

Graduate Study in Psychology 2017

Summary Report: Admissions, Applications, and Acceptances

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Graduate Study in Psychology Summary Report: Admissions, Applications, and Acceptances

The 2017 Graduate Study in Psychology Summary Report reflects data collected from more than 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; published each August as a joint effort of the APA Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Education & Training and the APA Office of Publications and Databases. The 2017 book and this report represent data from the 2014-2015 academic year and aggregate these data in the following areas: survey participation; admissions review, application fees, and applications & acceptances by level and subfield. Where meaningful, descriptive statistics are reported 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 are reflective of the self-reporting of participants. As such, analyses are drawn 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 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.

This report was produced by the Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Education and Training and reviewed by the Center for Workforce Studies within the APA Education Directorate. We are grateful for the support of Cynthia D. Belar, PhD, ABPP, Interim Chief Executive Officer of the APA, Jasper Simons, Executive APA Publisher, and Jaime Diaz-Granados, PhD, 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 receive a secure URL to access and complete the survey. Up to five reminders are sent to departments until the survey is completed. Departments not updating information for two subsequent years are removed from the database and their information not included in the updated version of the book. Information not updated in a single year is incorporated in that year's edition, but notated that data are from the prior year in the publication.

Survey Participation

For the 2017 survey, 509 departments offering graduate degree programs in psychology or related training (e.g., mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy) provided complete responses to the survey reflecting information from the 2014-2015 academic year. Table 1 breaks out the participation by the self-reported type of college/school/institution in which the department is housed. A substantial majority of departments (62%) were located within a university college of arts and sciences followed by university college/schools of education (18%). These departments were comprised of 1,622 programs in 2017 as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Departmental Participation in 2017 Graduate Study in Psychology Survey by Department Location

Type of Department	N	%
University College of Arts and Sciences	315	61.9
University College/School of Education	89	17.5
Free-standing Professional School	38	7.5
University-based Professional School	26	5.1
Medical School/Health Sciences University	8	1.6
Other	33	6.5
Total	509	100.0

Notes. N=509. 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 2017 Graduate Study in Psychology Survey by Department Location

