Updated: November 2021

So You're Applying to Clinical Psychology Graduate Programs

These are the biased opinions, advice, and experiences from Jasmine Mote, PhD. I attended a clinical science program from 2011-2017, including two years of being on their graduate admissions committee. I was the first PhD in my family and the first woman to get a college degree. I have over a decade of mentoring undergraduate and postbaccalaureate students, including first-generation students and students traditionally underrepresented in academia. I have talked most of them out of going to graduate school. Use at your own risk.

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Maybe You Should Reconsider This Whole Grad School Thing?

So you're thinking about applying to clinical psychology PhD programs. Why? Seriously, take some time and really consider why you're interested in this career path. Talk to people who are in grad school, or who recently got their PhDs, or got another type of degree, or are therapists, or professors, or decided against going to grad school. Talk to as many people as possible. Read about what it's like to go to grad school and be a psychologist (see "Recommended Resources").

Still unsure? Then don't apply to grad school!

Listen, I loved grad school. I love research. I love clinical work. I have no regrets. You can succeed and be happy and fulfilled on this path, regardless of your background! But you probably already have a lot of people talking to you about how great it is. Let me offer a counter-narrative. The world is a big place, and there are so many fun career options available to you. Why not try different jobs? Or travel? Or make some extra money to help pay off your student loan debt, or simply save for the future? Graduate school is a lot of work, where you are hyper-focused on one specific goal, and you are getting paid very little relative to many other career options. It will take years for you to advance in your career, and during that time, you will most likely have to move across the country, multiple times, which can be exhausting and make it difficult to form a community. After college, I moved to four different states in less than nine years (MA for a research position, CA for grad school, NJ for clinical internship, and back to MA for a postdoctoral fellowship). I only started seriously saving for retirement when I got a postdoctoral fellowship, six years after I started grad school, because I was finally making more than $25,000-$33,000 a year for the first time in my life. A partner who made significantly more money than me helped support both of us. If you are on a research-focused path, the trajectory is even longer, more moves are (probably) required, and the competition for academic jobs and grants to fund your research is fierce, demoralizing, and frequently unfair.

All of this is to say, if you aren't sure what you want to do when you grow up, clinical psychology graduate school is not a great "maybe let's try this to see if it fits" option. There are better, higher paying or possibly more fulfilling options available to you. Take them. Grad school is not going anywhere!

Okay. So you've taken time to talk to many people and considered all your options, and you still want to get a clinical psychology PhD. I'll take your word for it. Keep reading.

Overview of Clinical Psychology PhD Programs

A clinical psychology PhD is a years-long (usually 5-7 years) graduate program. It involves coursework, clinical training, and research training, all in service of becoming a clinical psychologist. You may also be required to teach undergraduate courses or supervise students in research or clinical work. To complete your degree, you will complete a research-based dissertation (a major independent research project approved by a faculty committee). You will also be required to complete a year-long clinical internship, a full-time clinical position at a separate institution, during the last year of your program. Clinical internships involve a national matching process, where you will apply to institutions across the country, interview at various sites, rank the sites based on where you want to work on a website, where the site you interviewed will also rank you, and through an opaque process you will be "matched" to a site (which means that you will be told where you will be working and living for a year as a requirement to get your degree).

For the majority of programs, your tuition is covered by the institution, and you earn a living stipend through either research or teaching responsibilities (though this varies widely from program-to-program). You are also paid during the clinical internship year, but not much.

Programs vary in how much they are focused on training practitioners (psychologists whose main job is to provide clinical services, like assessment or therapy) versus researchers (psychologists whose main job is to conduct research and/or teach). Most clinical psychology programs have learning goals or objectives on their websites where they discuss their training model. Programs are broadly categorized as the following:

- **Clinical Science:** These are primarily research-focused programs. Students apply to these programs to work with a specific faculty member (called a PI, or Primary Investigator) based on their research interests. Students complete courses and clinical training, but are expected to prioritize research training, including working on studies, presenting at academic conferences, publishing peer-reviewed manuscripts, and writing grants. The primary goal of these programs is to train future researchers and faculty members. Clinical science programs may use phrases on their websites like "clinical scientist orientation," "advancement of clinical psychology as a science," "major goal is the training of clinical scientists," "not for students who seek to do applied training (e.g., primarily or only interested in seeing clients) as their profession."

- **Scientist-Practitioner (Boulder Model):** These programs attempt to put equal emphasis on clinical and research training. They believe that all clinical psychologists, including those who primarily want to be practitioners, should be trained in research and scientific practice. The majority of clinical psychology programs follow this model. Scientist-Practitioner programs may use phrases such as the "Boulder-Model" (a 1949 conference that emphasized this model) or how they want to produce "science-informed clinicians."

- **Scholar-Practitioner (Vail Model)**: These programs primarily focus on clinical training. They still include research training, though more in line with teaching students to

consume research as part of their training to be practitioners. You might encounter this model more if you are interested in a Psychology Doctorate (PsyD) rather than a PhD, due to its limited emphasis on research training.

Taking “Time Off” Before Applying

Clinical psychology PhD programs are considered one of the most competitive graduate programs to get into. Expectations related to clinical and research experience prior to getting into graduate school are skyrocketing. For that reason, it is becoming standard for students to gain relevant experiences both during college and after they graduate to be competitive for PhD program admission. It’s becoming increasingly rare for students who apply straight from college to get into a clinical psychology PhD program. I do not recommend doing this.

Instead, I recommend finding a research assistant position or other job where you can gain relevant clinical and/or research experience before you apply to grad school. Taking “time off” is a misnomer because you’re definitely not just loafing around – you’re working! This is advantageous for multiple reasons, including:

- It allows you to gain valuable experiences that will strengthen your eventual graduate school application
- It allows you to take more time to really consider whether a career in clinical psychology is the right choice for you

Research Assistant Positions

Paid research assistant or lab coordinator positions, where you work in a research lab in a university or hospital setting for at least a year, are great ways to help you figure out whether you like working with a specific population (e.g., people with schizophrenia) or whether you like research/clinical work. These types of jobs allow you to contribute to ongoing research projects as well as handle more organizational/administrative duties (e.g., helping with an IRB, recruiting participants, ordering lab supplies, coordinating meetings, etc.). Ideally, they also allow you to work on independent research projects.

