Frequently Asked Questions about Applying for the Educational Psychology Ph.D. program

We realize that applying for a graduate program, especially for a doctoral program, can be intimidating and unfamiliar to those who are first generation college students who have not seen others apply for graduate training. Here are some answers to the Frequently Asked Questions about applying for the UWM doctoral program in Educational Psychology.

1. How do I address a low or mediocre GRE or GPA?
   a. We recommend that you address it directly in your statement, explaining the circumstances that may have led to the score or GPA. We take into account the GRE and GPA scores, but only as part of the application process. We also look at the statement and letters of reference, as well as the applicant’s experiences.

2. What do you look for in a strong statement of purpose?
   a. We are a scientist-practitioner program, so we are looking for statement of your overall goal for doctoral training, why you want to be a counseling psychologist, your research interests, how you align with faculty interests, and your interests in focusing on cultural competence in your doctoral training. Here are a couple of additional websites with helpful information on writing a statement of purpose:


   https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/psychology/_files/PDF/diversitypdfs/Personal-Statements%20Workshop.pdf

3. Do recommendation letters have to come from professors? What if it’s been a long time since I was in school? Or if I no longer have a relationship with my professors?
   a. No, they do not have to come from professors, but we would like a letter from someone who can speak to your ability to do advanced graduate work. This might be a supervisor or employer who can speak to your professionalism, commitment to graduate training or ability to do advanced study.

4. Do I need to have research experience to apply for the PhD?
   a. Not necessarily, but you should be able to speak to the areas of research you do want to do and your goals for research.

5. If I am admitted to work with one faculty, is there flexibility to work with others?
   a. Yes. Many of our students are on more than one research team.

6. What if I do not have any clinical experience?
   a. You can speak to the experiences you have had helping people, including volunteer experiences, as well as interests in research working with people.

7. How much must I align with faculty interests?
   a. One area we consider in admitting students is how much they align with faculty interests. However, we realize that interests may change over time, we may hire new faculty, so we will admit students who do not align with a faculty member’s interests but are otherwise a good fit for the program (particularly in wanting to be in a program that emphasizes cultural competence).
8. What opportunities are there for funding?
   a. There are several teaching assistantships available for doctoral students in the department. In addition, there are scholarship opportunities through the Graduate School, such as the Advanced Opportunity Program which is targeted to racial/ethnic minority students and/or first generation students. More information is available at: https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/financing-your-education/

9. Is there a safe space to talk to someone about being a minority or international student in the program?
   a. Yes, Darius Wright and Lauren Mascari, both third year students, have offered to be point people for students applying to the program: dowright@uwm.edu or lmaskari@uwm.edu. They will help find another student if they cannot address the question applicants ask.