Michigan State University Psychology Graduate Program

Information Session

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Admissions chair



SPARTANS WILL.

Tell us about yourself

Department of Psychology: Who are we?

Our mission is to train the next generation of scientists, leaders, and professionals to advance knowledge and promote individual and societal well-being.

We are dedicated to providing world-class scientific training

We value scientific integrity, methodological rigor, curiosity, collaboration, inclusiveness

Roughly 50 faculty members, 25-30 staff, 60-75 graduate students

Where are we?

~1.5 hr to Detroit or Grand Rapids
~3.5 hr to Chicago
~5 hr to Toronto



















MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

East Lansing Facts

- ~45,000 residents (non-student)
- Over 100 restaurants, bars, shops downtown
- Almost always new downtown projects/construction
- Lovely place to live
  - only moderate traffic
  - very safe; crime ~40% lower than national average
  - cost of living ~10% below national average





Lansing Facts

- Capitol of Michigan
- 115,000 residents
- Even less expensive than East Lansing
- Many different types of neighborhoods
- Kiplinger Magazine – Top 10 cities for young adults
    - “Little-known hotbed for young professionals”





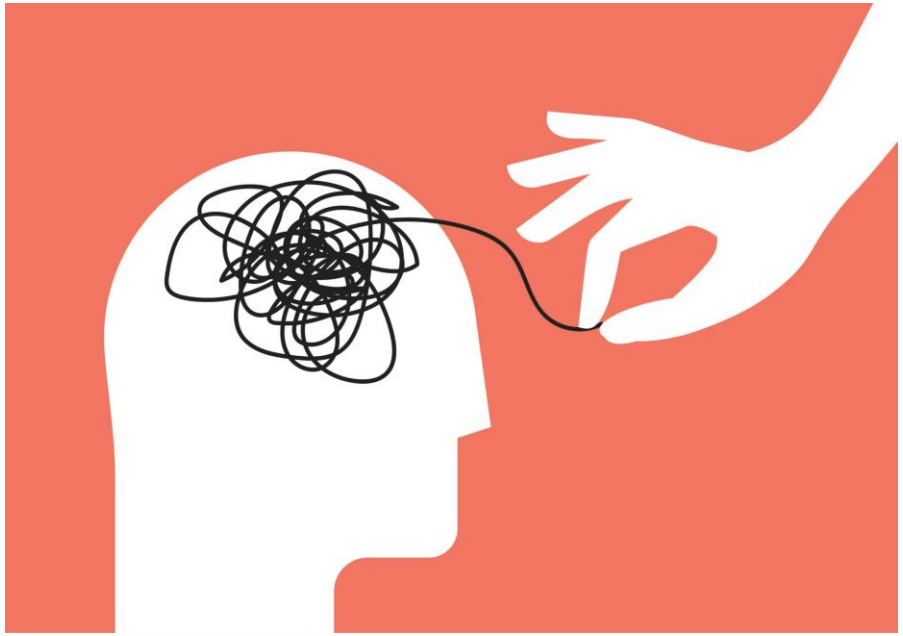
MSU Facts

- Founded in 1855
- 5,300 acre campus
- More than 200 programs of study
- 50,000 students
  - 41,000 undergraduate
  - 9,000 graduate/professional
- In top quartile of Tier I research universities in U.S.
- Over half billion dollars in external research funds annually





How is MSU Psychology organized?



- Behavioral Neuroscience (BNS)
- Clinical Science (CS)
- Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience (CCN)
- Ecological/Community Psychology (ECO)
- Organizational Psychology (ORG)
- Social/Personality Psychology (S/P)

BNS program highlights

- Studies the neuronal, hormonal, and genetic control of diverse motivated behaviors (e.g., sleep, social play, parenting, ingestive behavior, drug addiction)
- Highly collaborative
- Toolboxes include
  - Rodent behavior
  - Viral-mediated gene knockdown/up
  - Brain protein and mRNA analysis
  - Neuroanatomical tracing
  - Intravenous drug self-administration
  - Optogenetics, chemogenetics
  - Microdialysis
  - Microbiota analysis

BNS faculty



Alexandra Castillo-Ruiz– Influence of birth mode on infant microbiome and brain development.



