

Frequently Asked Questions by Prospective Students

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APPLICATION PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS

What graduate programs does your department offer?

Our department offers two Master's programs. Our primary mission for both programs is to prepare students for doctoral study by offering quality instruction in the science of psychology and opportunities to conduct psychological research.

One program is the Clinical Psychology program. This program provides training consistent with the scientist-practitioner model and includes a foundation in abnormal psychology, psychotherapy, and assessment. Students complete a 240-hour clinical and/or research internship during their second year, and they are strongly encouraged to complete a thesis or other independent research project.

The other program is the Cognitive and Social Processes program. This program provides extensive training in cognitive psychology, social psychology, statistics, and research methods. Students are strongly encouraged to complete a thesis or other independent research project.

How many students are accepted to the Master's programs each year?

In 2016, we anticipate accepting 8 students in the Clinical program and 8 students in the Cognitive and Social Processes program.

How do I apply to the program?

This link to our department's graduate application process will provide you with all of the information you will need for applying. You should refer to it throughout the application process: "How to Apply" link--

<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/psychology/academicprograms/mastersdeg/howapply>

First, you will need apply to Ball State University's Graduate School

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/gradschool/applynow>).

The Graduate School will guide you through its application process, and this is where you will pay your application fee. On their forms, please **indicate carefully** which program you are applying to; there are other programs at Ball State with similar names.

Second, you will need to submit your academic transcripts to the Graduate School. This link provides information about how to do this

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/gradschool/admissions/submittintra>

[nscripts](#)).

Third, you will need to apply to the Department of Psychological Science.

To apply to the program, you will need to:

- Have three recommendation letters submitted by professors or supervisors who can comment on your qualifications for graduate study in psychology and evaluate you on a recommendation form. You will need to indicate if you have chosen to waive your right to review your recommendation.
- Submit your responses to several essays relating to your skills, experiences, research interests, and reasons for applying to the program. Specific instructions on what goes into the personal statement are included in the online application.
- A curriculum vita outlining your education, honors and awards, research experience, work or internship experience that is related to psychology and other psychology-related experience.
- An official report sent by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of your Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (the psychology subject test is not required or considered).

When is your application deadline?

For Clinical applicants, the application deadline is February 1st. This deadline is firm—All materials must be received by this day. For Cognitive and Social Processes, the deadline is also February 1st; however, the Graduate Committee will continue to evaluate applications after February 1st until either five weeks before Fall classes start or until the maximum of 8 students for the program have been accepted (whichever comes first). For guaranteed consideration, you should plan to have submitted your application by February 1st.

What is the minimum GPA and GRE scores that I need in order to be admitted?

There are no minimum cutoffs. The Graduate Committee considers an applicant's entire record, and weaknesses in one area can be balanced out by strengths in other areas. Here are *average* successful applicant GRE scores: Quantitative, 149-151; Verbal, 156; Analytic Writing, 4.3-4.75. The *average* successful applicant overall GPA ranges from approximately 3.57-3.7. Remember, these scores are only averages—there are no minimum requirements. In addition, exceeding these averages does not guarantee admission into a program.

Does the Graduate School have a minimum GPA?

The graduate school has a GPA requirement of 2.75 for admission to the graduate school. Students can ask the department to help them get probationary admission, but it would be up to the department to decide if they want to, and even if they do the grad school might not support it. The way the department would decide is by looking at the student's departmental application materials. Also, usually, the department won't want to recommend probationary admission unless the applicant is just slightly below 2.75.

How do I find out when I can take the GRE, how much it costs, etc.?

Go to www.gre.org to find out when and where the test is offered, how much it costs, and how to prepare for it. Keep in mind that it usually takes four to six weeks for the testing service to mail your official scores to a university, so you must make sure to take the exam well before the application deadline. If you know what your scores are, it's helpful to report them when you send your application materials, but you won't be offered admission until your official score report has been received from the testing service.

What are the school and department codes to which GRE scores should be sent?

The GRE score code for Ball State is 1051. The department/program code for Clinical Psychology is 2001. For Cognitive and Social Processes, the code is 2002.

I'm not happy with my GRE scores. Should I take the exam again?

Maybe. Keep in mind that the testing service will report all of your scores from the past six years, no matter how many times you've taken the exam. It's not uncommon for students to take the GRE twice, but you probably don't want to take it more than twice. Also, it's wise to consider whether you can realistically expect to score higher if you retake the exam. If you were ill when you took it initially, or if you have more time to prepare now than you did in the past, then you may very well improve your scores. But if you studied reasonably hard the first time and nothing about your situation has really changed, you'll probably score about the same if you try again.