Unfortunately, these jobs can be difficult to find, and they vary in their pay scale (between $20,000-$50,000 for full-time positions, depending on location and cost of living). There is no central repository of where to find these types of jobs, and they are often advertised throughout the year (though many of them start during the summer or fall of a given year, following an academic schedule). If you’re financially able to volunteer for positions, it might be a good way to get some experience while working part-time doing something else. See “Recommended Resources” for tips on how to find these job postings.

Because these jobs are competitive and somewhat scarce, apply to as many as you possibly can. Even if you don’t meet all of the qualifications for the job posting, apply anyway! You never know! Additionally, I would not worry too much about whether or not the research is “exactly” the type of research you want to do in graduate school, or whether it’s working with the exact population you want to work with. What’s more important is the type of research training you’re receiving from this job, such as the ability to co-author research papers, work with graduate students or other researchers in training, be mentored by someone you enjoy working with, work with research participants, gain clinical research skills, and/or present at conferences. Research skills can easily translate to other settings, and no one is expecting you to be a

"finished product" or to have all the necessary experiences you need to be a psychologist before going into graduate school (even if it can feel that way!) For example, say you worked in a research lab that studied adolescents with eating disorders, but you decide that in graduate school you want to help adults with OCD. That's okay! The only possible exceptions to this rule are:

- If you want to work exclusively with children in graduate school, I recommend trying to find a research or other job experience to show that you have worked with children before.
- If you are interested in serious mental illness (i.e., working with people with bipolar disorder and/or schizophrenia), I recommend trying to find a research or other job experience to show that you have worked with this population before.

However, even these exceptions are not always true – I did not work with anyone with serious mental illness *until* graduate school. I would not recommend this route, if only because you want to make sure you like working with the population you want to see in treatment/research before committing yourself to grad school.

You may also find a great research experience where you don't work with a mental illness population. This is especially okay if you are interested in clinical science positions and this job gives you a lot of valuable research experience – this is what I did! However, you will need to show that you have worked with clinical populations in some capacity (see below).

Clinical Experiences

Graduate programs want to make sure that you have exposure to mental health populations in some professional capacity. This makes sense – they want to know that you're sure that you enjoy working with people with mental health conditions, and that you have some interpersonal skills required for clinical training, and you should, too! Clinical work is so rewarding, but also difficult and exhausting. It's better to find out sooner rather than later if you like working with people with mental health difficulties.

There are many ways to gain these types of experiences, including working in a research lab that works with people with mental illness. Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of other common ways to gain clinical experiences before graduate school, many of them volunteer-based:

- Volunteer for a suicide hotline or other hotline for people experiencing distress (interpersonal violence hotline, rape crisis hotline, etc.)
- Volunteer at a local mental health clinic or women's shelter (e.g., doing administrative tasks)
- Seek out organizations at your college or community dedicated to reducing mental health stigma or offering a type of peer counseling

Choosing a Program

There are lots of things to consider when choosing a program. More frequently, programs host free virtual or in-person workshops to answer questions related to the admissions process, especially geared towards first-generation students or those from traditionally underrepresented groups. Check to see if those workshops are available for you to attend – even if you're not interested in that specific graduate program, the questions and responses will still be useful.

Here are some of the big questions to ask yourself:

Why are you getting a PhD? The main thing you want to decide is what type of training you want, based on the type of career you want to have: research-focused (clinical science model), practitioner-focused (scholar-practitioner model), or a balance (scientist-practitioner model). Read a lot of program websites to figure out which model they have.

Who do you want to work with? Especially if you're applying to a clinical science program, you're really applying to work with a specific faculty member whose research interests align with your own. However, who you want to work with is important for any program. Read a lot of lab websites. Read articles by the faculty member you're interested in working with. Reach out to them to chat about their work, including making sure they're doing the type of work you're interested in still (some websites are outdated), that they are taking graduate students this cycle, and what they are like as a mentor. You not only want your research interests to align, but also your working style (e.g., hands-on versus hands-off, structured versus not, open to talking about personal experiences versus wanting more boundaries). This person is going to be a big part of your life in grad school. Chat with their current or former grad students to get a sense of what it's like to work with them. Do they meet with students every week, every month, twice a year? Are they supportive of a work-life balance, or do they expect you to answer emails at all hours of the night? It's also helpful to choose a program where there may be multiple people you could imagine working with – not only because it's nice to collaborate with others, but for the very practical reasons that you may need or want a secondary mentor in your program (e.g., your primary mentor goes on sabbatical, or leaves the university unexpectedly).

- Some faculty members may not respond or may not want to talk with potential applicants, for fear that this would bias their response towards other applicants. If someone doesn't get back to you or says they don't chat with potential applicants, don't take it personally! See if you can chat with anyone else in their lab, such as their current or former grad students. Otherwise, apply to them anyway, and you will get the chance to ask them these questions during the interview stage.

Where do you want to live? Now, many people will give you the advice that this does not matter. THEY'RE WRONG. Five to seven years is a long time to live somewhere, and even though grad school is a big commitment, you still deserve to have a fulfilling personal life separate from work. Is public transit access important to you? Cost of living? Diversity of communities? Political climate? Actual climate? Availability of single people you'd want to date? Job opportunities for partners? Childcare costs/availability? Proximity to family? Cultural events? Outdoor activity opportunities? Restaurants? Abortion access? Again, chatting with current grad

students is a good way to get a sense of this information, as well as other people you may know who have lived in various places.

What other professional opportunities do you want during your graduate training? Outside of your primary mentor, there are probably other things that are important to you. Do you want to make sure to be trained in CBT? What about neuropsychology? Do you want the opportunity to work in various settings, or do you care more about programs where they have in-house clinics (i.e., clinics as part of the psychology departments where you can see clients on campus)? What about the diversity of the clients that you're able to see, or supervisors you'll be able to work with? Do you want to learn neuroimaging research techniques? Think about what other experiences you'd like to prioritize as you begin to look at programs.