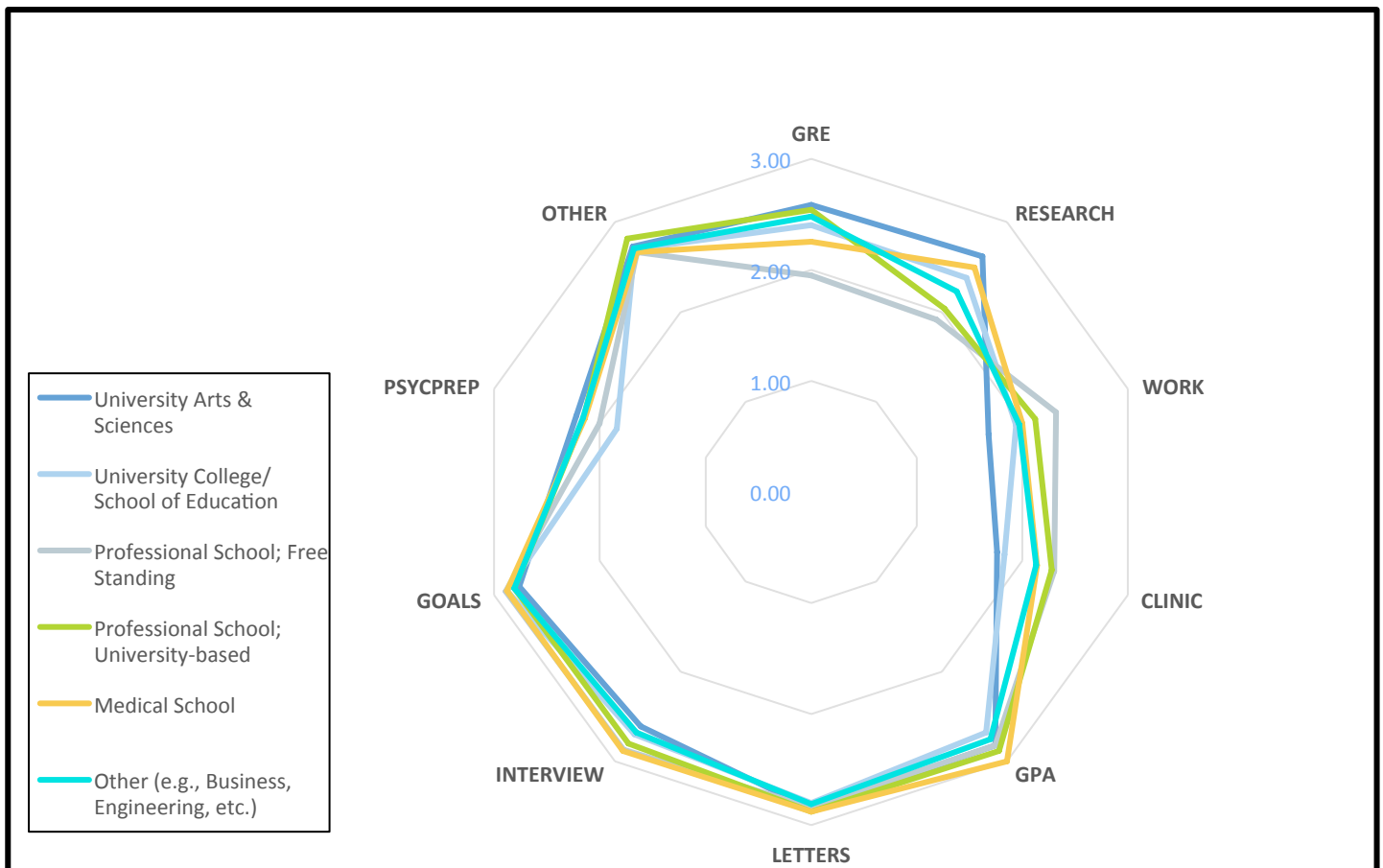
Type of Department	N	%
University College of Arts and Sciences	1,067	65.8
University College/School of Education	275	17.0
Free-standing Professional School	119	7.3
University-based Professional School	67	4.1
Medical School/Health Sciences University	22	1.4
Other	72	4.4
Total	1,622	100.0

Notes. N=1,622. 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 plots the mean ratings for each of these items by department location. Undergraduate GPA (GPA), recommendation letters (Letters), candidate interview (Interview), and statement of academic/career goals (Goals) consistently scored as the most important admissions review criteria across all department locations. Yet, greater variance across department setting was found on the other criteria, including GRE scores. Overall, departments housed within either university-based or free-standing professional schools ranked work and clinical experiences higher than other types of departments, while medical school departments ranked these lower, giving more emphasis to GPA, evaluation letters, and Other. Preparation in psychology (Psycprep) was notably less important compared to the other criteria, but on this criterion was ranked lowest for university colleges/schools of education and free-standing professional schools. Research experience, GRE scores, and undergraduate GPA were the strongest review standards for university-based departments.

