
ADMISSIONS

How do I apply?

Applications are available from Teacher’s College Admissions Office. You may call the office at (212) 678-3710. In addition, information and forms can be found at: http://www.tc.columbia.edu/admissions.

How does the admissions process work?

There are several steps in our admission process. First, each application file is thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the committee. Based on this evaluation, the applicant pool is narrowed to a subset of applicants who will be interviewed. Selected applicants are invited to campus for an interview day. During the interview day, each applicant is interviewed individually by several faculty members and current Ph.D. students. In addition, opportunities are provided to tour the campus, meet informally with faculty and students, ask questions, and learn more about our program. Applicants who are not able to attend an interview day are interviewed by phone and are given the chance to speak with faculty members and students. Once selected applicants have been interviewed and evaluated, the faculty meet to make final decisions.

What is the time frame? When will I know if I have been accepted?

Applications are due to the Teachers College Admissions Office by December 15th. The file is cleared by the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at Columbia University. Once that occurs, each applicant file is
carefully reviewed by the social-organizational psychology committee during January and February. Final decisions are made about applicants between the middle and end of March, and applicants are expected to be notified around the first week of April.

**What percentage of applicants are accepted each year?**

The number of students we accept varies from year to year, and typically ranges from 5 to 10. The percentage of applicants accepted also varies from year to year, and typically ranges from 10 to 20%.

**What are the criteria for acceptance into the doctoral program?**

We seek students who are committed to furthering their knowledge of social-organizational psychology. In addition, students must be committed to a scientist-practitioner model that combines both research and practice. Students must desire solid training in the research process as well as be motivated to learn how to apply this knowledge in organizational settings.

We use a compensatory model whereby a weakness in one area can be compensated for by strength in another area. That is, we look at the entire profile of each applicant across a number of different areas. A strong applicant is one with a solid and consistent record of achievement across various domains. In general, we focus on intellectual capacity, fit to the social-organizational psychology program, relevant background and experience, and dedication and commitment to obtaining a Ph.D. To assess these areas, we examine a number of factors including GRE scores, GPA, letters of recommendation, research experience, work experience, activities, a writing sample, and a written personal statement.

**How high do my GRE scores need to be?**

We do not have an absolute minimum score for GRE’s. In the past, the GRE scores (sum of verbal and quantitative components) have been:

- Average GRE score across all applicants: 1230
- Range of GRE scores across all applicants: 680-1530
- Average GRE scores of those accepted: 1300
- Range of GRE scores of those accepted: 1120-1430

**How high do my grades need to be?**

We have no absolute score for GPA but a B average is expected. In the past, GPA’s have been:

- Average across all applicants: 3.5
- Range of GPA across all applicants: 2.4-4.0
- Average GPA of those accepted: 3.5
- Range of GPA of those accepted: 2.8-4.0

**Is work experience required?**

Students are expected to have some previous organizational experience, including full-time work, part-time work, or volunteer work. This background helps students grasp the practical significance of the various theories and research they study. Exceptions may be made for applicants with a strong research background who can demonstrate an understanding of the importance of applied research.
Will it help my chances of acceptance if I talk with faculty members before submitting my application?

Talking with or meeting with faculty members prior to applying will not promote your chances of acceptance. However, faculty members and current students are available to discuss any additional questions you might have about the program. Once acceptance decisions have been made, accepted applicants are afforded formal opportunities to meet with faculty and students to discuss the program.

What should I submit as my writing sample?

The writing sample can take on many forms. If you have a research-oriented paper such as an honors project, master’s thesis, or class paper; this would be a good type of sample to submit. However, any paper that shows your writing skills and your ability to present ideas coherently, concisely, and convincingly is acceptable.

If I am not admitted to the Ph.D. program, may I be considered for the master’s program?

The evaluation committee regularly requests that top candidates be admitted to the master’s program if they are not accepted to the Ph.D. program. However, if you want to ensure that your file is forwarded to the master’s committee once evaluation for the Ph.D. program has been completed, you should note this clearly in your application file.

How can I increase my chances of being accepted?