How will I get paid, and how else will the program support me? Do not feel shy about figuring out how you will make money during graduate school. This is important! Some programs guarantee a stipend for all students regardless of anything else – you will get paid to do coursework, research, and clinical training. Other programs stipulate that only students who teach courses will get paid, which can mean a lot more work! Some faculty have research grants where they can pay their graduate students from that grant, but maybe for only a year or two, and then after that the student is required to find their own funding (through a grant or through teaching). Programs vary so much in how they pay their graduate students. This is important information to find out, and sometimes it may not be clear until you get to the interview stage of the application process. Don't be afraid to ask!

Additionally, it's important to get a sense of how a program will support you as a person outside of the living stipend, especially if you are a first-generation student or belong to a group that is traditionally underrepresented in academia. Do students have access to low cost or free mental health services? Are students unionized? What rights do graduate students have? Will programs provide health/dental insurance? Are there other organizations or resources available and encouraged for graduate students to be part of to help their health and well-being? Does this program care about diversity, equity, and inclusion, and if so, what type of work are they doing in this area? Are they open about offering accommodations for students with different learning needs? Is there parental leave, or low-cost childcare options offered to graduate students? All of these are appropriate questions to ask potential faculty mentors, other students, and administrators. You deserve to know, and it should influence your decision about what programs may be better fits for you than others.

Application Essays

Graduate programs will ask you to write at least one essay, if not multiple essays, describing why you want to go to their specific graduate program and what you want to study. Essays are not a place for you to list/repeat accomplishments from your CV. Essays are a place to tell your story and convince anyone reading them that you are an ideal candidate for the program you are applying to. Your whole application is a narrative – you want to have key points that you cover in each essay (e.g., making sure to highlight your commitment to working with single mothers who experience anxiety, or how much you value disseminating evidence-based practices to rural communities). At the same time that you are creating a broader narrative across essays, you also want to individualize your essays and respond to the specific prompts that each program wants you to write about.

As you write, think of the person reading your essay as being tired, hungry, and in a hurry. Most likely, they will be all of these things! This helps you remember that the person reading this essay is probably reading anywhere from 30-100 other applications. You want to be memorable (in a good way!) and you want to catch someone's attention. You can do this by writing clearly, succinctly, and well.

Here is an example structure for a personal statement, along with made-up content (also see the Appendix). There are no hard or fast rules for these types of statements, so don't worry if your style or structure for essays differs from this. I do recommend figuring out some type of structure that you can use across essays. For example, if you look closely at this structure, everything can probably stay the same across essays for different programs, except for Paragraph 4.

- Paragraph 1: Specific anecdote that illustrates your interest in clinical psychology
    - A story about how you helped an autistic adolescent introduce himself to a new friend while you were a camp counselor in college, and how this inspired your interest in clinical psychology.
- Paragraph 2: Other anecdote that helps you discuss other relevant professional experiences
    - While working on your first co-authored publication with your research mentor after college, you learned how to analyze data from randomized controlled trials with children and their parents with autism. This helped you learn that you wanted to continue to both conduct research like this as well as learn therapy to help families with autistic children.
- Paragraph 3: Continuing to discuss relevant professional experiences, skills, and achievements
    - You discuss other research and clinical experiences you had that informed your interest in research and clinical work, including working for a suicide hotline and volunteering as a peer counselor during college.
- Paragraph 4: Discuss what you want to accomplish in graduate school and beyond, including why you want to go to this specific program, who you want to work with, and what you want to do after you get your degree. Make it clear that you are familiar with

professors' works, but you also have new ideas/want to learn new skills related to their work.
    - Talk about how much X University aligns with your goals to become a clinician and researcher working with autistic children and their families, with a focus on understanding their social difficulties. Discuss why you want to work with Professor Y, including how you want to expand on their research with autistic children in some specific way. Also state that you want to work with Professor Z who works with Asian immigrant families and how your interest in clinical interventions for social difficulties can apply to their work.

Other writing tips:

- Show, don't tell. For example, rather than writing, "I am passionate about working with adults with bipolar disorder and improving their positive emotion and well-being," you can illustrate this better by writing about a middle-aged female research participant with bipolar disorder you interviewed and how they said they were afraid to date because they were worried that if they met someone they liked, they would feel so good that it might lead to a manic episode. Then, you can talk about how this informed your interest in clinical psychology. "Showing" versus "telling" usually takes more words, but it will create a stronger, more memorable essay.
    - In line with "show, don't tell," be specific as you describe your skills, experiences, and accomplishments. Here are some examples of what it means to be specific in writing from the website The Professor Is In.
- Really make sure you are responding to the specific prompts provided by each program you are applying to, and answering each section of each prompt. This will help admissions committees see that you are individualizing your essays per program.
- Use language that is consistent with each program's website (e.g., if a program describes themselves as a "scientist-practitioner-advocate" model, use this exact phrase when you discuss your interests in their program).
- Have a BUNCH of people read your essays and provide feedback, even (especially?) people who don't know anything about what you're applying to.
- Read your essays out loud to really hear how well they flow.
- Be as personal as you feel comfortable being. Despite what we study, some people on clinical psychology admissions committees can be fairly biased and have stigmatized attitudes towards people seeking help for mental health concerns, for example. It's up to you whether you want to share any personal experiences about mental health concerns, seeking therapy, or similar experiences.
- Shorter is better. Don't go over a word limit. If there are no word limits, err on the side of less words.
- Read good writing (including successful graduate school essays) and read good writers' tips for writing well!

A Note About "Diversity" Statements

Some programs may ask you to write statements that ask you to explicitly discuss how you think about or represent "diversity," or how your work is related to equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. I have mixed feelings about these statements. As a person of color, they can feel

tokenizing, as if a graduate committee just wants me to share a trauma or struggle related to my race/gender/whatever, or formalizes a way for them to “tick a box” to show that they are considering applicants from a variety of backgrounds. It feels like the bare minimum a program can do to show that they care about these issues. At the same time, it’s important for all people, regardless of their backgrounds/identities, to be able to speak to how they will address these issues in their research and clinical work. It’s important for psychologists to work towards cultural humility as we work with various marginalized communities.

Generally, write what you feel comfortable writing about. Just like any essay, strong statements expand upon your personal experiences to how you think about diversity concerns relate to your research, teaching, clinical work, desire to mentor undergrads, or desire to take leadership roles. I know people who had strong statements who discussed family members’ experiences with mental health concerns, stigma they witnessed in their culture/communities related to mental health treatment, personal disabilities, or specific experiences that made them reflect on their own privilege. Remember to tie this essay into the rest of the narrative you are writing throughout the rest of your application.

