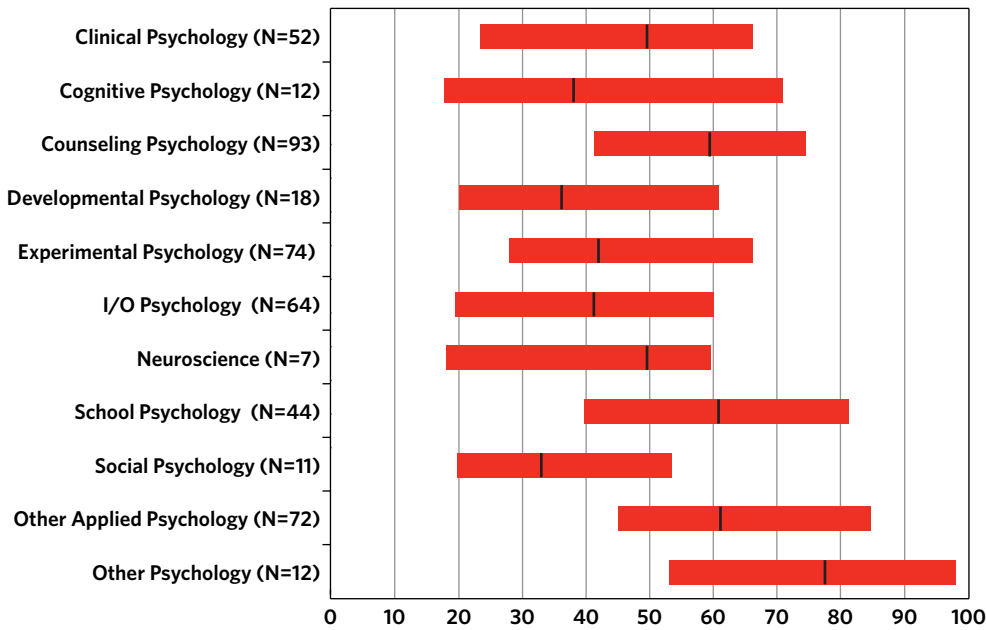
MASTER'S ACCEPTANCES BY BROAD SUBFIELD



Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

FIGURE 5.

MASTER'S ACCEPTANCE RATES BY BROAD SUBFIELD

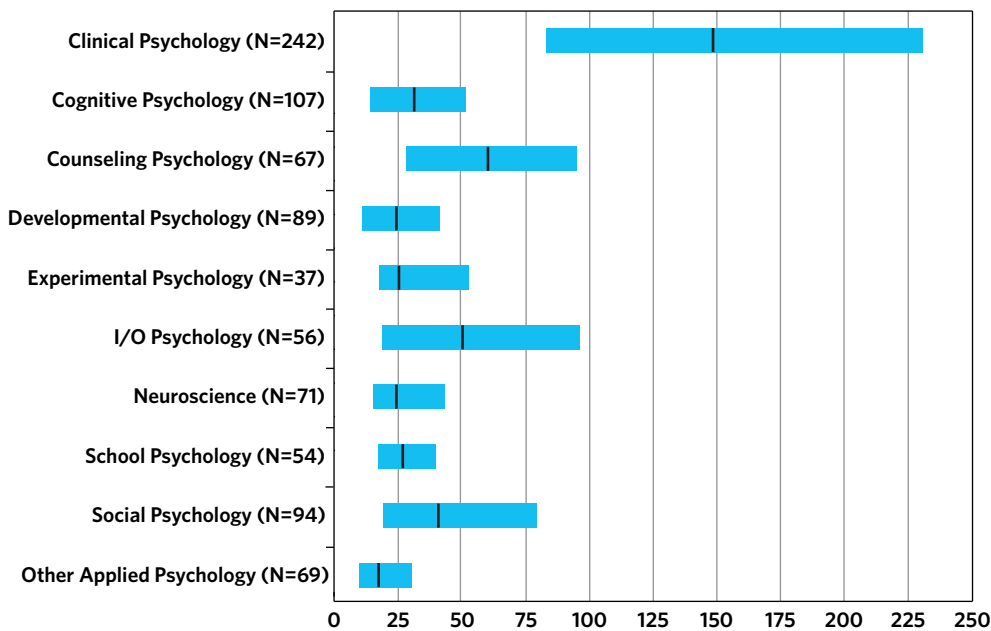


Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. Acceptance rates were not calculated for programs reporting neither application nor acceptance numbers.

Applications for doctoral programs are presented in Figure 6 by subfield. Clinical psychology had the largest number of applications across the greatest interquartile range with a median of 149 applications. Counseling psychology, I/O psychology, and social psychology represented the next largest median numbers of applications, respectively. Figure 7 shows the ranges of acceptances by subfield. As was also found in 2017 and 2018, clinical psychology had median acceptances of 11 and all other subfields had median acceptances below 10. As shown in Figure 8, acceptance rates for doctoral programs were noticeably lower in comparison to master’s programs, with the median rates for doctoral clinical psychology and social psychology both at 8%. School psychology and other applied psychology showed the highest median acceptance rates for doctoral programs at 30% and 24%, respectively.

