

Finding Fit When Transferring to Another Graduate Program

Students transfer from one graduate program to another for a variety of reasons, some beyond their control. APA created this document to equip students with the questions that will help them make thoughtful, informed decisions. Additionally, before applying or accepting a transfer, students are encouraged to speak directly with programs of interest about educational and training offerings and the careers obtained by their graduates.

1. Review your goals and needs.

Given the variety of educational offerings in graduate psychology, we normally advise students to reflect on their goals and interests when selecting a new program. The recommendations on [Psych Learning Curve](#) provide some general guidance for students who have never previously attended graduate school on questions such as:

- What is your primary interest, and how does it relate to the best fit training to reach your goals?
- What degree type and subfield best fit your educational and career needs?

As a transfer student, review your previous career goals and needs and consider how they may or may not have changed. Then consider how a different program will help you to achieve your new goals and support your career needs.

2. How do I target programs that will meet my career and educational goals?

We suggest that you read the program description and graduation requirements carefully. Ask where graduates go after successful program completion. If you are considering a doctoral degree that prepares you to provide health services, consider the value of accreditation to ensure the program meets minimal quality training standards (APA accredits doctoral programs in clinical, counseling, and school psychology). If you are interested in pursuing research careers, ask about the career paths students take after graduation (e.g., entering the workforce, pursuing postdoctoral research and fellowship positions).

3. Now that you've identified programs of interest, consider the program requirements you will need to successfully complete your education.

- How many credit hours will transfer from your prior coursework?
- Are there minimum residency requirements or time in the program requirements?
- What costs will you incur, and what aid is available? (Consider application fees, course fees, graduation fees, etc., and how these may differ for students in and out of state, and international students)
- Which courses and/or experiences will you need to retake and how will this impact time to degree?
- What is the process for finding a research advisor and mentor?
- What are the dissertation, thesis, and/or comprehensive exam requirements?
- Are there teaching requirements?
- Are there required internships?
- If licensure is a goal, how successful are students with securing internship placements?
- If research is a goal, how successful are students at receiving funding and publishing papers?

4. Evaluate your career options and the program's success with providing its graduates with those careers.

- If licensure is a goal, what is the program's licensure rate for its graduates, and does the program meet a particular jurisdiction's licensure requirements?
- If research is a goal, how successful are graduates in securing postdoctoral research positions or starting research careers?

5. Programs will evaluate your recent graduate-level academic and experiential training but may also consider the following factors utilized to review new applicants.

- Undergraduate or terminal graduate degree coursework.
- GPAs (e.g., undergraduate, undergraduate major, graduate, etc.).
- Standardized test scores.
- Research, work, and/or volunteer experience.
- Reference letters.

Transitions routinely demand significant time and energy, but the time and energy spent can result in rewarding new paths. We hope that in providing you some guidance in the form of questions to ask yourself and your prospective schools, you will end up in a graduate program that fits you well. Best wishes.