Letters of Recommendation

Asking Potential Letter Writers

Be strategic in who you ask to write a letter of recommendation. You want people who know you well and can speak to your potential as a clinical psychologist. These will most likely be professors from college, or faculty members/primary investigators from a research assistant position, or people who supervised you in a clinical experience. Remember: your entire application is telling a story, so you want your letter writers to be able to support that story. You want someone who can speak to your interpersonal strengths, academic success, and research expertise – maybe even someone or multiple people who can speak to all of these qualities. For example, my letter writers included two professors from college (one who taught me in two courses, including abnormal psychology, and one who supervised my honors thesis) and one faculty member who mentored me in my research assistant position after college. Generally, faculty members are the people to ask for letters of recommendation, rather than people who supervised you in non-academic-related jobs. However, there are exceptions to this rule – ask for advice from a trusted mentor about this.

Whether you ask someone in person or through email, I recommend asking any/all potential letter writers whether they would be willing to write you "a favorable letter of recommendation." This allows a potential letter writer to be able to gently say no if for whatever reason they do not think they could write you the strongest letter possible. While this may be difficult to hear, it's better for a letter writer to say "no" at the outset than to write a letter that is sufficient but not strong. When people read letters of recommendation, it can quickly become clear whether or not a letter writer knows the applicant well. You do not want what is known as a "poisoned" letter of recommendation, where a letter writer is polite but critical. These are rare, but they happen.

Working with Letter Writers

My main advice related to letters of recommendation revolve around being an advocate for yourself. This means being ready to talk about your strengths to people who are writing these letters on your behalf, letting them know how they can be most helpful for you, and reminding them about your skills and accomplishments. Making this process as easy as possible for your letter writers, as well as holding them accountable to deadlines, will help reduce stress around this process for all people involved. Professors are incredibly busy, and are asked to write many, many of these letters – what this means is that you're not imposing upon them to write a letter (they are used to it!), but also that you need to remind them/put in more effort so that they are able to write a favorable, specific letter that will be advantageous for you.

Initially each out to letter writers with as much time as possible (ideally two months or more prior to your first deadline). I recommend creating a "cheat sheet" for all of your letter writers that includes the following information (emailed as a PDF, Google Doc, etc.) to be sent at least one month from your first deadline:

- A summary of the places you are applying to, the type of program it is, the faculty member(s) you are interested in working with, along with the deadlines for applications

and detailed instructions for how they can submit their letters (Interfolio, links to another web platform, etc.)
- A summary of what you did in their class/what clinical experiences you did with them/what research experiences you did with them that you would like them to highlight in their letter
    - For example, if you have a developmental psychology professor who is writing you a letter and they are the main person who can speak to your expertise in this field, you can ask them to really highlight your strengths from this class
- Your undergraduate transcript (for undergraduate professors)

Letter writers may ask for additional information (e.g., a draft of your personal statement). Letter writers may also you to write a portion of the letter. This is not uncommon, so if this happens to you, definitely seek other advice/support in how to draft this type of letter.

Additionally, if you worked more closely with a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow during a research experience, they may write a portion of the letter on your behalf, or work the faculty member in writing your letter. The letter will ideally be from both the graduate student and faculty member.

Check in with letter writers frequently. Usually you will get a notification if/when a letter is submitted electronically. Reminders about upcoming deadlines are appropriate (e.g., one week before a deadline if they have yet to submit the letter).

Also, it's really nice and appreciated to send any letter writer some type of thank you after they have submitted all their letters. It can be a handwritten thank you note, or some chocolate, or a bottle of wine (if appropriate). Don't feel like you need to spend a lot of money on a big gift. But something thoughtful is just really appreciated – as someone who has written a lot of letters of recommendation, it is always incredibly meaningful when a student does this.

The Interview

There is a lot of advice out there about how to “succeed” at graduate school interviews. Read it. Here are some broad tips, based on my experiences interviewing candidates.

You’re constantly being evaluated. Informal chats over lunch, Q&As with graduate students, discussing your clinical interests with a faculty member you barely know… these are all part of the interview. This doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t be yourself – you should! But you should be the version of you who knows and understands that you are being evaluated.

As a former graduate student who was part of the admissions committee, there were many applicants who did not view me as someone with power, so they let their guard down. They weren’t ready to answer my questions about why they wanted to be at our program. They insulted other applicants, or other grad students. They got drunk during a dinner with just grad students. This all affected whether we decided as a program to admit them or not. Further, we were highly critical if we heard from administrative support staff about applicants who were rude to them during email exchanges or informal conversations. This should be standard practice for anyone, but just as a reminder: Be nice to people who appear to have very little power!

You’re interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. Yes, it’s a cliché, but it’s true. It’s very easy to only think about how you are coming off to others, but be mindful and inquisitive about your own opinions about the place you’re interviewing. Be vigilant. If someone makes a random comment to you that you find off-putting or offensive, take that into consideration as you evaluate the culture and environment of the program you’re applying to. In line with this…

Be prepared to ask A LOT of questions. Someone once interviewed me and spent the entire 30 minutes just wanting me to ask them questions. Luckily, I was prepared with lots of questions, but I knew others who were not. This probably won’t happen to you, but it is important to be ready to ask questions from every single person that you interview, as well as anyone else you encounter in even informal settings (like over lunch). It does not look favorably when applicants have no questions to ask – questions allow interviews to see you as someone who is curious and excited about their program. Ask the same questions to multiple people to compare whether their responses are the same. Don’t forget to ask practical questions related to living in the city where the program is and how the program will support you (financially, emotionally, etc.). Refer back to “Choosing a Program” to brainstorm specific questions.

Have a list of questions ready (in your purse/briefcase/binder) to refer to at any moment during the interview process. Here are a few that I like to ask:

- [For potential mentor(s)] How would you describe your mentorship style?
- What is your favorite aspect of this program, and what aspect are you working towards changing?
- What’s your favorite part about being a (professor, researcher, clinician, student)?
- What’s the hardest part about being a (professor, researcher, clinician, student)?
- What’s your favorite aspect about research?

