If you have remaining questions about the program and its suitability for your goals after reviewing the Psychology Department M.S. Program webpage, Office of Graduate Studies website, and this FAQ document, we’d be happy to discuss more by e-mail. You can reach the Director of the Graduate Program in Psychology via email at irene.kan@villanova.edu. Questions about the mechanics of applying to the program should be directed to our department’s office staff at 610-519-4720 or psychologyinformation@villanova.edu.

What should I include in the Statement of Goals?
We would like to hear about both your "immediate" and "long-term" goals, why you think our program is a good fit for you, and why you think you are a good fit for our program. In addition, we also want to know how your prior work (academic, research, extra-curricular) has helped prepare you for graduate education, and how those experiences have shaped your current interests. If there are specific faculty members whose research resonate with your interests, by all means, tell us about that, too. Please note that you are not required to identify specific faculty members in your application material. Many students come to our M.S. program (rather than directly to Ph.D. program) because their interests are not yet focused on a specific research area, and our program can help them refine those interests. Finally, if you wish to explain impediments and barriers that might have impacted your academic performance (such as grades, GRE scores), you may include a brief paragraph at the end of your statement to describe those factors, such as family care responsibilities, illness, or disability. In sum, your statement will help us determine the fit between your interests and our program and also the fit between our program’s strengths and your eventual goals. There is no specific length requirement, but we recommend keeping your statement to 2 to 3 pages.

Is the GRE required? What about the Psychology Subject Test?
The GRE General Test is a required element of the application. We recognize that the cost associated with standardized tests can be prohibitive to some. We encourage you to explore the GRE Fee Reduction Program offered by ETS (https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions).

The Psychology Subject GRE is not required. It is useful information as part of an application when an applicant’s academic background is unusual with respect to the Psychology course work.

Do I have to send official GRE scores from ETS?
Yes.

Do you review every application? Or do you use some kind of a triage process?
The admissions committee reviews all applications holistically -- that means we consider your GPA, GRE scores, prior research/teaching experience, statement of goals, letters of recommendation, and fit with our program. We do not use cut-off scores, and we review all applications that we receive.

Can I include a resume or CV? How about a writing sample?
Yes. The online application system will allow you to include additional materials that are not required. Resumes and writing samples are among the items that can be helpful for evaluating your application.
Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?
We would recommend submitting letters from professors or research supervisors who can speak to your academic aptitude and/or research abilities. While letters from Psychology professors will be the most directly relevant, letters from professors in other disciplines are often appropriate.

What if I don’t have all the pre-requisites by the time of application?
In general, we only consider applicants who have fulfilled all the application requirements (link here). Under rare and special circumstances, we would consider special requests. Please email the Program Director at irene.kan@villanova.edu for additional information.

Are there special requirements for international students?
Yes. Please visit this webpage for additional details.

Are graduate assistantships available?
Graduate assistantships are merit-based, and our evaluation includes your entire application portfolio. To be considered for graduate assistantships, we strongly encourage you to complete your application by March 1. We usually begin making funding decisions near the end of March.

The university also offers graduate assistantships in other offices. We encourage you to explore the "Funding" section on this webpage (link here).

What are the kinds of research opportunities available to graduate students?
All of our students volunteer in research labs. In some cases, some students volunteer in multiple labs. Additional information about specific labs can be found here.

How is thesis mentorship determined?
As students begin our program, we encourage them to explore/refine their interests by volunteering in faculty members’ labs. That is usually a great way to get to know the faculty members, their interests, and the culture of their labs. At some point during the student’s first year (usually towards the end of the Fall semester), they would approach potential thesis mentors and gauge mutual interests. Every faculty member has a slightly different timeline in terms of committing to a thesis student. To help with that process, each faculty member has a document that outlines their preferences and expectations, and these documents are available to all students to peruse. Related to that, faculty members will present their work in one of the required classes during the first semester. This is another opportunity for you to hear about active projects in the labs.

Do you interview candidates for admission?
On-campus interviews are not a necessary or typical part of our admission process. We invite all candidates accepted for admission to visit our department and meet with faculty members as well as current students. If you are interested in visiting before applying or during the admissions process, the program director will be happy to arrange a meeting with you. We also encourage you to consider attending the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Graduate Open House, where one of us will be available to chat, or a Virtual Information Session offered by Graduate Studies. In addition to learning more about the university, attendees of either event will receive an application fee waiver.