

1. Will you be taking students this year?

A: In principle, yes. My lab accepts graduate students in most years. In practice, on any given year, this depends on various external factors (availability of graduate student slots, availability of student funding, the pool of applicants, number of current graduate students in the lab, etc). Due to the competitive nature of the application process, as well as various external factors mentioned above, many otherwise highly talented students are not admitted. If you were not selected, please do not take this personally! It is key to apply to many graduate programs so as to maximize your chance of admission to at least one graduate program.

2. How do I apply?

A: All of the information you need to know can be found at <http://www.psych.ubc.ca/grad-pgm/admissions.psy>, and <http://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective>.

If you have any questions not answered by these websites, email the Psychology Department graduate secretary, Rose Tam at rose@psych.ubc.ca.

3. What do I need to do to get in?

A: The most important thing is to apply. Put together the best application package you can. An excellent academic record, reasonably high GRE scores, demonstrated research ability, letters of recommendation, and a good match in research interests are essential. Decisions are made based on your overall record, rather than any one aspect. Assemble the best application package you can, and apply.

4. What are my chances of getting in?

A: The UBC Psychology Department is one of the top departments in Canada and North America. We get many applications every year, and we have a limited number of funded slots, so the competition is stiff. Obviously the chances of getting in vary from year to year, and are not evenly distributed across the applicant pool. Roughly, on a given year, 10-15% of applicants are offered admission. But don't worry about the numbers and just submit the best application you can prepare.

5. I do not have a psychology degree, can I still apply?

A: Yes. We sometimes accept students who do not come from a traditional psychology background. In my lab in particular, interdisciplinary research is encouraged. A background in anthropology, human evolution, cognitive science, or religious studies are acceptable and can be an asset, as long as you can demonstrate basic knowledge of psychology (by taking a number of psychology courses, by scoring high on the Psychology GRE, by obtaining research experience in a psychology lab) and gain basic competence in statistics and empirical research methods. Non-psychology majors must meet all minimum requirements of the university and the department. The Admissions Committee needs reassurance that they will be able to thrive in a research-intensive psychology department such as ours as soon as they enter the program. If you have an academic degree other than psychology, be sure to highlight in your application steps you have taken to gain basic knowledge of psychology, statistics, and behavioural research methods.

6. Do I need research experience to be accepted in graduate school?

A. Almost certainly yes! Rarely if ever students are admitted to our program without some demonstrated research competence. The research experience you get involved in need not be on the topics that you want to pursue in the Culture and Cognition Lab. Research Experience is important for a number of reasons. First, it helps you to find out whether or not you really want to pursue a doctoral degree in social psychology that involves five to six years of intensive research. Second, it helps us figure out whether or not you're good at it. Third, getting research experience is an excellent way to get good letters of recommendation. So, if you are thinking of going to graduate school, definitely try to get some research experience!

7. Do I need to take (insert name of test here) to apply?

A: If the application says you do, then yes you do.

8. Can you tell me about the research projects you're working on now?

A: A good place to start is under "Research" at www.psych.ubc.ca/~ara. The most recent publications are the most reliable guide to current research projects. Conference posters and talks are another good way to find out what we are doing currently. If you would like to get a more detailed picture of what's happening in the lab, take a look at the lab page, at <http://www.psych.ubc.ca/~anlab/>

9. Can I come visit your lab/do a department visit to see what it's like?

A: If you have been officially admitted, you will be invited to our departmental recruitment weekend, when you will get to meet faculty in the department and spend time with the graduate students and learn a great deal about what we do here at UBC. We can't really do department or lab visits prior to official admission.

10. Can I call you/set up an appointment to discuss my application?

A: In the interest of fairness, I ask everyone to just apply and go through the same application process as everyone else. I do not set up special meetings or phone calls with applicants, before they are admitted, because it would not be fair to all of the other people who apply who don't get a special meeting or phone call. So, please just apply. We look forward to reading your application!