Figure 1. Importance of Admissions Review Criteria by Department Location

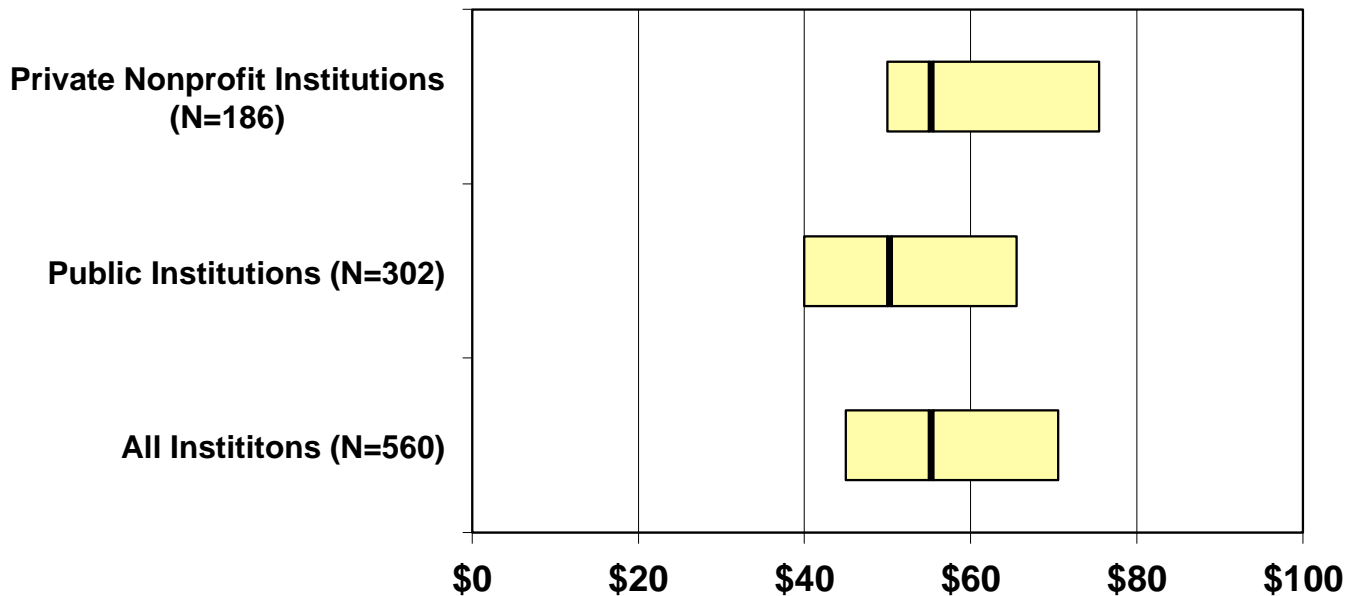


Note. N=509. Level of criterion importance increases (1=Low; 2=Medium; 3=High) moving outward from center of chart. Descriptions of review criteria are provided in the appendix.

Application Fees

A total of 560 departments provided information about application fees required of prospective students by the institution. These fees ranged in dollars from \$0 to \$125 per application in 2017, with a mean of \$57 (SD= \$22.94) and a median of \$55. In 2016, the mean application fee was \$56 (SD=\$22.80). Ninety-six percent of responding departments required a separate application fee for each program to which a prospective student applied (when permitted), but some allowed applications to multiple programs within a department or school on a single fee. Figure 2 presents the interquartile ranges for application fees across all participating departments and split by public versus private and not-for-profit institutions where permissible.