- Make sure your application file is complete and submitted by the deadline.
- Review your application thoroughly before submitting it to ensure that you have provided all requested information, and have corrected any typos and errors.
- Take the GRE more than once, particularly if your scores are low the first time.
- Ask for letters of recommendation from people who know your academic, research, and/or work experience well enough to provide detailed information and thorough evaluative comments.
- Clarify your career goals before applying. Consider why you need a Ph.D. to meet those career goals.
- Learn about and demonstrate an understanding of the area of social-organizational psychology.
- Clarify your areas of interest within the broad domain of social-organizational psychology. Consider the topics and areas you are most interested in learning about, researching, and practicing.
- Learn about the research process. Obtain experience working on research projects.
- Gain relevant work experience if you do not have any, which can include part-time work or volunteer activities.
- Ensure that you will have the time and motivational commitment required to complete a Ph.D. program.

THE PROGRAM

What are the major requirements for the Ph.D. program?

A minimum of 80 course credits for the Ph.D. is required. Students also must pass a research certification exam, typically toward the end of their second year. In addition, three qualifying papers must be submitted based on students’ academic work and research. A dissertation is the capstone of the degree requirements.
What types of classes are required?

Required classes cover four main areas: 1) research and statistics, 2) theory in social-organizational psychology, 3) practice in social-organizational psychology, and 4) integrative experiences (research workgroups). In addition, students must take three courses in related areas, such as in other psychology fields, business, or human development to ensure breadth of study. More detailed information about coursework and requirements can be found in our Ph.D. Handbook, which is available on-line.

Can I receive credit for previous graduate work?

It is possible to receive up to 32 credits for previous graduate work, if these credits meet social-organizational psychology program requirements. The number of credits that may be transferred is determined on a case-by-case basis by the student’s academic advisor.

What options are available to students to gain practical experience as part of the program?

The program requires students to complete four practical courses, such as practica in change and consultations, conflict resolution, coaching, and group dynamics. In addition, many students complement their academic experience with internships in a variety or organizations in the New York metropolitan area. Organizations where social-organizational psychology Ph.D. students have recently worked or had an internship include Mercer Human Resource Consulting, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, TIAA-CREF, Perkins Williamson Associates, the United Nations, Pfizer, Campbell Soup Company, and PricewaterhouseCoopers (now IBM's Global Business Consulting Services).

What types of research projects are available for students to participate in? How do students get involved?

Students get involved in research by participating in workgroups led by social-organizational psychology faculty. Students are required to participate in at least one workgroup per semester for a minimum of eight semesters overall. Participation in at least two different workgroups is required over the course of the program. More detailed information about workgroups and their activities can be found in the “workgroups” section of Ph.D. handbook, which is available on-line.

What role do students play in workgroups?

In workgroups, students participate in all phases of the research process, including the design and conduct of research. Many times, this participation leads to presentations at professional conferences or publications in journals and books with faculty.

How many students are in a typical workgroup?

The number of students per workgroup varies but typically ranges from 4 to 8.

Can I be a part-time student?

Only full-time students are accepted into our program.

How long does it take to obtain a Ph.D.?

The average amount of time is 5 years for dedicated students.
Is it possible to earn the M.A. *en passant* to the Ph.D.?

Yes, Ph.D. students can receive an M.A. provided that they meet the course and degree requirements for the M.A. This requires completion of at least 45 credits and one qualifying paper.

What is the relationship between Teachers College and Columbia University?

Teachers College is an affiliate of Columbia University. The College has its own administration and budget, while having access to resources of Columbia University, such as the library, health services, recreational center, and so forth. Doctoral degrees are granted by Columbia University.

What kinds of opportunities and support are available for Ph.D. students interested in teaching a course?

A number of students have taught courses within our program at Teachers College, in various programs across the Columbia campus, and at other universities in the local area such as NYU. Students desiring to teach are supported in gaining skills by progressing through a sequence of experiences including serving as a teaching assistant, a focused course related to teaching techniques, and practice with feedback from faculty.

To what extent are students encouraged to pursue their own research ideas and projects?

Numerous opportunities exist for students to work on research projects with faculty in research workgroups as well as to develop and pursue their own research projects and interests. Faculty encourage students to develop their own ideas and studies, leading to papers to meet program requirements or to publication opportunities.

What kind of recognition has Teachers College and the social-organizational psychology program received?

