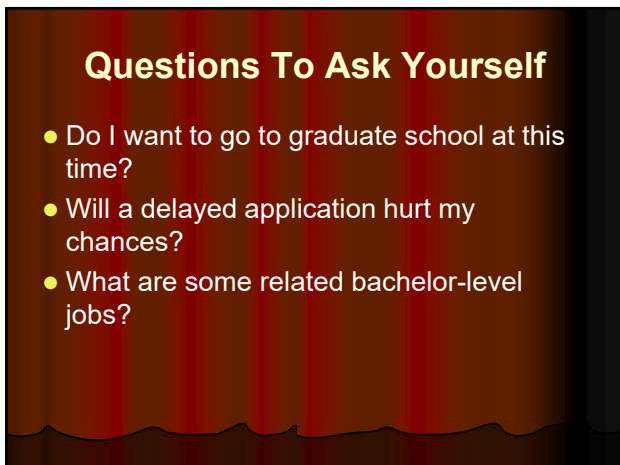


1



2



3

Related Bachelor-Level Jobs

- Program specialist/direct treatment worker
- Alcohol abuse counselor
- Teacher/Teacher's Aide
- Clinical intake worker
- Youth and family counselor
- Social service worker
- Behavioral specialist
- House parent
- Counselor in mental health setting
- Child-care worker
- Camp director
- Foster parent
- Volunteer

4

College Degrees Leading to Specific Entry-Level Positions

- Teacher Education
- Journalism
- Accounting
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Nursing

5

College Degrees NOT Leading to Specific Entry Positions

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Art | ● Interdisciplinary Studies |
| ● Agriculture | ● Mathematics |
| ● Allied Health/Human | ● Modern Languages |
| ● Biology | ● Music |
| ● Chemistry | ● Philosophy & Religion |
| ● Communication | ● Physical Education |
| ● English | ● Psychology |
| ● Folk Studies | ● Physics/Astronomy |
| ● Geography/Geology | ● Public Health |
| ● Government | ● Sociology |
| ● History | ● Theatre & Dance |
| ● Industrial Technology | |

6

Questions To Ask Yourself

- In what types of programs am I interested?
- Are my credentials strong enough for graduate school?
 - GRE scores
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Undergraduate GPA
 - Research experiences
 - Other

7

Graduate School

- Recent (2005) survey:
 - (1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high)
 - Master's Programs:
 - Letters of Recommendation: 2.74
 - Research Experience: 2.04
 - Work Experience: 1.91
 - Clinically-Related Public Service: 1.94
 - Extracurricular Activity: 1.46
 - Interview: 2.30
 - Personal Statement: 2.63
 - GRE Scores: 2.36
 - GPA: 2.75

8

Graduate School

- Recent (2005) survey:
 - (1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high)
 - Doctoral Programs:
 - Letters of Recommendation: 2.82
 - Research Experience: 2.54
 - Work Experience: 1.87
 - Clinically-Related Public Service: 1.91
 - Extracurricular Activity: 1.41
 - Interview: 2.62
 - Personal Statement: 2.81
 - GRE Scores: 2.50
 - GPA: 2.74

9

Questions

- How do I choose a program?
 - Know thyself
 - Examine programs
 - Where do you want to work when you're done?

10

Questions

- Should I get a Masters degree before going for the doctoral degree?
 - Maybe
 - Maybe not
- How do I identify "good" graduate programs?

11

Questions

- How do I get initial information about graduate school programs?
 - *Graduate Study in Psychology*
 - Internet/Program Websites
 - Public Disclosure Data
 - Ask faculty
- How many potential programs should I apply to?

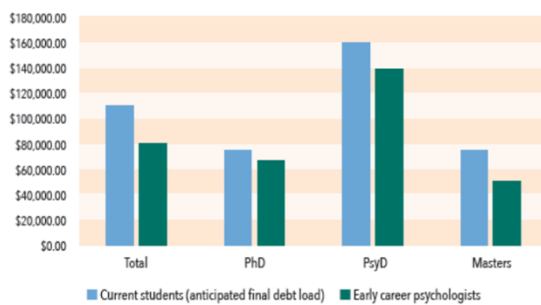
12

Questions

- What will it cost to get my degree?
 - Graduate stipends
 - Student Loans
 - Student Debt
 - Ph.D. v. Psy.D.
 - Financial aid (assistantships)

13

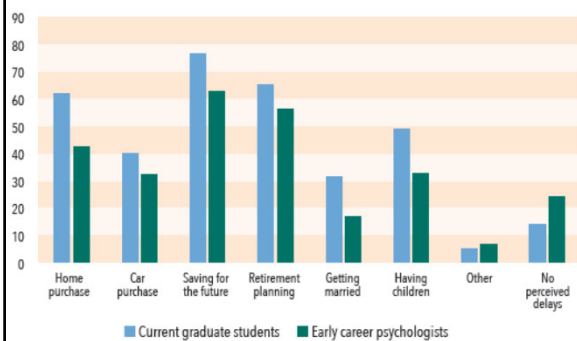
Median debt loads for current graduate students and early career psychologists, 2014