Alex Johnson– neuronal mechanisms of learning & motivation.



Joe Lonstein - neuroendocrine regulation of postpartum caregiving and emotional behaviors



Alexa Veenema – role of vasopressin and oxytocin in regulating social behavior



Lily Yan- how ambient light affects emotional & cognitive behaviors

Our Facilities



Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Building






Where is the Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Building on campus?
Interdisciplinary Science and Technology
Architecture
Food Science
Wilson Rd
Oyer Speech and Hearing
Landscape Services
Communication Arts and Sciences
Packaging
Natural
Plant Biology Laboratories
Molecular Plant Sciences
Plant and Soil Sciences
Horticulture Gardens
Food Safety and Toxicology
Veterinary Medical Center
Vet Med Fields
Pegasus Critical Care
Tennis Courts
Conrad
Hubbard
Fee
Canadian National Railway
Regional
Lewis Landscape Arboretum
Bogue St
S Hagadorn Rd
Service Rd
Linen Services
Simon Power Plant
MSU Recycling Drop-Off
Green Way
Recycling Dr
Farm Ln
MSU Surplus Store and Recycling Center
Baker Woodlot and Rajendra Neotropical Migrant Bird Sanctuary
Interdisciplinary Science and Technology
Bott
Clinical Center
Life Science
Bio Engineering
Radiology
Woodlot Dr
Engineering Research Ct
Engineering Research
Nuclear Magnetic Resonator
Energy and Automotive Research

How will I spend my time?

- 2-3 courses each semester of first year
- Actively engaged in research from the start
- Less formal training through seminars, research team meetings, workshops
- Master's thesis completed in first two years; dissertation completed typically within 5 years

What stands out about the MSU Psychology graduate program?

- Available resources
  - funding, professional development, student organizations
- Student involvement in publications/presentations/awards
- Success of alums



What does it cost?

- Research and Teaching Assistantships
  - 4 years guaranteed funding
  - 20 hours/week work for $1162 biweekly pay (current rate)
  - health insurance covered
  - tuition waiver for 9 credits
- Fellowships
- Research/travel funds
- Parking: $147 semester



What kind of applicants are you looking for?

A PhD is a *research degree*



Research skills

Analytic and writing skills

Fit with faculty research interests

What should I include in my application?

Required scores

- GPA

Application fee: $75

Optional

- GRE

Recommendations (3 letters)

- Who to ask? When to ask? What to ask?

Personal Statements

- What makes you stand out?
- Why do they need you?
- What will you do with this degree?

Interviews

- Some but not all PSY graduate programs conduct interviews as a second stage

Personal statement elements



- Relevant background about you
- Your experiences
- The skills you gained from these experiences
- Your specific strengths
- Your goals
- Your interests
- Who you want to work with
  - *review department website and faculty webpages to help determine this!*

How to craft a successful application

- Emphasize the fit between your experiences, knowledge, and future interests and that of the graduate program and its faculty
- No one piece of your application is a “make or break” piece of information. All information is considered and evaluated relative to fit with the training goals of the program and specific faculty research.
- There are always fewer slots than qualified applicants, and other constraints, that limit the number of accepted students.

How to Apply

https://psychology.msu.edu/academics/graduate/doctoral/admission

https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/graduate-students



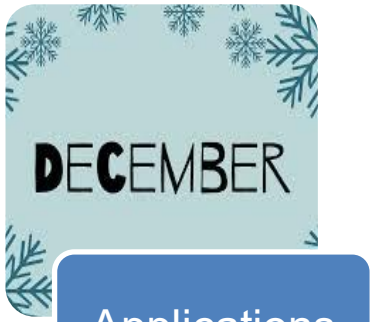
Things to consider as you apply

- Give yourself plenty of time to collect materials and work with the online portal
- Use the online portal for queries about application status
- Recognize that the decision-making process takes time and is iterative (it's conducted in stages)
- Initial contact is via the online portal, followed by outreach directly to you from admissions chairs and sometimes other faculty members

Timeline for applications



Applications Due



Applications Reviewed



Fellowship offers; candidate interviews



Initial offers and waitlist offers



Acceptances



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