I want to apply for the dual Master's program in Clinical or Cog/Soc and Sport and Exercise Psychology. How do I do it?

If you are applying for the dual-master's program in Cognitive & Social Processes and Sport & Exercise Psychology or in Clinical Psychology and Sport and Exercise Psychology, you will need to complete and submit two separate applications. One application will be for our program, and the other application will go to the Sport & Exercise Psych program. Don't forget that you will also still need to submit an application to the Graduate School—a total of three applications altogether.

Additionally, when you are completing the application materials for the Cognitive & Social Processes or Clinical Psychology program, you should explain in your personal statement what you are doing (applying for the dual Master's with Sport & Exercise Psych) and how you are qualified for both programs.

You should also check with the Sport & Exercise Psychology department to make sure they don't require you to do anything extra during the application process.

Can I apply to BOTH programs? How does that work?

You may apply to both programs, but you must enter only one program if accepted to both. Also, your essay statements should address your research interests and qualifications in both areas. In this situation, you do not have to apply to the Graduate School twice, and you only

need to fill out one of our departmental application forms (but indicate clearly that you want to apply to both programs). You only need to submit one set of transcripts to the Graduate School.

Would a recommendation from an employer be accepted?

The Graduate Committee will accept a letter from your employer. However, be aware that recommendations from individuals who are familiar with your academic, research and/or clinical experience are highly preferred. Recommendations from professors are most preferred because they are good sources of information regarding your academic potential. If your employer is familiar with your clinical experience, a letter from him or her may also be helpful. If an individual cannot commit on your academic abilities, it is not recommended that he or she serve as a recommender. Personal recommendations (e.g., friends, family, therapists, religious officials) are not acceptable.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

I'm an international student. How do I apply?

First, this link to our department's graduate application process, and it will provide you with all of the information you will need for applying. You should refer to it throughout the application process: "How to Apply" link--

<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/psychology/academicprograms/mastersdeg/howapply>

The first thing you will need to do is apply to Ball State University's Rinker Center for International Programs (<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/international>). This is where you will pay your application fee. When you apply, please **indicate carefully** which program you are applying to; there are other programs at Ball State with similar names. Follow this link for a list of Graduate Admission Requirements by the Rinker Center for International Programs (<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/international/requirements/graduate>). Here, you will also be prompted to submit your official undergraduate transcripts.

The next thing you will need to do is apply to the Department of Psychological Science. You can download the appropriate application packet from the "How to Apply" link (<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/psychology/academicprograms/mastersdeg/howapply>).

For the departmental application, you will need:

- Three recommendations from professors or supervisors who can write a letter of recommendation commenting on your qualifications for graduate study in psychology and evaluate you on a recommendation form. You will need to indicate if you have chosen to waive your right to review your recommendation.
- A series of essays that discuss your skills, experiences, interests, and reasons for applying to the program. Specific instructions on what goes into the personal statement are included in the digital application.
- A resume or vita outlining your education, honors and awards, research experience, work or internship experience that is related to psychology, and other psychology-related experience.
- An official report sent by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of your Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (the psychology subject test is not required or considered).

When should international students start applying to meet the application deadline?

We have the same deadline for all students. But because international students must apply through the Rinker Center for International Programs, more time might be required in ensuring that the application materials get here by the deadline. Once the Rinker Center has received your information, it will then send it to the Graduate School at Ball State, which then sends

them to us. So, you can see that International students should apply as early as possible to make sure their materials reach the department by the deadline (it can take weeks or months for Rinker Center to process them).

See the Rinker Center for International Programs' suggestions about when to apply to ensure that your application materials are processed on time

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/international/datesdeadlines>).

Can international students be admitted on a conditional basis?

Yes, Ball State allows students to be admitted on a conditional basis. To find out the specific requirements for this, you will need to contact someone in the Graduate School

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CollegesandDepartments/GradSchool.aspx/>) or the Rinker Center (<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/rinker/contactus>).

While international students may apply for conditional admission to the department, it is generally not common for the department to invite students to the department on the basis of conditional admission. This is simply because we receive many applications from qualified applicants each year, the majority of whom would be offered regular admission. It is not impossible for a student to be admitted conditionally to the program, but it is not common due to the volume of regular admission applications we receive. Also, keep in mind that a limited number of students (only 8) may be admitted to each program each year.

You can look at the information at the Rinker Center on conditional admission at this link

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/international/conditional-admission>).

What do I need to know about TOEFL scores?

The Rinker Center for International Programs can answer questions about TOEFL scores; our department does not make determinations about TOEFL scores.