FIGURE 6.

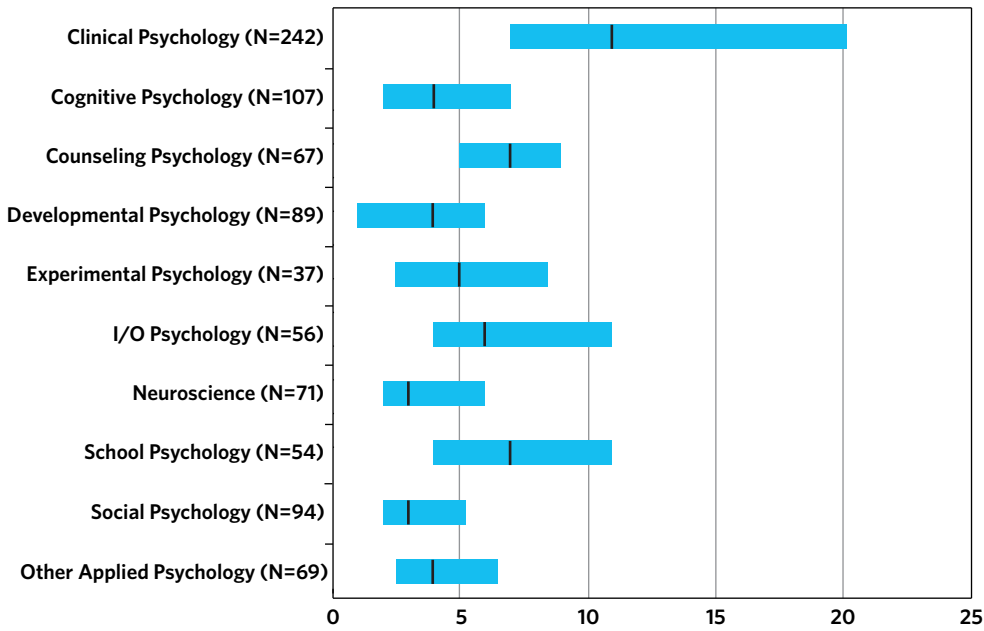
DOCTORAL APPLICATIONS BY BROAD SUBFIELD



Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. The 'Other Psychology' category, comprised of 5 programs, was excluded from analysis at the doctoral level. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

FIGURE 7.

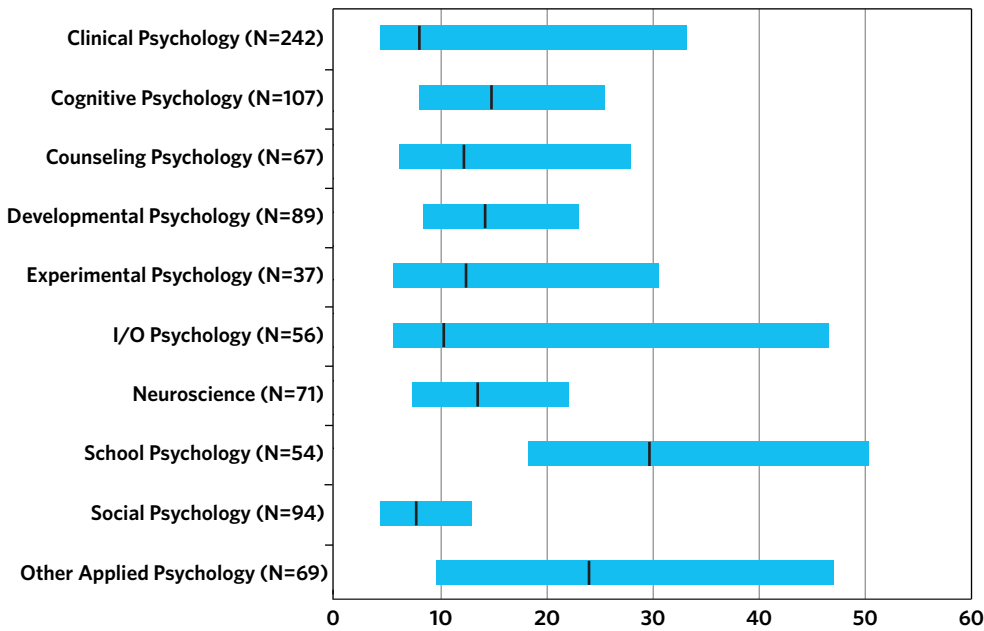
DOCTORAL ACCEPTANCES BY BROAD SUBFIELD



Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. The 'Other Psychology' category, comprised of 5 programs, was excluded from analysis at the doctoral level. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

FIGURE 8.

DOCTORAL ACCEPTANCE RATES BY BROAD SUBFIELD



Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. The 'Other Psychology' category, comprised of 5 programs, was excluded from analysis at the doctoral level. Acceptance rates were not calculated for programs reporting neither application nor acceptance numbers.

Table 3 summarizes total applications, acceptances, and acceptance rates by broad subfield for both master's- and doctoral-level programs. A total of 1,350 programs, comprised of 459 master's and 891 doctoral programs, provided complete responses related to applications and acceptances in order to be incorporated into this section.