- Why did you get into this field in the first place?
- What does a successful graduate student in this program look like?
- What advice do you have for potential clinical psychology graduate students?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- Any questions that I should have asked that I haven't?

Take advantage of time with graduate students. Graduate students are the canary in the coal mine – they will show you whether a program is the right fit for you. They will typically be more honest than faculty related to things that they don't like about the program, or whether it's hard to afford living in a specific city based on their stipend, or whether they're overworked, or whether the person you're applying to work with is supportive of their students or not. Ask them questions that you may feel less comfortable asking a potential mentor. Watch how they interact with their peers (are they competitive with others?) as well as whether they just seem happy or not. They are your future. Take advantage of all the wisdom they can offer. It is a BIG red flag if you are not provided during the interview stage with any structured time just with graduate students.

Read in between the lines. Always ask about what aspects of the program people don't like, or what are the strengths and areas of growth of potential mentors/other faculty. Whatever people say, a good rule of thumb is that it's probably worse than how they are presenting it. Even students want to present their programs in a favorable light, and don't want to appear rude or ungrateful. You may need to read in between the lines. For example, if someone says that a potential mentor is "a little micro-manage-y," this probably means the person is INCREDIBLY micro-manage-y. Alternatively, if someone says that a faculty member "can sometimes be hard to reach by email," this probably means that this faculty member almost never responds to emails. Maybe you ask a question and someone changes the topic, and you realize later that they didn't really answer your question at all. Look out for potential red flags that may be disguised by polite language or from people avoiding some topics.

A Note About Pre-Screening Interviews

Some programs have what are known as pre-screening interviews prior to asking applicants to be part of more official interviews. For example, a faculty member may decide to have a 30-minute phone/Zoom interview with 10-12 potential candidates to decide on the 2-4 candidates they want to invite for the in-person interview.

The same advice applies to these interviews as other interviews. Schedule them (if you can) during times when you know you'll be ready and have privacy. Be prepared to discuss broadly why you are interested in that specific program, why you want to work with specific faculty member(s), how you want to extend/contribute to the program, and what types of clinical experiences you're looking forward to. It might be helpful to create a cheat-sheet – a one-page document just listing main points you want to get across, articles you want to bring up, specific aspects of the program you're excited about, and questions you want to ask. You can have this sheet ready during the conversation if you need to glance at it to remind yourself of things you want to say. This type of sheet is useful for any interview (virtual or in-person) – to be used as a resource, not something to stare at or read from.

Budgeting for the Application Process

Applying to graduate programs is *expensive*. Here are some of the main costs, both explicit and implicit, with the process, as well as an approximate amount of money I spent when I applied to seven programs in 2010.

Applying to programs

Potential costs related to applying to programs:

- Taking the GRE or the GRE Psychology test (if GREs are required for programs you are applying to), as well as costs related to sending your GRE scores to programs
- Sending official transcripts from your college(s) or other educational institutions (always check to see if programs require official transcripts versus being able to send free electronic copies)
- Fees for applications (though look for application fee waiving programs/scholarships, especially if you are first-generation student or otherwise belong to an underrepresented group in academia)

For comparison: Back in 2010 I applied to seven programs and spent approximately $750 total on these related costs.

Interviewing at programs

Congratulations, you've been invited for interviews! The costs are going up! Reach out to the administrative contact for the university you're interviewing (most likely the person who is emailing you schedules and asking you about dietary restrictions) for more information if necessary to help you budget for your needs.

As of 2021, it's unclear whether programs will continue to offer virtual/Zoom interviews as standard practice. So, it may still be prudent to expect to pay to travel for in-person interviews or open houses.

Potential costs to consider:

- "Professional" attire and related expenses (e.g., suits, shoes, shirts, make-up, hair products, ties, briefcase/purse, travel iron/steamer, tailor costs, dry cleaning costs, etc.). I could say a lot about the sexist, racist, classist, ableist expectations related to what is deemed as looking "professional." Regardless, due to the society we live in, at least when I applied for programs, I was expected to wear a suit – so I bought my first suit. I also had to get it tailored because of course suits bought off the rack don't automatically fit on your body (why would you expect such an unreasonable thing?!) You may want to budget for multiple suits, depending on the expectations for attire and how many interviews you go on.
    - Be mindful that you may be required to walk a decent amount, in winter weather. This means possibly investing in a "professional" winter coat if you so choose,

    and comfortable shoes that also appear “professional,” which if you are a femme-presenting person, you understand is a BIG undertaking. Good luck.
- Travel to and from the interviews (plane/train tickets, gas).
    - Some schools may offer to reimburse a part of these costs (definitely ask!), but most likely not all of them, and not the entire costs. Additionally, they may only reimburse you months *after* you purchase your plane tickets, so it’s still a cost you need to consider in the short-term.
- Travel *during* the interviews – don’t automatically assume that wherever you are staying will be walkable to campus or to other places as part of the interview process (e.g., dinner out with grad students), or that the airport is accessible to any of these locations. Budget for cab rides, gas for your car, and/or public transit fees.
    - If you are staying at a hotel close to campus, ask the hotel whether there are any free shuttles to and from campus. Some hotels offer these if they are close to a medical school, for example, where medical student applicants come and go frequently.
- Housing/Meals
    - You may be able to stay with a graduate student or family member or friend during the interview, or the school may provide a hotel room for you, which will reduce housing costs. However, this may not be an option for you, or for whatever reason you need/want to find your own place.
    - Most programs will provide meals during the interview day(s), but it varies – definitely budget for at least a few meals on your own (e.g., dinner after the last interview when your day is officially “over,” breakfasts, coffee, etc.).

For comparison: I did not keep great records of how much the interview process cost me in 2010. I went on four in-person interviews, including one local university and three out-of-state (meaning three roundtrip plane trips). Each out-of-state place offered me $200-$300 to offset travel costs. I was also able to stay with graduate students or friends at each location, so I did not have housing costs. My guess is that I spent approximately $2,000, with $600-900 of that money reimbursed, with the bulk of these costs including plane tickets and my “professional” attire.