See Requirement #5 on this link

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/international/requirements/graduate>) at the Rinker Center. If you still have questions, you can contact the Rinker Center directly by finding their contact information on the following link

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/rinker/contactus>).

ASSISTANTSHIPS/FUNDING

Can I get an assistantship? How do they work?

You can apply for a departmental assistantship by checking the box indicating that you want to apply for “Admission and assistantship” on the departmental application. All applicants are ranked by the Graduate Committee as part of the admissions process. The top-ranked applicants are offered assistantships.

If you get a departmental assistantship, will be assigned either to work with one professor for 20 hours/week or with two professors for 10 hours/week for each one. Graduate assistant/professor assignments are not made until late summer, so you won't know right away who you will work with or what your duties will be. The tasks you will do for an assistantship varies dependent upon the professor. Sometimes professors will have you assist in research in their labs, and sometimes they will have you assist them in their classes.

You can see this link

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/gradschool/employmentandgraduateassistantships>) for more information on employment and graduate assistantships from the Graduate School.

If I get an assistantship, can I request a specific faculty member to work for?

No, but you can contact the professor and ask him/her to request you.

How much is the assistantship stipend, and how much will I still be responsible for paying with an assistantship?

In return for working, you will get paid a stipend of around \$9,200 for the academic year (August-May), divided up and distributed bi-weekly like a regular paycheck. You also get a tuition remission, excluding “dedicated” fees of around \$1,500 per semester (about \$3,000 per year). All assistants get this tuition remission, regardless of whether they are in-state or out-of-state residents. Student loans or other payment arrangements should be made to pay this remainder to the university.

See this link

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/psychology/academicprograms/scholarships/payoptions>) for more detailed information on options for paying for graduate study.

How much is tuition without an assistantship?

For graduate students as of 2014-2015, tuition costs for the academic year (for 9 credit hours per semester) for IN-STATE Indiana residents was about \$8,100. For out-of-state residents, tuition costs for the academic year (for 9 credit hours per semester) was about \$20,000.

See this link (<http://cms.bsu.edu/admissions/tuitionandfees/graduate>) for more detailed information on tuition and fees for graduate students.

I didn't get offered a departmental assistantship. What do I do?

If you don't get a departmental assistantship, there is a good chance that you can get one through another office on campus. Although we can offer departmental assistantships to about half of our students, historically most students in our program get an assistantship somewhere on campus.

See this link

<http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/careercenter/studentemployment/graduateassistantships>) for some postings of currently available graduate assistantships on campus.

You can also see this link

<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/psychology/academicprograms/scholarships/payoptions>) for more detailed information on options for paying for graduate study.

COURSES/COURSE OFFERINGS

In what sequence are the classes required?

We have some recommendations regarding our course sequence, which I will include below, but there is some flexibility in the order in which you take them. We do recommend that you take intermediate statistics and research methods your first year, as they are prerequisites to completing a thesis.

For Cognitive & Social Processes:

I am now listing the course requirements and a recommended course sequence below; students generally take 9 – 12 credits per semester, although they are allowed to take up to 15 credits:

Psychology Core Requirements:

EDPS 642: Intermediate Statistics, 3 credits, (generally taken fall of your first year, but due to a faculty leave of absence, this upcoming academic year it will be spring)

PSYS 668: Physiological Psychology, 3 credits, fall first year

PSYS 680: Research Methods in Psychology, 3 credits, spring first year

PSYS 697: Diversity Issues in Psychological Research, 3 credits, fall second year

Cog/Social Course Requirements:

PSYS 616: Perception and Cognition, 3 credits, fall first year

PSYS 623: Theories of Personality, 3 credits, fall first or second year

SOPS 610: Social Psychology (can be waived if you had Social as an undergraduate), 3 credits, fall first year

PSYS 617: Memory Processes and Applications (offered alternatively with 618 every other year), 3 credits, spring first or second year

PSYS 618: Advanced Cognitive Processes (See above)

Two of the following: SOPS 615: Social Cognition; SOPS 620: Group Dynamics; SOPS 640: Social Psychology of Attitudes; SOPS 660 Contemporary Social Psychology; PSYS 695: Seminar in Psychology (sometimes special seminars covering a social psychology topic are offered in our department), 6 credits overall, taken variously

Electives – 9 credits (See “pre-approved electives” in the Graduate Student guidebook or submit elective courses to be approved)

Total hours = 42 minimum

For Clinical:

Psychology Core Requirements:

PSYS 616: Perception & Cognition OR PSYS 623: Theories of Personality, 3 credits, Fall second year

EDPS 642: Intermediate Statistics, 3 credits, Fall first year
PSYS 668: Physiological Psychology, 3 credits, Fall first year
PSYS 696: Diversity Issues in Clinical Psychology, 3 credits, Spring first year