Compared to doctoral programs, acceptance rates for master's programs were substantially higher for all subfields, yet the numbers of master's applications submitted overall is less than that of doctoral programs (approximately 24,000 master's applications compared to 70,000 doctoral applications). As in recent years, master's counseling psychology programs received the highest number of both applications and acceptances, with an acceptance rate of 57%. However, it is important to note that

many of the participating programs in this category identify as "counseling" programs, which are designed to train graduates for careers as licensed professional counselors in psychology-related health services. Acceptance rates were lowest for social psychology and I/O psychology at 39% for both.

At the doctoral level, clinical psychology showed the highest number of programs, applications, and acceptances, but with an overall acceptance rate of 13%. Acceptance rates for doctoral programs ranged between 7% and 14% across most subfields, but were noticeably higher for school psychology (31%) and other applied psychology (25%). Although nearly four out of five (78%) of applications to other psychology subfield programs were accepted, the low number of programs (5) limits meaningful interpretation.

TABLE 3.

SUM OF APPLICATIONS, ACCEPTANCES, AND OVERALL ACCEPTANCE RATES BY DEGREE LEVEL AND BROAD SUBFIELD

Subfield		Master's			Doctoral		
		Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance Rate	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance Rate
Clinical Psychology	N	52	52	40.0%	242	242	12.8%
	Sum	2,551	1,021		40,698	5,221	
Cognitive Psychology	N	12	12	51.4%	107	107	13.1%
	Sum	426	219		4,296	562	
Counseling Psychology	N	93	93	56.8%	67	67	10.8%
	Sum	6,105	3,468		4,898	530	
Developmental Psychology	N	18	18	51.0%	89	89	14.4%
	Sum	782	399		2,741	395	
Experimental Psychology	N	74	74	42.75%	37	37	10.5%
	Sum	3,418	1,458		2,167	228	
Industrial/Org. Psychology	N	64	64	38.7%	56	56	14.0%
	Sum	3,797	1,471		3,355	469	
Neuroscience	N	7	7	54.2%	71	71	11.6%
	Sum	144	78		2,422	280	
School Psychology	N	44	44	56.4%	54	54	30.9%
	Sum	1,988	1,121		1,726	533	
Social Psychology	N	11	11	38.6%	94	94	7.1%
	Sum	350	135		5,167	368	
Other Applied Psychology	N	72	72	51.6%	69	69	25.2%
	Sum	3,660	1,888		1,423	359	
Other Psychology	N	12	12	71.6%	5	5	77.6%
	Sum	892	639		818	635	
Total	N	459	459	49.3%	891	891	13.7%
	Sum	24,113	11,897		69,711	9,580	

Notes. N=Aggregate programs in subfield. Sum=Total number of applications and acceptances by subfield. Acceptance rate is calculated as the ratio of acceptances to applications within that category. Subfield categories have been collapsed (see Appendix Table II for categories).

APPENDIX

I. Application Review Criteria

Figure 1 of the report presents ten criteria used by departments for application reviews and plots those by level of importance by institutional location of the department. The table below defines each of the criterion. Survey respondents have the option to provide text clarification for the “Other” review criterion.

Review Criteria	Description
GRE	Scores from the GRE general and/or subject tests
Research	Prior research experience
Work	Employment/volunteer history and experience
Clinic	Prior clinical experience
GPA	Undergraduate GPA
Letters	Recommendation letters from faculty/supervisors
Interview	Candidate interview
Goals	Statement of students’ academic and career goals
Psycprep	Academic history in psychology and coursework
Other	Other criteria unique to department’s review

II. Subfields

Survey respondents were provided a complete list of subfields as shown in the left column of the table below. These categories were then collapsed into broader subfields as shown on the right for reporting purposes.

Subfield Response Options	Collapsed Subfield
Experimental Psychology (Applied)	Experimental Psychology
Experimental Psychology (General)	
Biological	Neuroscience
Comparative Psychology	
Neuropsychology	
Neuroscience	
Physiological	
Psychopharmacology	
Health*	
Personality	
Social	
Child and Adolescent	Developmental Psychology
Developmental	
Human Development and Family Studies	
Geropsychology	
Clinical	Clinical Psychology
Health*	
Primary Care	
Psychoanalytic	
Consulting	I/O Psychology
Industrial/Organizational	
Counseling Psychology	Counseling Psychology
Community Counseling	
Family Psychology	
Marriage and Family Therapy	
Mental Health Counseling	
Rehabilitation	
Cognitive Psychology	Cognitive Psychology
Human Factors	
Psycholinguistics	
School Psychology	School Psychology
School Counseling	
Applied Behavior Analysis	Other Applied Psychology
Community Psychology	
Educational Psychology	
Forensic Psychology	
Sport Psychology	
Quantitative Psychology	
Behavioral	
Environmental	Other Psychology
General Psychology	
Humanistic	
Multicultural	

*Depending on the nature of training, clinically-oriented Health programs are included in the collapsed Clinical subfield. Other Health programs are included in Social/Personality category.



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