A Note About Program Accreditations

There are two main accrediting bodies for clinical psychology PhD programs, and they are important because they will affect what opportunities are available to you to become a licensed provider (if this is one of your professional goals).

American Psychological Association (APA) Accreditation: The majority of clinical psychology PhD programs are APA-accredited. For many American clinical internship sites, it is required that you received your degree from an APA-accredited institution. Additionally, the majority of US states require that you come from an APA-accredited institution to become a licensed provider.

Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS): PCSAS is an independent organization that has a different standard for research rigor than APA accreditation. If a program went to the trouble to get PCSAS accreditation, you know that it is a research-focused and research-heavy program. Many programs are both APA and PCSAS accredited. However, some clinical science programs (like UC Berkeley) have stopped seeking APA accreditation because they feel like the accreditation standards have become overly burdensome and irrelevant for clinical science programs and are now only accredited by PCSAS. This makes things complicated for internship and licensure, as many clinical internships require students to come from an APA-accredited institution, and many states require APA accreditation to become licensed providers. As of 2021, if you come from a PCSAS-only institution, you can become licensed in seven states (CA, NY, IL, DE, MO, MI, NM) and through the Veterans Administration. Learn more and keep updated on PCSAS news here. You can find a list of doctoral programs that are PCSAS-accredited, in addition to being part of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, here.

This may not seem like it matters all that much, especially if you're more interested in clinical science programs. However, a lot can change during grad school: you may enter the program thinking you *never* want to be a licensed provider, and then leave the program realizing that you'd like the option to become licensed. While it's hard to predict what we want in the future, try to take some time to really think about all the possible opportunities you want to have available to you once you get your degree, especially if you're considering programs who are or are considering to be only PCSAS accredited.

Recommended Resources

The Application Process

- Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice by Donald Asher (parts of the book are free on Google Books)
- Insider's Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical and Counseling Psychology
    - It lists different clinical and counseling psychology programs in the US and tells you some quick info about them (e.g., how research oriented they are vs. clinically oriented). It also gives great advice about the application and interviewing process for different grad programs.
- The Professor Is In (book and website)
    - No-nonsense career advice for grad students all the way through to someone trying to find an academic job (as well as deciding that maybe you don't want that after all) – written mostly for people interested in academia, with a focus on people in the humanities, it is still incredibly informative and helpful for all stages in the academic career and will offer a perspective you probably won't get in grad school. The website also has a lot of great, free resources, including excerpts from the book, posts by BIPOC scientists/academics, and other general advice.
- Project SHORT is a student-led organization committed to helping shrink the socioeconomic gap in medical and graduate school – if you are a first-generation student or otherwise underrepresented in academia, you can get connected with a graduate student mentor to help edit/comment on your grad school essays and mentor you through the application process for free.
- Resources from the Stigma Psychopathology Assessment (SPLAT) Lab for potential graduate students in clinical psychology, including sample personal statements, FAQs, and other helpful information: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/splat-lab/faqs/
- Tips from the Carolina Affective Science Laboratory for how to develop your career, get involved with research, and get into graduate school (not specifically tailored for clinical psychology programs): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TWQSx0jOLVT6lrB9nztZLNUvZOFqH4xBQO3Rf5rPDh4/edit

Professional Networking

- Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology (Twitter: @SSCP_Tweets) is dedicated to integrating science and practice in clinical psychology – has a great email listserv where people will post research assistant jobs, student openings, post docs, etc. (you will get a lot of other stuff through email, but it's worth it)
- Society for Affective Science (Twitter: @affectscience) is dedicated to affective science broadly defined (the study of emotions). It has an annual interdisciplinary conference and a very engaged student presence. Job posting are often found on their website/Twitter.

- Society for Research in Psychopathology (Twitter: @srp_science) is a society on the research of psychopathology (includes a fairly large group of scientists interested in studying mood disorders and schizophrenia). It has an annual and a great email listserv for getting job postings, student openings, etc.
- Academic Twitter is a broad term related to using Twitter to follow scientists, labs, and clinicians. More and more researchers let their followers know whether they are hiring or taking new students in their program. Follow organizations/labs/researchers/journals you're interested in (including the ones from this document!) You can also Google "how to use academic Twitter" for some tips. Here are a few more Twitter accounts that may be worth a follow:
    - @ABCTNOW (Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies)
    - @APA (American Psychological Association)
    - @PCSASNews (Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System)
    - @PsychChatter (Academic Twitter for Psychology)
    - @Academics4BSW (Academics for Black Lives)

Other Resources

- A Google spreadsheet of BIPOC-authored psychology papers (organized by discipline) https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1i7Eacoyv9VVg2lBbCV-KJZg4nSGvR_VZFOysOyOGG8g/htmlview#gid=666010790
- A Google spreadsheet of Scholars of Color, including their university/affiliation and areas of expertise: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1188aq_e2FXv7qvbkrmlT3-OUT47JKU2UjY2FFt1_Y24/edit?fbclid=IwAR2TcnXFuRXAW1Iyy61drRdw9cM5vgzCM3Unb17pWXQxhJsJfblIIMwTO9w#gid=0
- A list of free and low-cost resources for graduate students, postdocs, and early career researchers (e.g., editing, review resources, time management, etc.): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IFbHIN5OOAO0qz-VfCU9nEx4-x6CfArj1-d8ylA2vsU/edit
- How to Write a Lot by Paul Silvia
    - More for general advice about scientific writing (by a psychologist!)

Appendix

Personal Statement Example

NOTE: This is my personal statement from when I applied to graduate programs in 2010. I have not changed the content since then. There are things I like about it, but there are things I don't. Definitely do what I say (in my advice), rather than copy exactly what I did…

She looks confused as I ask her to put down the toy cars. I lead her to a room away from her classmates where I introduce the "music game" I want her to play – the main task for my senior honors thesis, "The effects of tempo and familiarity on children's interpretation of emotion in music." She looks afraid and refuses to speak. Although no child has cried yet in my presence, I dread the thought of it. Despite the overwhelming kindness and support the teachers have shown in allowing me into their classrooms, I worry that I could lose their trust in an instant if I cause one tear to fall from a child's eyes. I smile to the girl as encouragingly as I can and tell her how excited I am to play this game with her. She does not say a word. I start to fear that she will be my first crier. I reassure her that if she doesn't want to play my game, she doesn't have to. After giving me a long blank stare, she finally says, "If I play your game, will you play cars with me after?" I nod energetically, breathing a huge sigh of relief as I start my task. A period of anxiety transforms into one of the most rewarding interactions I have with a child participant. She is laughing with me by the time I walk her back to the classroom. Small moments like this continue to cultivate my desire to pursue a Ph. D. in psychology.