Figure 2. Application Fees for Graduate Psychology Admissions

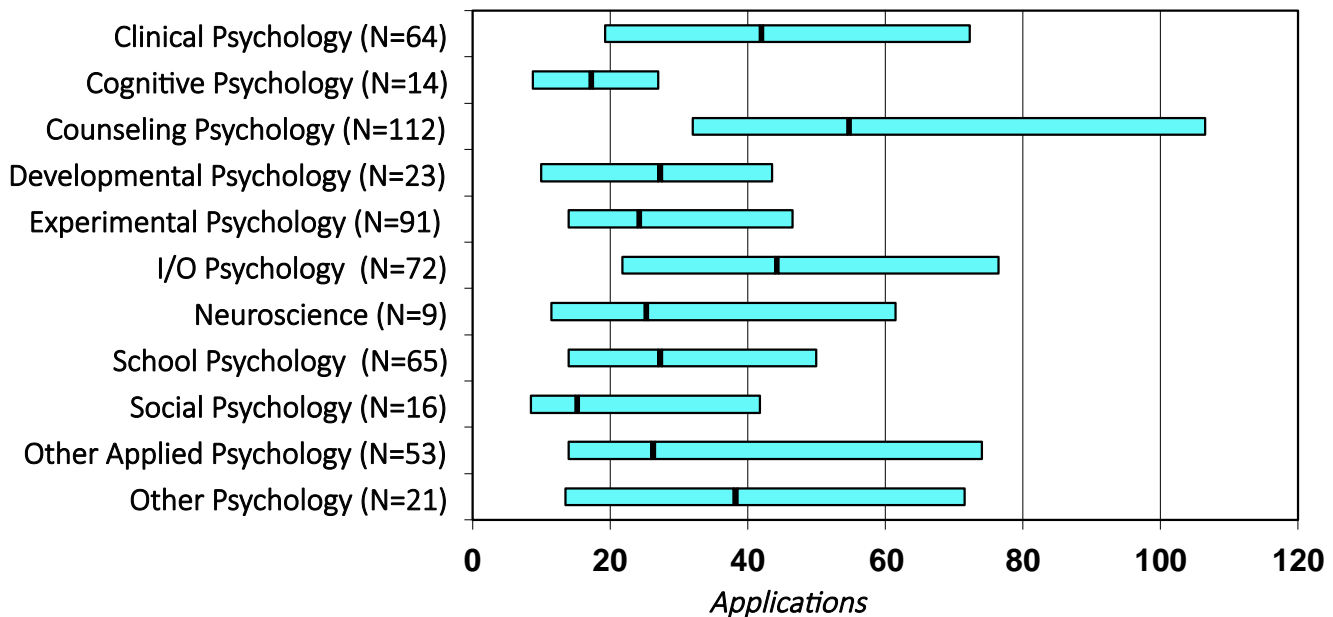


Notes. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. All: Mean= \$57 (SD= \$22.94); Public: Mean= \$55 (SD= \$20.59); Private: Mean= \$56 (SD= \$23.20). Institutions not clearly identified as either public or nonprofit were excluded from those categorical analyses.

Applications and Acceptances

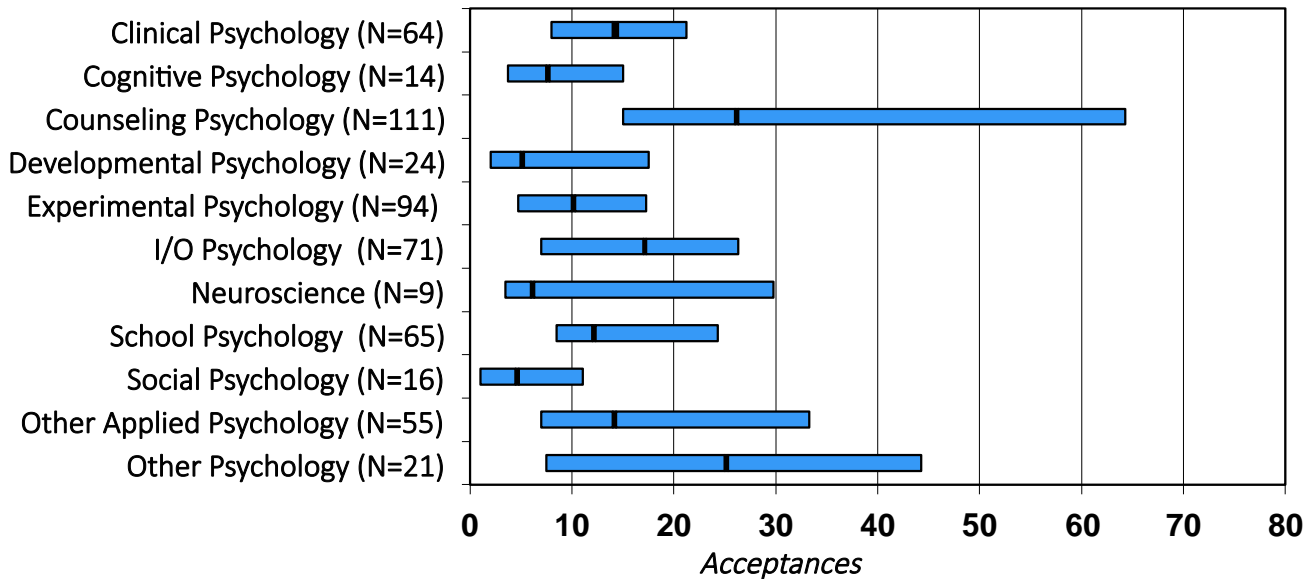
Figure 3 presents the interquartile ranges of applications by broad psychology subfields; descriptions of these subfields are provided in the appendix. The majority of departments offering terminal master’s degrees in these subfields received median number of applications between 25 and 50 for the most recent application cycle. Interquartile ranges varied, with the greatest found in counseling psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, clinical psychology, other applied psychology, and other psychology. Acceptances are shown in Figure 4 and featured similar ranges, but with median acceptances falling between 5 and 20, except in counseling and other psychology. Figure 5 plots the interquartile acceptance rates, defined as the ratio of acceptances to applications, at the master’s level. Median acceptance rates for most subfields at the master’s level hovered between 40% and 60%, but social psychology and neuroscience acceptance rates were slightly above 30%. The median acceptance rate for the other psychology subfields (68%) was highest in comparison, but encompassed one of the widest interquartile ranges extending from 38% to 92%.