Electives (See “pre-approved electives” in the Graduate Student guidebook or submit elective courses to be approved) – 12 credits total, varies

Clinical Course Requirements:

PSYS 632: Abnormal Psychology, 3 credits, Fall first year
PSYS 640: Assessment I, 3 credits, Fall first year
PSYS 644: Assessment II, 3 credits, Spring second year
PSYS 652: Psychotherapy I, 3 credits, Spring first year
PSYS 685: Psychotherapy II, 3 credits, Fall second year
PSYS 685: Clinical Internship, 6 credits, Fall and Spring second year

Total hours = 48 minimum

What is considered a full academic load in graduate school?

At Ball State, a full academic load during the Fall and Spring semesters for graduate students is 9-15 credit hours. A full-time graduate student, for financial aid purposes, must be registered for 9 credit hours during a Fall/Spring semester. A full-time student, as defined by the Bursar’s Office for billing purposes, must be registered for 12 credit hours.

Graduate students may register for a maximum of 15 credit hours per Fall/Spring semester and 12 hours during an entire summer (though it is not required that you take credits during the Summer).

Students with assistantships must take at least 9 credit hours each Fall/Spring semester; sometimes, for graduate assistants in other offices on campus, the minimum credit hours required is 6. There is no minimum requirement for students who are not graduate assistants.

Is the first year more class-heavy and the second year more focused on the Master's Thesis?

We generally do recommend that you take more courses your first year so that you can have room for taking thesis credits your second year if you plan on completing a thesis.

Can I take classes as a part-time student? Can I take classes while working full-time?

Yes, but you should be aware that most classes are only offered once a year on certain days and times. Most classes are offered only during the day; therefore, your work schedule must be somewhat flexible. If you enter the Clinical program, be aware that many classes are prerequisites for other classes. This means it could take you twice as long as the usual two years to complete the program if you are a part-time student.

Can I take classes online?

Currently, there are no distance learning courses for either the Clinical or Cognitive and Social Processes program.

Does your program have night classes?

Almost all of the classes for both programs are offered during the day time, Monday through Friday.

PROFESSORS/LABS

Is a specific way to ask if professors are taking on students or apply for research labs for the coming year?

The absolute best way to determine if a professor will work with you is to e-mail them. You can let them know that you were accepted to our program and offered an assistantship, a little bit about your interests, and ask if they would have an opening in their lab in the fall for you to work with them on research. You are also always welcome to arrange a visit if you would like, so that you could meet with them in person.

Can I work in more than one lab?

Yes. You might be a part of someone's lab through your assistantship, but you are always welcome to volunteer to work in other professors' labs for additional research experience.

I'm a Clinical/Cognitive and Social Processes student. Can I work with a faculty member who doesn't specialize in my program's field? (For example, a Cognitive and Social Processes student working in a lab of a Clinical faculty member).

The faculty members in our department are well-rounded in their research and research interests. You can work with whomever is a good fit for your research interests, as long as the faculty member is willing and able to work with you.

What do professors expect of graduate students who work in their lab?

Each professor integrates students into their lab in different ways. This is something you should ask of the professors with whom you are considering working. Most professors enjoy collaborating with students in a variety of ways, from asking them to assist in data collection to eventually being more involved in the conceptual elements of projects. If you are part of a professor's lab based on your assistantship, you may also occasionally be asked to assist your supervising professor in the classroom with such things as simple grading, student study sessions, attendance, etc.

Do professors publish regularly? With graduate students?

Our tenured or tenure-track professors are respected members of their academic fields and publish consistently. Many of our professors do publish with the students who work with them in a substantial project in their lab. Particularly, although not exclusively, professors will attempt to assist students in publishing their thesis work. Please be aware, however, that unless you are able to start work on a substantial research project early in their first year in the program, it is necessarily difficult for them to publish before they graduate due to the general scope of publishable work from start to finish.

Do you have research equipment available for graduate students?

There is certain equipment available. Professors usually allow students who need lab space to share their labs for collecting thesis data, including using their computer stations. There are not dedicated laptops assigned to students, who must provide their own laptops. We do have 4

iWorx systems for collecting psychophysiological data (heart rate, skin conductance, etc.), and we have a fully-functional electroencephalography/event-related potentials (EEG/ERP) lab.

Is there a dedicated time I meet with my advisor each week?

Each professor handles this differently. Academic advisors try to meet with you as needed and formally once or twice an academic year. However, once you have a thesis advisor, you may request of them that you meet weekly. For assistantships, some professors have weekly lab meetings where they will check in with you, as well.