The only aspect of research that I enjoy more than interacting with participants is transforming those interactions and responses into statistical data. My love of data analysis was heavily influenced by my experience in my undergraduate statistics class, Research Methods II. This course taught me the power of statistics in answering questions about the real world by focusing on its practical applications as well as its conceptual aspects. My friend Cynthia and I often worked on our statistics homework together and she would remark on my enthusiasm for the subject. Working late into the night, she would often be ready to quit long before I was. Inevitably, she would turn to me with an exhausted smile and say, "You're having too much fun with this." The most exciting part of research to me is the ability to take real-life observations, such as whether or not a child thinks a song is happy or sad, and turn them into statistical results that help to answer a question about human behavior, such as figuring out what influences children's emotional reactions to music. Applying the knowledge I gained from this course to the data analysis for my senior honors thesis not only fostered my passion for statistics, but strengthened my passion for psychological research as well.

My current work as a full time research assistant in Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett's Interdisciplinary Affective Science Laboratory (IASL) continues to develop my interest in studying emotion. In collaboration with Dr. Barrett and other researchers, I am currently working on a multitude of studies that explore the way we process affective information, leading the majority of my projects with a team of undergraduate research assistants. One project I have been involved with since its inception is a series of studies examining whether perceiving affect (pleasantness/unpleasantness or approach/avoid tendencies) is more automatic, and therefore more basic, than perceiving discrete emotion categories in faces. Our preliminary data suggests that defining affect according to the perceiver's behavioral tendency (approach/avoid) might be a distinct process from defining affect according to the property of the perceived object (pleasantness/unpleasantness) when categorizing faces. In the future we may examine whether

these definitions of affect are associated with distinct neural pathways. I am excited about the potential of this finding and look forward to my involvement in preparing these data for publication when the time is right.

I am passionate about applying my skills and knowledge on affective processing to the study of psychopathology. My interest in clinical psychology was fostered through an internship at the Darke County Mental Health Clinic, where I gained experience interacting with patients and understanding the daily routine of a mental health institution. I believe the inability to regulate or process one's emotions, a capacity that most people take for granted every day, is the most debilitating aspect of many mental disorders. After confirming my love of research throughout my undergraduate career and current position, I am eager to gain clinical research experience. Every new question that arises in my current work I yearn to apply to clinical populations. I am dedicated to research that contributes to a broader understanding of the emotional problems related to psychopathologies in order to improve the assessment, prevention, and treatment of them.

The University of California, Berkeley is my ideal place to embark on the next step of my professional life. I wholeheartedly ascribe to the Clinical Science program's dedication to integrate theory, research, and application towards the study and understanding of mental illness. Dr. Ann Kring's work regarding the specific deficits related to affective processing and schizophrenia, summarized in Kring and Caponigro (2010), captivates me. I was first inspired by her research during my undergraduate career and it continues to influence my devotion to understanding the unique emotional deficits related to clinical populations. Dr. Sheri Johnson's work examining emotion regulation and bipolar disorder is also of great interest to me. It would be an honor to have either of these outstanding professors as a mentor. I am also excited by the prospect of receiving my clinical training through the department's unique Psychology Clinic, allowing me the opportunity to work with a diverse and multicultural population. After receiving my Ph. D. I plan on continuing my career as a research scientist in an academic setting, attempting to instill the same intellectual curiosity in my students that was instilled in me. Writing about my past experiences and what I wish to accomplish in the future only enhances my excitement in pursuing a Ph. D. at the University of California, Berkeley. I highly anticipate beginning my research career in clinical science and the exhilarating challenges that lie ahead.

Diversity Statement Example

NOTE: This is my diversity statement from when I applied to graduate programs in 2010. I have not changed the content since then. Again, do what I say, not necessarily what I did…

My mother is one of the strongest individuals I know and has unduly influenced my idea of the person I strive to become, both in my personal and professional life. My parents married right after high school and because they both could not afford to go to college, she supported my father while he worked for his undergraduate degree. She has worked in a factory position for the majority of my lifetime and both her and my father have worked for a living in order to support me and my three brothers. While she has never shown any shame regarding her profession, it is obvious that if circumstances had been different she would have relished the opportunity to continue her education. She did not want our family's socioeconomic position to impede on any of her children's academic aspirations. When I began showing interest in prestigious private liberal arts colleges that were beyond the means of my parents' income, she did not want financial obstacles to stop me from being able to attend my top choice undergraduate institution. Each day that passed came with a reminder from my mother to apply for financial aid and academic scholarships to help finance my education. While her daily reminders sometimes felt relentless, I understand now that her regular discussion of money was for my own benefit. She wanted me to be aware that in order to reach the high goals I set for myself, I would need to work hard and understand the sacrifices that both her, my father, and I would need to make, financial and otherwise. Above all else, she did not want me to take for granted the education she wanted me to have, an education that she was not able to have. I have never felt ashamed of the financial assistance I received in college when so many around me did not need such support. My parents taught me to be grateful for the privilege to have access to my education despite my family's socioeconomic status. This appreciation led me to work for three years in the Oberlin Alumni Fund, an organization devoted to fundraising for scholarships for students like myself who otherwise would not have been able to afford such an education.

As I continue my education by pursuing a Ph. D. in the Psychology Department at the University of California, Berkeley, my mother's influence on me persists. She has always supported my passion for psychology and encouraged my desire to use my intelligence and talents to help those less fortunate than myself. From volunteering to help rebuild a women's shelter to sewing her grandchildren's Halloween costumes, my mother has never let time nor financial restrictions keep her from offering her help to others in need. My passion for psychology stems from a similar desire: I wish to devote my professional life to clinical research with the purpose of learning more about what causes mental illness and what can be done to treat it. Unfortunately in our society, those who are less privileged financially often suffer more than others if issues such as mental illness arise. By pursuing a career in clinical science, I hope that my research will help anyone who may have a psychopathology, regardless of their socioeconomic status. My upbringing and my mother's strength and determination in the face of adversity have unduly influenced my career pursuits. I hope that I can continue to live up both to her and my own high expectations that I have set for myself in pursuing a Ph. D. at the University of California, Berkeley.

