

Graduate Training in Clinical Neuropsychology

A tip sheet provided by the Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (American Psychological Association - Division 40) in collaboration with the Association for Doctoral Training in Clinical Neuropsychology (ADECN) and Association of Neuropsychology Students in Training (ANST)



What is a Clinical Neuropsychologist?

As defined by the Houston Conference in 1997, "a clinical neuropsychologist is a professional psychologist trained in the science of brain-behavior relationships". Clinical neuropsychologists are trained to perform assessment, diagnosis, and treatment to individuals who have developmental or acquired conditions that affect the central nervous system. Activities of clinical neuropsychologists may include research, practice or some combination of the two in settings as varied as hospitals, academic institutions, independent practice, private industry, governmental agencies, military settings, professional sports franchises, schools, and forensic settings, among others.

What should I look for in a graduate program?

When looking for a graduate program:

- Is it APA- or CPA-accredited?
- Is there a specific neuropsychology track, specialty, or concentration that adheres to the Houston Guidelines?
- Are there courses and clinical and research opportunities relevant to your career goals?
- What is the program's internship placement track record? Do they place students in quality neuropsychology internships?
- Is funding available for students through teaching or research assistantships?
- Location, location, location! Can you see yourself living in the area for 5 years?

When looking at a program's faculty:

- Are there licensed clinical neuropsychologists on faculty?
- Do their ongoing research projects and clinical work complement your interests and training goals?
- Do they have active research grants?
- Are there other faculty members with whom you could also see yourself collaborating?

Once you've found a potential program, DO send an email BUT remember:

- Triple check to make sure that you are addressing the correct person.
- Do your homework: make sure that you are asking informed questions that are not readily available on the website.
- Attach your curriculum vitae.

What qualities make a good graduate applicant?

Every applicant has strengths and weaknesses, and it is rare for someone to meet every mark, but here is a list of lofty targets for which to aim:

- **High Numbers:** general and psychology-specific GPA (>3.5) and GREs (> 70th percentile).
- **Applied Experience:** ≥1 yr *post-baccalaureate* experience in a relevant setting that matches the program's research and/or clinic emphasis
- **Strong Recommendations:** three glowing letters, with ≥1 from a clinical neuropsychologist who is quite familiar with the applicant and the program.
- **Presentations and Publications:** authorship on scholarly presentations and peer-reviewed publications, with substantive contributions (e.g., lead author) to a few.
- **Good Match:** short- and long-term interests and career goals that complement the training aims of the program (and primary mentor, if applicable).
- **Personal Characteristics:** develop qualities such as being mature, personable, a strong work ethic, and sense of professional responsibility.

What happens if I don't get in?

Reapply! It is not uncommon for most successful applicants to have applied more than once. Re-evaluate your application strategy: did you apply to all top-tier programs rather than a range? Get advice on how to become a stronger applicant, and how to revise your application strategy.

Places to find graduate programs with training in neuropsychology:

Society for Clinical Neuropsychology, APA Division 40
<https://www.scn40.org/trainee.html>

Neuropsychology Central
www.neuropsychologycentral.com
 (click - links, training, individual training program pages)

Association for Doctoral Education in Clinical Neuropsychology
www.adecnonline.org

Applying to graduate school in clinical psychology:

APA Graduate and Postdoctoral Education Resources
www.apa.org/education/grad

Getting In: A Step-by-Step Plan for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology (2nd Ed.)
 American Psychological Association

Graduate Study in Psychology (2014)
 American Psychological Association

Neuropsychology Resources:

Society for Clinical Neuropsychology, APA Division 40
www.scn40.org

Association of Neuropsychology Students in Training (ANST),
www.div40-anst.com

The Houston Guidelines
www.div40-anst.com/downloadable-materials.html

Suggested Application Timeline

Now!	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Participate in research, get faculty advice on grad school	Decide on potential programs	Take GRE	Organize all application components	Contact specific faculty	Retake GRE if needed	Get feedback on essays & CV from faculty advisor	Refine statement and essays	Finalize materials	Applications due	Schedule interviews		
	Prepare personal statement			Request letters of rec							Practice interviews	