Figure 3. Master’s Applications by Broad Subfield



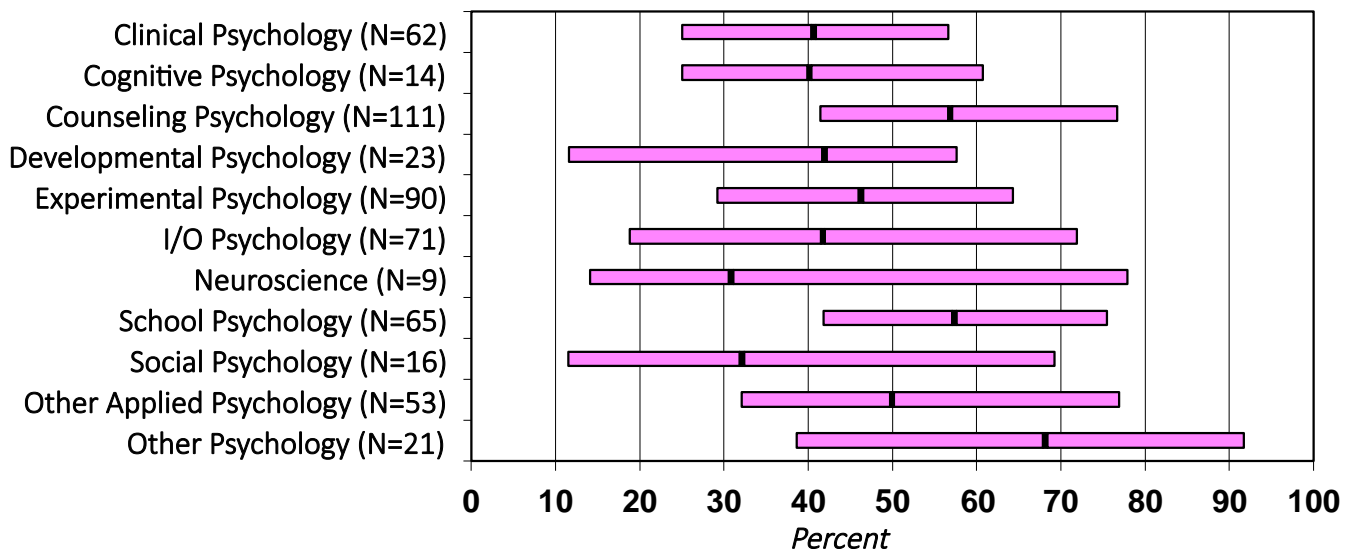
Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

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.