Teachers College has been consistently ranked on *U.S. News & World Report’s* list of top graduate schools in education. Moreover, the social-organizational psychology program has been recognized as one of the best in the country due to its comprehensive approach to preparing graduates (*Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research*, 1998, p. 215). The program was recently ranked #7 in the country based on student ratings of quality (*The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 2004, pp. 28-43). A number of the social-organizational psychology faculty have received national awards and recognition for their contributions to research and practice.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STUDENT AID

How much does it cost to study at Teachers College?

Non-subsidized tuition and fees for the college amount to approximately $20,000 per year. However, all social-organizational psychology doctoral students receive partial tuition subsidies for their first four years in the program. Opportunities for additional income and tuition supplements are also available through teaching, assistantships, teaching courses, work-study programs, and various other appointments.

Are teaching/graduate assistantships available to social-organizational psychology students?

Assistantships are available on a regular basis. Students are required to serve as a teaching assistant for one term; however, most students take on several teaching and graduate assistantships during the course of their program. The remuneration is typically a small stipend.
Do social-organizational psychology students work part-time in addition to their studies?

Many students work part-time in organizations to supplement their income after their second year in the program and most students do a full-time internship with a local business during the summer months.

Do Ph.D. students receive grants and fellowships from organizations outside the school?

Yes, in recent years, several students have received fellowships from various external agencies. Faculty support students in their efforts to obtain external funding and students are encouraged to apply for scholarships, grants, and fellowships.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

How many students are in the program?

The number of students ranges from 35 to 45. At any given time, about 30 are “active” meaning that they are still taking classes, participating in workgroups, and working on completing their formal requirements; the remainder of the students are working on their dissertations.

What are the demographics characteristics of the student group?

Approximately 60% of the students are female, approximately 20% are minority, and approximately 10% are international. On average, students tend to be in their mid to late-twenties when starting the program. However the range of age is large, from early twenties to late forties.

Where do students typically live?

Students tend to live near the university on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Many students live in graduate housing on campus. A few students commute to school from other parts of the city and the greater metropolitan area.

Where are social-organizational psychology students from?

Social-organizational psychology students come from all over the United States, as well as from Canada, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Israel, Nigeria, and many other countries.

STUDENT LIFE

What kinds of activities outside the classroom are available?

Social-organizational psychology Ph.D. students and faculty meet regularly for a colloquium series to promote learning outside the classroom and foster a sense of community within the program. In addition, students engage in committee work with faculty to help with planning colloquia and speakers, social gatherings and parties, selecting and recruiting new students for the program, and so forth. Several student-run clubs aligned with Organizational Psychology are available for membership as well. These include The Organization and Human Development Consulting Club, Society of Human Resource Management, and the Columbia Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development.
Students are encouraged to join professional associations, such as the American Psychological Association, the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology, the Academy of Management, and the Society for Human Resource Management. In addition, students are encouraged to attend and participate in professional conferences as well as take advantage of opportunities within the Columbia University system and the New York City area.

**What is the atmosphere like within the program?**

The atmosphere within the social-organizational psychology program can be described as collaborative, friendly, and relatively informal. Oftentimes, students work in groups on assignments or get together socially. Program faculty are accessible to students, and are supportive and open to students’ ideas, questions, and concerns.

**What kinds of student activities/organizations are there?**

There are about 25 student organizations at Teachers College, representing various aspects of the school’s diverse student body. In addition, Student Life organizes a range of activities on a regular basis, including workshops, social events, and networking opportunities. For more information, please visit the Student Life website at http://www.tc.columbia.edu/stlife/.

**CAREER PROSPECTS**

**What kind of jobs do students get after obtaining their Ph.D.?**

Our students are trained as both researchers and practitioners. Thus, jobs obtained after completion of the Ph.D. vary. Among the jobs our students obtain are: faculty members in university settings, consulting positions in consulting firms, industry positions, and public sector positions. These positions include work in the areas of social psychology, organizational psychology, human resource management, organization change and development, negotiation and conflict resolution, leadership, work-family, coaching, and organizational dynamics.

**Are career/placement services available to students seeking jobs in the academic community or private/public sectors?**

Teachers College Career Services offers consultation and placement services, as well as workshops on job search strategies and skills. In addition, Career Services works with student interest groups, such as the Society of Human Resource Management, to organize job fairs in which corporate recruiters visit the campus and provide other careerrelated networking opportunities. For more information, please visit the Career Services website at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~career-services/>. Faculty and alumni also play a role in helping students obtain jobs.