General Letter to Prospective Applicants for Graduate Study in Behavior Analysis

Thank you for your interest in our program. Information about the graduate program and the behavior analysis area, as well as the application process, can be found on the psychology department web site. I am noting below some characteristics of our program that may guide you in making decisions and preparing your application.

The behavior analysis program at UF is unique in that it combines all aspects of behavior analysis—basic, applied, and theoretical. All students take seminars in each of these areas and individualize their programs primarily on the basis of their research. The faculty view research competence as the primary emphasis of training, although students acquire related skills during the course of their training through practica, research apprenticeships, and liaison work with off-campus research sites. Students also qualify for taking the national certification exam in behavior analysis administered by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

Our program is highly selective in that virtually every applicant we admit has: (a) several courses in behavior analysis at the undergraduate or graduate level, (b) laboratory experience in either basic or applied research, and (c) letters of reference describing exemplary performance in both of the above. Students who have had little or no exposure to behavior analysis in their undergraduate careers are highly encouraged to seek additional experience following graduation (we often send our own undergraduate students to one of several leading research programs around the country before considering them as graduate students), or to complete a Masters degree in behavior analysis having a strong research emphasis before applying to our program.

Another unique feature of our program is that acceptance as a graduate student is by individual advisor. Although we (faculty) meet as a group to determine which applicants possess the minimum qualifications for consideration, individual faculty members make the final selections. Therefore, it may be helpful to become familiar with the interests of our faculty (Dallery, DeLeon, Iwata, Vollmer) and to indicate your interests in the personal statement that accompanies your application.

There are three sources of financial support: university and college fellowships, department teaching assistantships, and research assistantships. Consideration for the first two is automatic if requested on the application for admission. Very few fellowships are offered; these are competitive within the university and usually are awarded based on GPA and GRE scores. Teaching assistantships are contingent upon funding from the college and department and are awarded based on applicant ranking. Research assistantships are awarded by individual faculty members. Every student admitted to our program over the past 10 years has received support through one of these mechanisms. In fact, it seems to have become common practice to admit only the number of students we can support.

Regards,

Brian Iwata