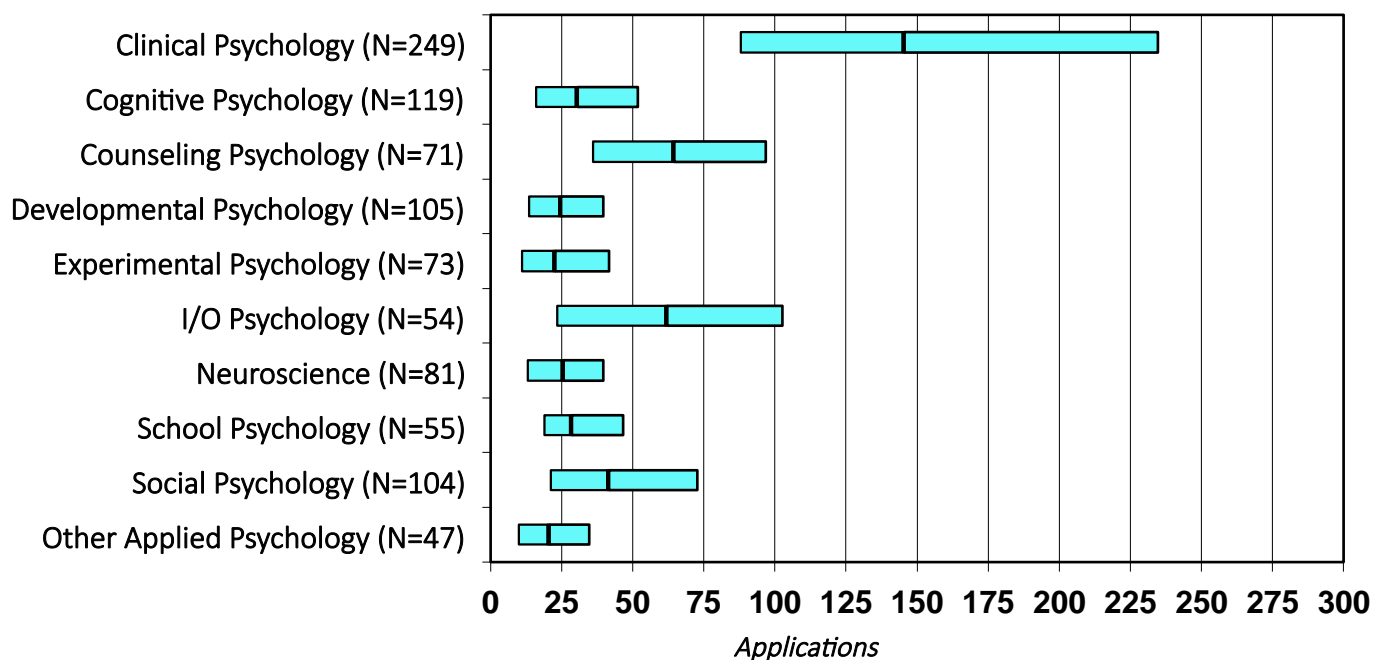
Figure 5. Master's Acceptance Rates by Broad Subfield



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.

