

## Preparing for Grad School in I-O Psychology Advice and Resources from Purdue I-O Faculty

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### Franki Kung

My course on the intro to I-O psych uses Paul Levy's text: "[Industrial/Organizational Psychology: Understanding the Workplace](#)." If you haven't taken any I-O psych class, I'd recommend you give it a look.

In terms of books on graduate school, this may be controversial, but I have enjoyed [Surviving Your Stupid, Stupid Decision to Go to Grad School](#), [57 Ways to Screw Up in Grad School: Perverse Professional Lessons for Graduate Students](#), [The Professor Is In](#), and especially in my early grad school days... [PHD comics](#).

SIOF has great educational [videos](#). The one on "[Everything You Want to Know About Graduate School in I-O Psychology but Are Too Afraid to Ask!](#)" from 2016 may be useful to you!

### Melissa Robertson

To get a broad overview of various topics in the field, the [Journal of Applied Psychology Centennial Special Issue](#), [Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior](#), and major handbooks (examples: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) are some great starting places.

If you are interested in working with a particular faculty member, I would recommend looking up some recent work they have published in [Google Scholar](#). Keep in mind that faculty webpages are notoriously outdated and that research takes a long time to publish, so they may be working on things that you aren't aware of.

Finally, I recommend the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) for resources on productivity and time management in academia (you do not have to be faculty to participate).

### Louis Tay

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/successfully-selecting-great-phd-program-louis-tay/>

### Sang Woo

Decide on what general research topic you're interested in, and start reading up on the recent publications on those topics. Some of the major I-O journals you may want to start with are: Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Management, Journal of Business and Psychology, and Journal of Organizational Behavior (also I second Melissa's recommendation on how to get a broad overview of various topics).

After you identify key authors whose work you appreciate in particular, get in touch with them via email to see if they are admitting new students and/or open to research volunteers in their lab.

Once you identify a handful of doctoral programs to consider closely, pay closer attention to the programs where students are thriving (both in terms of research productivity and professional engagement AND psychological well-being), not the ones where you see super-star faculty but little evidence of supportive mentoring. Prepare a list of questions that are targeted toward specific observable behaviors (e.g., ‘how long does it take for you to hear from your advisor on the paper you’re working on’; ‘how often do you meet with your advisor, and are you happy with the frequency and depth of your interactions with them?’), in addition to broad open-ended ones (e.g., ‘are you happy here?’; ‘are they a good advisor to you?’; ‘what do you like about your program’).

### **Chelsea Song**

First, determine whether I-O psychology is the field you want to devote to by:

- Taking introduction to I-O psychology courses and/or reading I-O psychology textbooks (e.g., Paul Levy’s textbook recommended by Franki and Frank Landy and Jeffrey Conte’s “Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Introduction to Industrial and Organizational Psychology”)
- Exploring the recent developments in the field and career options through the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (<https://www.siop.org/>)

Remember, graduate school is an important step in your career, and you want to be sure of your choice before moving forward.

Second, once you are certain that a graduate program in I-O psychology is what you want to pursue, the next step is to get a broad overview of the topics in the field and identify the topics that you are interested in (echoing Melissa and Sang’s suggestions). These include various review papers, book chapters, and journal articles. It is usually recommended to:

- Start off with broader review papers (see the resources listed by Melissa for broad overview) and
- Then move on to research articles (see the main journals listed by Sang). [SIOP Frontiers Series](#) also provide topic-specific summaries of the leading topics in the field.

Note that, in this stage, you do not want to narrow down on your interests too much – you will be learning much more about I-O psychology in graduate school, but it is helpful to know what kinds of topics you are interested in and build up good background for the topics.

Third, identify some key labs in the field and learn more about them. Both Louis and Sang provided great advice and I highly recommend considering them. The fit between you and the advisor and the program is very important – you want to make sure that you choose a program that are supportive and can help you achieve your potentials.

Good luck to your applications!