

NAME

Personal Statement

When I was younger, my passion was riding horses. At first, school was a means to an end because if I did not maintain my grades I would not be able to go to the barn to ride. However, as I continued on in my education, school work was no longer just a means to an end; it became a passion of mine. I started to enjoy school, enjoy my classes, and develop a desire and motivation for education. Nonetheless, I was just as motivated to become a skilled and talented rider as I was to become an excellent student. Making time for both was, and still is, a challenge, but I have always been able to find time for my passions. Attaining a **Ph.D.** in clinical psychology is my next goal, the next challenge in my life which will allow me to attain another one of my passions, a career in psychological, **forensic assessment**.

I became interested in psychology after noticing the importance of coping with stress in horse shows. This initial interest was further propelled after taking my first psychology class. The different disorders immediately captured my interest, and I found myself eager to learn more about them. As my undergraduate work progressed, I found I also had an interest in law and criminal justice; classes like Criminal Profiling and Criminalistics, sparked my interest in the study of offenders. I became motivated to find a way to research and study both.

Next, a forensic psychologist spoke about forensic and neurological assessment in my Psychology and Law class, and I had the opportunity to visit the maximum security prison in McCallister, OK. These experiences helped me realize that I want to be involved in the assessment of offenders. **I am interested in assessing competency to stand trial, malingering, legal insanity, and finding ways to better define them. (for the more practice based programs) I am interested in developing and improving upon measures that can help assess**

for competency to stand trial and malingering as well as legal insanity. (for more researched based schools)

There have been two main training experiences that have especially aided me in preparing for graduate school. First, I had the opportunity to work as a teaching assistant for a semester in introductory psychology. During this experience, I was required to take an active leadership role in terms of preparing lecture materials, providing certain lectures to students, and learning how to make the material interesting to students. In addition, I also was in charge of collecting research credits, grading papers, and keeping track of attendance. Thus, these opportunities have provided me with invaluable experience that can be augmented through my graduate training.

I also received considerable hands on training working as a research assistant for Dr. DeMond Grant's Laboratory of Emotion and Psychophysiology (LEAP). In this position, I was able to help Dr. Grant with setting up his laboratory, an experience that provided many learning opportunities. First, I was able to help in setting up and programming several types of psychophysiological equipment including Electrocardiogram and Galvanic Skin Response and scoring the data we collected. Finally, I have been in charge of managing two research projects, organizing laboratory materials, and editing and cleaning data. Through these experiences I have learned the stressors and difficulties involved with research. However, I also have learned how rewarding the research process can be. As a result of these experiences, I am eager to design and conduct research of my own.

Earning a **Clinical Ph.D** would be the ideal vehicle to fulfill my goals of studying psychology and criminal justice in the legal field. I feel that the training experiences offered by **The University of North Texas** are a perfect match for my career goals. In particular, **I am**

interested in examining and developing assessment instruments related to forensic psychology. Dr. Richard Rogers's work with measures of competency and malingering fit right into my intended area of study. Working with Dr. Rogers, would be an excellent way for me to improve my research abilities as well as learn more about creating and working with measures to assess offenders. Having the opportunity to study at The University of North Texas would be a great opportunity to continue on in the psychological field and develop my skills in a field of forensic psychology.

*** note: everything is **bold** and underlined is what I catered to each school I applied to – each is different***

Wingate Example Personal Statement

Obtaining a PhD in clinical psychology will not only provide me with more specific knowledge and research opportunities at the graduate level, but it will serve as a foundation for a career in the field of psychology. An academic career would allow me to continue life long psychological research and contributions to the science psychology. Attaining a Ph.D. in clinical psychology would allow me the very special and desired opportunity to teach and counsel others while expanding my knowledge base and continuing the educational process.

As an African American, I personally notice the lack of minority representation in academia. The deficit of African Americans with PhD's in psychology is a motivator for me to seek out a doctorate degree. There should be cultural diversity in academic settings and more diversity in those people researching clinical psychology issues.

I am particularly interested in researching eating disorders, and more specifically Binge Eating Disorder. I am interested in researching how to better define Binge Eating Disorder and looking at the possible etiology of it. I would also like to better understand its co morbidity with depression.

Depression as a specific research area is another issue that fascinates me. I would like to further examine prevention of depression, its co morbidity with other diseases and it's treatment.

My interests expand to interracial and intraracial issues. One example of an interracial issue that I am intrigued by is whether the race of the therapist has an effect on the success of client treatment depending on the race of the client. I want to examine psychological theories and studies that have been established in majority populations and see if these theories hold true for and pertain to minority populations.

At Florida State University Dr. John C. Brigham has been directing my honors thesis, and my committee is composed of Dr. Thomas E. Joiner and Dr. Brenda Jarmon. I am researching the own-race bias in facial recognition. I am seeking to understand how the skin tone of a target affects the recognition abilities of others. Dr. Brigham believes that my honors thesis can be submitted for publication upon its completion.

Throughout my lower-division years I participated in endeavors to expand my research experience, to better acquaint myself with the instructor role, and to participate in an applied counseling setting. I worked as a research assistant in our cognitive language and memory lab where I conducted computer experiments testing spatial cognition. I was also provided the opportunity to work as a teaching assistant to Dr. Ned Megargee. I learned to grade student class work, took class notes, assisted students, and lead class review sessions. In order to broaden my knowledge in the practical areas of psychology, I interned at a local domestic violence shelter as a victim counselor. I regularly facilitated group counseling at a residential substance abuse treatment program. In addition to that, I performed an intake interview, contacted clients, and provided community education. These experiences have expanded my knowledge in the field of psychology.

Since I began my undergraduate education I have committed myself to maintaining a high GPA. Currently my major and cumulative GPA's are 4.0 and 3.9 respectively. My GPA along with research experience, honors, employment, and the difficulty level of courses I have taken clearly reflect my level of diligence and intelligence. My high degree of achievement is not accurately reflected in my GRE score of 1150. I feel that the GRE score does not reflect my potential, dedication and motivation to seek a graduate degree in clinical psychology. Education is and has been the basis of the individual that I am striving to become.