THESIS/RESEARCH

When does the Master's Thesis process begin, and is it required?

Although a thesis, particularly, is not required in our program, it is highly recommended that you complete one, particularly if you plan on applying to doctoral programs. If not a thesis, we suggest you complete an independent research project.

Do I have to complete my thesis with my assistantship supervisor(s)?

No, you do not have to complete your thesis with your assistantship supervisor(s). You should choose a supervisor whom you believe you would work well with and whose research interests are most similar to your own.

POST-GRADUATION

Do most students who graduate go directly into doctoral programs? If so, how many usually do?

Students do not always go directly into a doctoral program upon completing their MA, although many students do. Around 40% of our students go directly into a PhD program upon graduation (please note that not all students decide to go on to a doctoral program; of students who apply, this percentage increases to approximately 75%). Of those who apply and do not get directly into a program upon graduating, the majority of students are admitted the following year. This often has to do with the time it takes for work done in the program to make its way through the publication process.

Where do graduates of your programs go after graduating?

About half of the graduates in the Clinical program choose to go on to doctoral programs in clinical or counseling Psychology, and the other half obtain jobs in a mental health setting. The Cognitive and Social Processes program is relatively new. So far, graduates of this program have gone on to doctoral programs in cognitive, social, or experimental psychology. We anticipate that some future graduates will obtain jobs as researchers or consultants in business or industry.

MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER

What's the difference between counseling psychology and clinical psychology? What's the difference between the Clinical and Counseling programs at Ball State?

The distinction between Clinical and Counseling Psychology is not always clear-cut. Traditionally, clinical psychologists treated and studied people with severe mental illness, whereas counseling psychologists helped people with common life troubles. But in recent decades, this distinction has become blurred.

It's important to understand the distinction between the Clinical Psychology graduate program and Counseling Psychology Master's programs at Ball State. These two separate programs are housed in entirely different departments at the university and are geared toward different outcomes.

The Psychological Science department's Clinical Psychology Master's program is research-focused. The primary goal of the Clinical program is to prepare students to enter doctoral programs. Our Clinical program is a good fit for students who eventually want to teach and conduct research in academia.

In contrast, the Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services department's Counseling Psychology Master's program is more applied in focus. This program would be a better fit for students who want to be a licensed therapist or counselor. The Counseling Psychology program

has “Clinical Mental Health Counseling Track” that can be pursued, and this track prepares you to be a licensed mental health counselor.

If you are interested in pursuing licensure and applied clinical counseling, you should contact the Department of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services, as they will be able to give you more information about their program

(<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/teachers/departments/counselingpsych>).

Is the primary goal of the faculty to help students get into doctoral programs?

The primary goal of our program is that of doctoral preparation. Therefore, we will assist and encourage you to gain as much research experience as possible while in the program, although that may not all occur with one specific advisor.

What is the student to professor ratio for your programs?

Each year, we accept no more than 8 students to each of our graduate programs. At any time, we may have a maximum of 32 students in our program (16 Clinical and 16 Cognitive and Social Processes students in total). We currently have 23 academic faculty and staff members (including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and instructors) in our department.

I didn't major in psychology as an undergraduate. Can I still apply to one of your programs?

Students with minimal or no background in psychology will not necessarily be disadvantaged when applying to our programs, but if admitted, they may need to take extra courses. These courses would be determined in consultation with the Director(s) of Graduate Studies. In particular, students without an undergraduate background in psychology might need to take an introductory graduate-level statistics class if they have never taken a statistics class, and they would need to take an introductory research methods class to prepare them for the required research methods class.

I have already taken some graduate classes. Will they transfer to your program if I get accepted?

Possibly. If admitted to our program, your transcript will be examined to see if any of the classes you took can be used to satisfy the degree requirements. You might also need to provide syllabi for the classes in question. The decision will be made by the Director(s) of the Graduate program, along with professors who teach the classes you want to have waived.

Can I transfer to your program from my current graduate program?

Regarding the transfer of credits, the Ball State Graduate School has several rules. Here are some of them.

- The “research requirement” must be done at Ball State rather than transferred. That means either a thesis or the statistics/research methods course sequence (two courses).
- The courses to be transferred must have been taken within the last 6 years, and you must have a B or higher in them. Classes you took with a pass/fail option won't count.
- You can transfer a maximum of 15 credit hours.

Aside from the Graduate School rules, you would also have to satisfy the department of Psychological Science requirements. You would have to send the Graduate Director(s) a detailed course description or syllabus of each course you want to transfer. This would then be looked at and faculty who teach similar courses would be consulted. Finally, the Graduate Director(s) would make a decision regarding course equivalency.