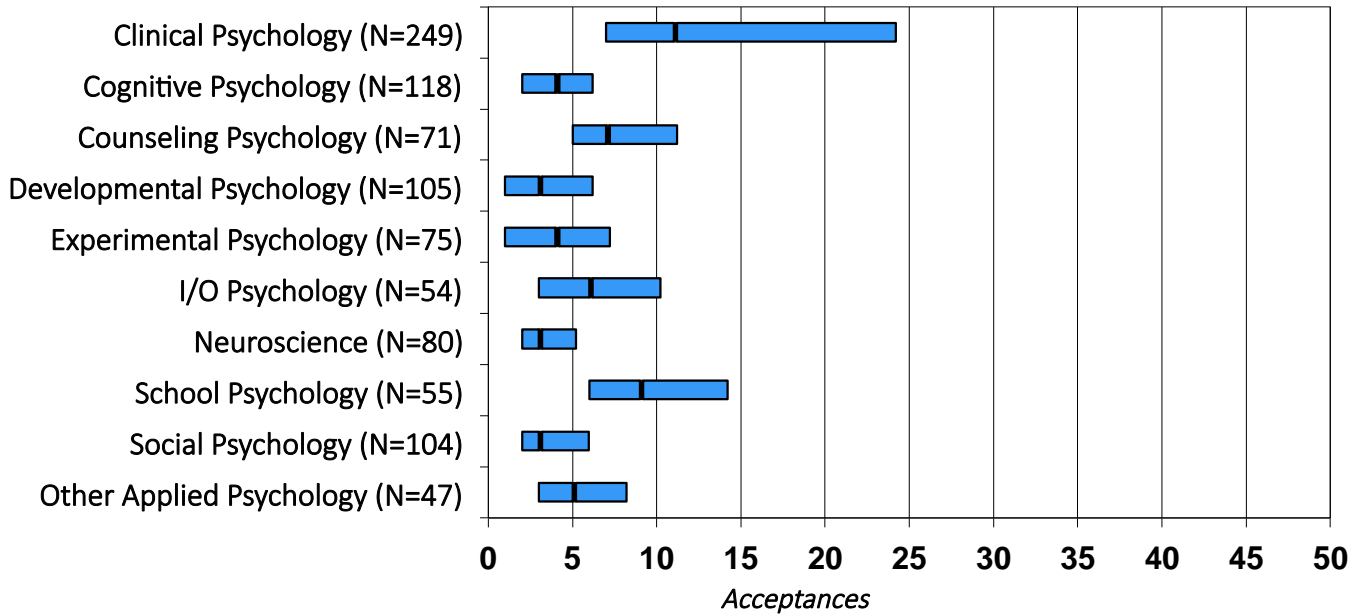
Applications for doctoral programs are presented in Figure 6 by subfield. The largest number of applications across the greatest interquartile range, were found in clinical psychology with a median of 146 applications. Counseling psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, and social psychology represented the next largest numbers of applications. Figure 7 shows the ranges of acceptances by subfield. Median acceptances for clinical psychology were 11, while median acceptances for all other subfields were below 10. Acceptance rates for doctoral programs, as shown in Figure 8, were noticeably lower in comparison to master’s programs, with the median rate for social psychology the lowest at 6% for doctoral programs. The highest median acceptance rates for doctoral programs were found in school psychology and other applied psychology at 34% and 25%, respectively.

Figure 6. Doctoral Applications by Broad Subfield



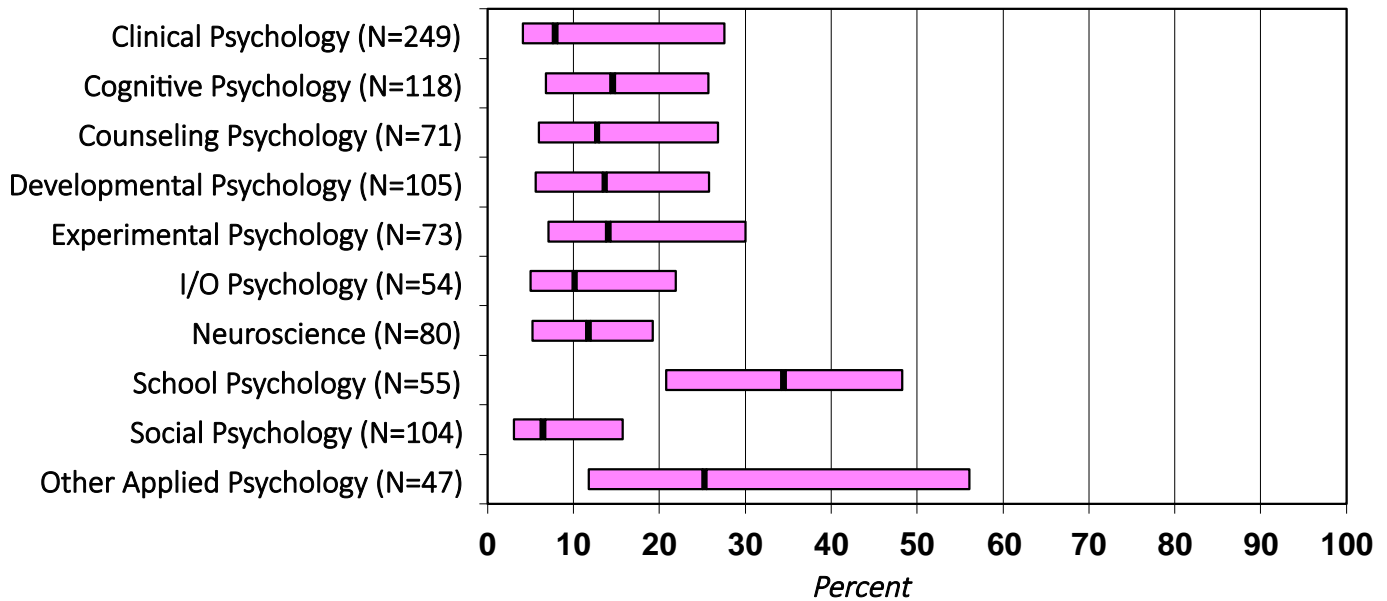
Notes. N=Programs within that subfield. Graph includes first quartile, median, and third quartile values. Subfield categories have been collapsed. The 'Other Psychology' category was excluded from analysis at the doctoral level. Missing data were excluded from analysis.

