Thank you for your interest in the Developmental Science Ph.D. program in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Boston University! I've been receiving many emails from potential applicants expressing interest in our lab and department, and I am unable to respond personally to every message. In the interest of fairness (i.e., not selectively responding to some and not others), I've compiled relevant information that may assist you in deciding whether to apply to our program.

You can learn more about our lab and the work we're doing by visiting our website. Please visit the department's website for more information regarding our Ph.D. program, and you can learn more about the Developmental Science program at Boston University here. Please note that I serve as the primary mentor for students in our Developmental Science program. Although I work closely with faculty and students in our other programs (i.e., Clinical and Brain, Behavior, and Cognition), I do not serve as the primary mentor for students in these programs.

First, I **do plan to review applications and interview students this year**.

Second, although the lab has broad interests in children's social-emotional development and developmental psychopathology, **potential applicants should have interests that align with the research questions outlined here, broadly speaking.** Please note that I see these topics as overlapping and integrated. In addition, we are currently conducting several NIH-funded studies, which are described here. Trainees in our lab will have the opportunity to work on these projects and our ongoing collaborative studies in various ways, so having interests that align with one or more of these projects will likely be important. Trainees have the opportunity to work with data from these projects and from our various completed studies. Finally, as indicated on our website, we believe that developmental science is best served by thoughtful collaborations between scientists whose expertise facilitates a multi-disciplinary approach to research. As such, trainees often collaborate with other faculty, postdocs, and students from other labs at BU and at other universities.

If you think that the BASE Lab might be a good fit for you, **you may wonder whether you would be competitive for admission and how you should put your best foot forward in your application**. Below are examples of key areas that I will consider when reviewing applications. I've adapted these criteria from materials Dr. Aidan Wright provides on his lab's website. I'd also encourage potential applicants to peruse other resources on the academic web, including good advice from the Shackman Lab (here) and the resources provided by Dr. Prinstein (here and here, although these last two links are tailored to clinical students, much of the advice is applicable for those interested in DS programs as well).

- <u>Specific and developed interests in the topics of the lab's research and intellectual curiosity.</u> The personal statement is a great opportunity to provide a coherent and compelling narrative with concrete examples of how you came to be interested in these topics. Things like creativity and intellectual curiosity might manifest in any number of idiosyncratic ways and I would encourage you to convey those as well. Maturity and life experience go a long way to helping us understand and shaping our views on the complex phenomena of psychopathology, so these can be a real asset to applicants.
- <u>Strongly motivated and perseverant in the face of challenges.</u> Provide clear examples of overcoming obstacles, problem-solving, and seeing things through in prior work or personal life.
- Has strong interests in and enthusiasm for quantitative methodology (e.g., statistics). Traditionally strong quantitative GRE scores are good indicator, but they are NOT required. Evidence of taking and doing well in undergraduate statistics or math courses is a good alternative. In the past, applicants have shown commitment to quantitative training by taking statistics courses at community college after graduation and before applying to grad school. Aptitude for coding and data management are always a plus.
- <u>Strong reasoning and writing skills.</u> Traditionally strong verbal/analytical GRE scores are good, but they are NOT required. Even better are writing samples that are demonstrably of the applicant's own work (i.e., not a paper that may have been written in large part by an advisor).
- <u>Values collaboration and teamwork.</u> Science is a social endeavor, and that you are good at getting along while getting ahead is important.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, but highlights some of the major themes and how you might go about conveying them. **I encourage you to develop your application materials so that you demonstrate you meet these criteria, however you think is best to do so.**

Moreover, **our lab values diversity in background and life experiences**. If you are from a traditionally underrepresented group or background or have taken an idiosyncratic path to get to this point, I encourage you to apply if we otherwise fit your scholarly interests and goals.

I hope this information helps you as you consider our lab and program. If after reading all this you have a very specific question that would make the difference between applying or not, please feel free to reach out to me or the trainees in the lab. Best of luck with the application process.