Should I Go (Straight) to Graduate School in Psychology?

What you need to go to graduate school
- strong academic record (academic honors and Psi Chi membership are helpful)
- research experience (including year-long empirical thesis)
- 3 letters of recommendation (give at least 3 weeks notice)
- high GRE scores (general and perhaps psychology subject GRE, depending on program)
- personal statement that indicates strong background, commitment, & fit with department
- for PhD programs, a good fit between your research interests and those of the faculty

MA programs
One-year programs (e.g., CGU's 4+1 program, London School of Economics social/cultural psychology program) or 2-3 year programs (e.g., MSW, MFCC, MFT)
- To be a therapist or counselor, one may receive masters-level training in social work (MSW or LCSW, licensed clinical social worker), counseling psychology or specialized programs of study (e.g., alcohol/drug, marital-family, or pastoral counseling; art therapy).

Things to consider:
- Programs are less time-consuming than PhD but more costly (they don't fund you)
- You get out faster but have potentially higher student loans and lower earning potential
- They are professional schools: They train you for a specific job – know that you want it!

PhD programs
- They are 5-7 years long so you have to live on a limited income for a long period of time
- Most programs will fund you for all or part of the program
- The academic PhD programs are very research-oriented and train you to be researchers or clinicians. Make sure you enjoy research and need a PhD to get the job you want – you don't always need a PhD for the job you want!

What are the differences among Clinical Psychology (Ph.D.), Professional Psychology (Psy.D.), and Counseling Psychology (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) graduate programs?
- See the graduate school information FAQ sheet (p. 5).

Consider taking some time off between college and grad school if:
- You need more time to do your homework (research grad schools and for PhD programs the research interests of faculty members) and gather application materials (including taking the GRE and if needed the psychology subject GRE)
- You need more time to be sure this is the direction you want to go in (programs can be expensive and time-consuming – when you get out you should want to have the job they will train you to get!)
- You need more time to save money (but don't get used to living on a full-time salary!)
- You need to beef up your application (take more classes, get more research experience, prepare for the GRE or psychology subject GRE)
- You want to take time off to work in a particular job or have a particular experience (traveling abroad, Teach for America, Peace Corps) – think about how you will argue that this experience has made you a more competitive applicant for graduate school

Online Resources at CMC Psychology Department Homepage (http://www.cmc.edu/psych/)
- Psychology Jobs
- Psychology Summer Internships
- Psychology Graduate School Opportunities
- Psychology Undergraduate Conferences
- Psychology Careers with a Bachelor's Degree
- Psychology Graduate School Information: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

How should I prepare early for graduate study in psychology?
See the graduate school information FAQ sheet for more detailed information (p. 5).

1. **Join Honors Societies, especially Psi Chi, and become involved in Psych Club**
    - Psi Chi is the national honors society in psychology
      (http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/psych/PsiChi.php).
    - Psych Club's mission is to represent the psychology community within
      CMC and to provide a resource to students who are interested in the field
      (http://www.cmc.edu/psych/Psych%20Clubs/psychclub.php).
2. **Read and Plan**
    - Begin reading books on graduate study (e.g., *APA's Graduate Study in
      Psychology, 2012 edition*) and examining university department websites
      for information on graduate schools.
    - Begin reading the APA Monitor and the APS Observer (available online)
      which include job listings for those with advanced degrees as well as the
      most recent developments in the discipline.
    - Register and begin preparing to take the GRE and GRE Psychology
      Subject Test.
3. **Get Involved in Research**
    - If possible, become actively involved as an undergraduate research
      assistant. Search out faculty members who share your research interests!
      As a first step, look up psychology faculty profiles on the department
      webpage and take a look at their research interests and publications.
    - Also, look for summer research internships in laboratories or in companies
      that are related to your research interests and opportunities to present your
      research at psychology undergraduate conferences. See links for summer
      internships and psychology undergraduate conferences on the department
      webpage.
4. **Take advantage of Summer Internships & Programs**
    - *Almost all summer internships have application dates around February.*
    - For CMC sponsored internships, see the *CMC Career Center and
      Services* guide. The community service internship program is one of
      the few, if only, internship programs available to freshmen.   The
      Kravis Internship is also of particular relevance to psychology majors.
        o See the Career Services Web site for application information.
           http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/csc/SponsoredInternships/Sponsor
           edSummerInternshipPrograms.php
        o Amanda Stevens (astevens@cmc.edu) is the internship advisor for Psychology.
    - Neuroscience fellowships
        o The 5 C's offer summer internships to conduct research in labs,
           especially those off the 5 C campuses. Contact Dr. Tom Borowski, the
           head of the Neuroscience program (tborowski@pitzer.edu).
5. **Attend Conferences and Give Poster/Paper Presentations**
    - Consider attending a local, state, or regional psychology conference. Also,
      attend any talks, colloquia, or symposia sponsored by the CMC Psychology
      Department, Kravis Leadership Institute, CGU, or neuroscience programs.
    - Become a student affiliate of APS (American Society for Psychological
      Science), APA (American Psychological Association), and/or WPA (Western
      Psychological Association).