Doran, J. M., Kraha, A., Marks, L. R., Arnsen, E. J., & El-Ghoroury, N. H. (2016). Graduate debt in psychology: A quantitative analysis. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 10(1), 3-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tepp0000112>

14

Percentage of students and early career psychologists who reported life delays due to educational debt



Doran, J. M., Kraha, A., Marks, L. R., Arnsen, E. J., & El-Ghoroury, N. H. (2016). Graduate debt in psychology: A quantitative analysis. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 10(1), 3-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tepp0000112>

15

Important Application Materials

- The Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement
- Vita

16

GRE

- General Test vs. Subject Test
- General Test
 - Verbal, Quantitative, Analytical Writing
 - Ranges from 130 to 170 in increments of 1 for Verbal and Quantitative
 - Ranges from 0 to 6 in increments of 0.5 for Analytical Writing
 - "Average" score = 150 for Verbal and 152 for Quantitative
 - Better to know percentile of the score
 - Changes almost yearly

17

GRE, 2

- How schools use it.
 - Highest combination of two scores
 - Highest Verbal plus Highest Quantitative
 - Average all scores
- Scores are good for 5 years
- In September 2023, introduced "short" test
 - Only 2 hours...

18

Letters of Recommendation

- Getting letters of recommendation
 - Full name
 - Vita
 - Personal Statement
 - Major/minor
 - GPA in major & overall
 - Description of research experiences
 - List of honor societies/clubs (note officer role)
 - Brief discussion of jobs or volunteer work
 - Outline of professional goals and plans
 - Any other info you want emphasized

19

Dos and Don'ts of Letters of Recommendation

- Don't
 - Be a refrigerator light bulb
 - Blame poor performance on others
 - Publicly manifest poor time management skills
 - Exhibit lethal student behaviors
 - Ask inappropriate people for letters
 - Demand that faculty will write your letters

20

Dos and Don'ts of Letters of Recommendation

- Do
 - Start early
 - Ask the right people
 - Choose your author strategically
 - Choose someone who knows you well, not who is well-known
 - Tailor the letter to the job/school
 - Ask if the person can write a good letter

21

Dos and Don'ts of Letters of Recommendation

- Do
 - Waive your right
 - Provide materials to improve the tone and depth of your letter
 - Provide your story
 - Complete each step in person
 - Complete the annoying stuff for faculty
 - Prepare for electronic submission
 - Give plenty of time

22

Dos and Don'ts of Letters of Recommendation

- Do
 - Double check everything
 - THANK YOUR LETTER WRITERS
 - Practice self-empathy

23

Dos and Don'ts of Letters of Recommendation

- Complete the annoying information on the recommendation forms
- Prepare for electronic submission
- Practice self-empathy
- Double check everything

24

Personal Statement

- The Personal Statement
 - Everybody's worst nightmare
 - Everybody (usually) needs one

25

Personal Statement

- Format:
 - Lead with who you are (WKU student) and what you want to do (work as a school psychologist with interests in...)
 - Discuss experiences you have had that prepare you for graduate school (2-3 paragraphs)
 - Research
 - Describe any research you have personally created in detail
 - Internships
 - Shadowing
 - Populations with which you have worked
 - Classes

26

Personal Statement

- Program strengths (1 paragraph)
 - Discuss what you like about the program and the program curriculum
 - Especially how the program helps you meet your goals
- Discuss how you are a fit with the program (1 paragraph)
 - Note how your experiences match with what the program wants
 - Especially note with whom you would like to work
 - Describe how their interests match with yours
- Concluding paragraph
 - Leave the reader with a good impression of you

27

Personal Statement

- Remember that people from other programs do not know WKU like you do
 - So, give full names of classes, not just course numbers
 - And provide details of what you did in the class and for the applied/research experience
- Read over your Personal Statement
- Let other people describe your personal characteristics

28

Hints & Suggestions

- Application process takes time!
- Get to know relevant faculty.
- Learn what the program is about.
- Learn about faculty interests.
- Demonstrate an interest in the program.
- 3 P's—persistent, polite, professional
- Acceptance decisions can be quirky. Don't take rejection personally.

29

“Kisses of Death” Appleby & Appleby (2006)

- 1) Damaging Personal Statements
 - Personal mental health
 - Excessive altruism
 - Excessive self-disclosure
 - Professionally inappropriate
- 2) Harmful letters of recommendation
 - Undesirable applicant characteristics
 - Inappropriate sources

30

**“Kisses of Death”
Appleby & Appleby (2006)**

3) Lack of program information

- Doesn't know program's focus
- Poor fit with the program

4) Poor writing skills

- Spelling & grammatical errors
- Poorly written application materials

5) Misfired attempts to impress