Curriculum Vitae (CV) Example

NOTE: The content from this CV is from when I applied to graduate programs in 2010. However, over the years I have reformatted it to be a slightly prettier, better organized CV.

Jasmine Mote, B.A.

Curriculum vitae

[MAILING ADDRESS]
[PHONE NUMBER]
[EMAIL]

EDUCATION

2009 B.A., Psychology (Summa Cum Laude)
Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
GPA: 3.90
Honors Thesis: "The effects of tempo and familiarity on children's interpretation of emotion in music (Chairperson: William Friedman, Ph.D.)

AWARDS AND HONORS

2009 Stetson-Heiser Prize in Psychology, Oberlin College
2009 Phi Beta Kappa, Oberlin College
2009 Sigma Xi, Oberlin College
2009 Graduation with Distinction of Highest Honors in Psychology, Oberlin College
2008 Jerome Davis Research Award, Oberlin College

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Mote, J.** (In press). The effects of tempo and familiarity on children's affective interpretation of music. *Emotion*.

2. Kveraga, K., Boshyan, J., Adams, R. B., **Mote, J.**, Betz, N., Ward, N., Hadjikhani, N., Bar, M., & Barrett, L. F. (In preparation). If it bleeds, it leads: Separating threat from mere negativity.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. **Mote, J.,** Barrett, L. F., Bar, M., & Gendron, M. (2011, January). "Affective processing precedes emotion processing when categorizing faces at brief exposure durations." Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Antonio, TX.

2. **Mote, J.,** Lynn, S. K., Hoge, E., Dryman, M. T., Pollack, M., Simon, N., & Barrett, L. F. (2010, May). "Over-generalization may underlie misperception of angry faces in social anxiety disorder." Association for Psychological Science, Boston, MA.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2009-2011 Research Associate, Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Boston College/Northeastern University, Boston, MA
Principal Investigator: Lisa Feldman Barrett, Ph.D.

Developed and implemented various behavioral experiments under the direct supervision of Dr. Barrett. Duties included administering an affect recognition task as patients with intractable epilepsy recover from surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital; programming and administering experiments using E-Prime software, including backward masking paradigms, auditory presentation tasks, norming studies, and reaction time studies; photographic stimuli acquisition and development using Abrosoft Fantamorph and Adobe Photoshop; undergraduate student subject recruitment; and SPSS data analysis.

2009 Research Assistant, Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Boston College, Boston, MA
Principal Investigators: Lisa Feldman Barrett, Ph.D.; Kristen Lindquist, Ph.D.

Worked under the direct supervision of Dr. Lindquist (June-August 2009). Duties included running participants on a psychophysiological experiment (EKG, blood pressure, impedance cardiography).

2008-2009 Psychology Honors Empirical Research, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
Principal Investigator: William Friedman, Ph.D.

Proposed and conducted an original project under the direct supervision of Dr. Friedman. Received funding for study and completed oral defense prior to graduation (earning Highest Honors in Psychology). Thesis currently published in *Emotion*.

2008 Undergraduate Research Assistant, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
Principal Investigator: Michael Loose, Ph.D.

Worked under the direct supervision of Dr. Loose in his neuroscience research lab (September-December 2008). Duties included collaborating with a team of research assistants; developing a unique research idea and EEG experimental protocol; testing participants using a 32-channel EEG net; and data entry and coding.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Understanding Themes in "The Twilight Zone" (Spring 2007), Experimental College (ExCo) Instructor, 10 students, Oberlin College

Co-taught an undergraduate course critically examining the TV series "The Twilight Zone" with another student instructor. Duties included developing the syllabus, leading weekly discussions, and assigning/evaluating mid-terms and final papers/projects.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Research Education

2010-2011 Cooperative Education Undergraduate Research Assistant Advisor, Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Northeastern University. Total research assistants: 1

2010-2011 Undergraduate Research Assistant Advisor, Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Northeastern University. Total research assistants: 5

2009-2010 Undergraduate Research Assistant Advisor, Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Boston College. Total research assistants: 2

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

2007 Office Intern, Darke County Mental Health Clinic, Greenville, OH
Volunteered from June-August 2007. Duties included researching for grants and writing grant proposals; creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations for interdepartmental meetings; recording meeting minutes; and taking dictation on therapist and psychiatrist notes.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/OUTREACH

2010-2011 Middle and High School Educational Outreach Volunteer for the Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

American Psychological Association; Association for Psychological Science

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP AND WORK EXPERIENCE

2009 Psychology Tutor, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH

Tutored a student in developmental psychology on an individual, weekly basis (April-May 2009).

2007-2009 Student Head Phoner/Researcher, the Oberlin Alumni Fund, Oberlin, OH

Duties included supervising other Student Phoners as they called alumni and parents to fundraise for numerous charities; researching for lost contact information of alumni and parents, both over the Internet and through Raiser's Edge software; and organizing program financial statistics on a weekly basis.

2008 Freelance Journalist and Assistant, Oberlin Alumni Magazine, Oberlin, OH

Responsible for organizing alumni class notes for magazine publication, preparing summaries of publications by alumni, and authoring articles on campus life and events (July-November 2008).

2008 Psychology Department Assistant, Oberlin College, Oberlin OH

Responsible for providing administrative support to administrative staff in the Psychology Department (June-August 2008).

2008 Media Relations Assistant, Oberlin College Office of Communications, Oberlin, OH

Created a daily email newsletter of current news articles associated with Oberlin College and higher education with circulation to senior staff members (June-August 2008).

2006-2007 Student Phoner, the Oberlin Alumni Fund, Oberlin, OH

Fundraised for numerous charities through phone, email, and mail correspondence.

2006-2007 Publicity Coordinator, Affirming Choice Through Spirituality, Oberlin College

Member of an organization devoted to creating awareness of women's health issues and reproductive rights through a non-denominational religious perspective. Responsible for promoting events on campus and facilitating communication between the organization and the college.