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 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 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 participating in the survey.

Compared to doctoral programs, acceptance rates for master's programs were substantially higher for all subfields, yet the numbers of applications were less than half of the application numbers for doctoral programs; approximately 28,000 to 74,000, respectively. Counseling psychology programs received one of the highest number of both applications and acceptances at the master's level with an acceptance rate of 59%. However, it is important to note that many of the participating programs in this category are identified as 'Counseling' programs granting degrees related to psychology and offering training leading to licensed practice as a professional counselor. Acceptance rates were lowest for social psychology and clinical psychology at 28% and 36%, respectively.

At the doctoral level, the highest number of programs, applications, and acceptances were found in clinical psychology, but with an overall acceptance rate of 13%. Acceptance rates for doctoral programs ranged between 7% and 16% across most subfields, but were noticeably higher for school psychology (32%) and other applied psychology (28%). Although more than 4 out of 5 applications to other psychology subfield programs were accepted, the low number of programs (8) obscures meaningful interpretation.

Table 3. Sum of Applications, Acceptances, and Overall Acceptance Rates by Degree Level & Broad Subfield

		Master's			Doctoral		
Subfield		Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance Rate	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance Rate
Clinical Psychology	N	64	64	35.5%	249	249	13.2%
	Sum	3,626	1,286		42,415	5,584	
Cognitive Psychology	N	14	14	43.8%	119	119	12.0%
	Sum	290	127		4,694	565	
Counseling Psychology	N	112	111	58.7%	71	71	11.3%
	Sum	8,871	5,203		5,383	610	
Developmental Psychology	N	23	24	48.3%	105	105	16.2%
	Sum	671	324		3,125	506	
Experimental Psychology	N	91	94	44.4%	73	75	13.3%
	Sum	3,123	1,387		2,889	383	
Industrial/Org. Psychology	N	72	71	41.0%	54	54	14.4%
	Sum	3,784	1,540		3,554	512	
Neuroscience	N	9	9	52.7%	81	80	11.0%
	Sum	273	144		2,622	288	
School Psychology	N	65	65	52.7%	55	55	32.0%
	Sum	2,541	1,339		1,986	627	
Social Psychology	N	16	16	27.9%	104	104	7.5%
	Sum	434	121		5,726	429	
Other Applied Psychology	N	53	55	60.0%	47	47	27.5%
	Sum	2,959	1,762		1,229	338	
Other Psychology	N	21	21	72.3%	8	8	84.7%
	Sum	1,620	1,171		799	677	
Total	N	540	544	51.1%	966	967	14.1%
	Sum	28,192	14,404		74,422	10,519	

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 2, 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.

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 Psychology
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	
General Psychology	Other 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.