

“What Can I do With a Major in...Psychology?”



Skills Possessed by Psychology Majors

- Understand socio-cultural forces impacting human behavior
- Possess awareness of the processes involved in dynamic person-environment interaction
- Evaluate personal problems and make appropriate decisions
- Interpret and clearly explain psychological research and tests of all types
- Read, write, and speak proficiently
- Evaluate, integrate, and apply knowledge
- Establish and maintain rapport through interpersonal communication skills
- Display sensitivity to and understanding of human development and behavior
- Develop strong quantitative and statistical skills
- Observe and analyze introspectively

From the University of Manitoba's Student Counseling and Career Center website.

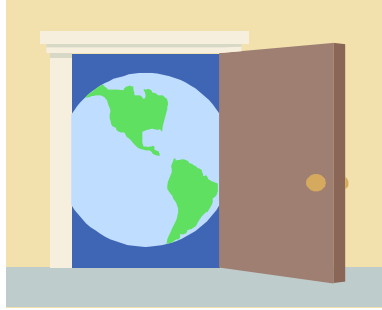
the career center



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Possible Job Titles for Psychology Majors



Psychologists

Psychologists study the human mind and human behavior. Research psychologists investigate the physical, cognitive, emotional, or social aspects of human behavior. Psychologists in health service fields provide mental health care in hospitals, clinics, schools, or private settings. Psychologists employed in applied settings, such as business, industry, government, or nonprofit organizations, provide training, conduct research, design organizational systems, and act as advocates for psychology.

Cognitive and perceptual psychologists study human perception, thinking, and memory. Cognitive psychologists are interested in questions such as, how does the mind represent reality? How do people learn? How do people understand and produce language? Cognitive psychologists also study reasoning, judgment, and decision making. Cognitive and perceptual psychologists frequently collaborate with behavioral neuroscientists to understand the biological bases of perception or cognition or with researchers in other areas of psychology to better understand the cognitive biases in the thinking of people with depression, for example. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Neuropsychologists (and *behavioral neuropsychologists*) explore the relationships between brain systems and behavior. For example, behavioral neuropsychologists may study the way the brain creates and stores memories, or how various diseases and injuries of the brain affect emotion, perception, and behavior. They design tasks to study normal brain functions with new imaging techniques, such as positron emission tomography (PET), single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

Clinical neuropsychologists also assess and treat people. And with the dramatic increase in the number of survivors of traumatic brain injury over the past 30 years, neuropsychologists are working with health teams to help brain-injured people resume productive lives. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Industrial-organizational psychologists apply psychological principles and research methods to the workplace that improves the well-being and performance of people and the organizations that employ them. I-O psychologists are experts in understanding and developing systems for hiring, motivating, training, and understanding people at work. They develop tests, promotion systems, and surveys. They also engage in coaching, team building, survey analysis, job analysis, organization design, and much more! They can be trainers, researchers,

consultants, or managers. I-O psychologists are scientist-practitioners specializing in understanding people in organizations.

Engineering psychologists conduct research on how people work best with machines. For example, how can a computer be designed to prevent fatigue and eye strain? What arrangement of an assembly line makes production most efficient? What is a reasonable workload? Most engineering psychologists work in industry, but some are employed by the government, particularly the Department of Defense. They are often known as human factors specialists. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Developmental psychologists study the physiological, cognitive, and social development that takes place throughout life. Some specialize in behavior during infancy, childhood, and adolescence, or changes that occur during maturity or old age. Developmental psychologists also may study developmental disabilities and their effects. Increasingly, research is developing ways to help elderly people remain independent as long as possible.

Social psychologists examine people's interactions with others and with the social environment. They work in organizational consultation, marketing research, systems design, or other applied psychology fields. Prominent areas of study include group behavior, leadership, attitudes, and perception.

Quantitative and measurement psychologists focus on methods and techniques for designing experiments and analyzing psychological data. Some develop new methods for performing analysis; others create research strategies to assess the effect of social and educational programs and psychological treatment. They develop and evaluate mathematical models for psychological tests. They also propose methods for evaluating the quality and fairness of the tests. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Rehabilitation psychologists work with stroke and accident victims, people with mental retardation, and those with developmental disabilities caused by such conditions as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. They help clients adapt to their situation, frequently working with other health care professionals. They deal with issues of personal adjustment, interpersonal relations, the work world, and pain management. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Clinical psychologists—who constitute the largest specialty—work most often in counseling centers, independent or group practices, hospitals, or clinics. They help mentally and emotionally distressed clients adjust to life and may assist medical and surgical patients in dealing with illnesses or injuries. Some clinical psychologists work in physical rehabilitation settings, treating patients with spinal cord injuries, chronic pain or illness, stroke, arthritis, or neurological conditions. Others help people deal with personal crisis, such as divorce or the death of a loved one.

Counseling psychologists use various techniques, including interviewing and testing, to advise people on how to deal with problems of everyday living, including career or work problems and problems faced in different stages of life. They work in settings such as university counseling centers, hospitals, and individual or group practices.

Forensic Psychologist can mean quite a number of things. Some forensic psychologists do clinical work in corrections settings; some work as consultants to trial lawyers; some serve as expert witnesses in jury trials; some formulate public policy on psychology and the law. Some forensic psychologists have PhDs in clinical psychology; others have both PhDs in clinical psychology and JDs in law. (There are several graduate programs in the country where you can earn the two degrees at the same time.) For more information about forensic psychology, visit the sub page on psychology and the law and the division information page of the American Psychological Association and locate Division 41 (American Psychology-Law Association).

School psychologists work with students in early childhood and elementary and secondary schools. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and school personnel to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students. School psychologists address students' learning and behavioral problems, suggest improvements to classroom management strategies or parenting techniques, and evaluate students with disabilities and gifted and talented students to help determine the best way to educate them.

Educational psychologists concentrate on how effective teaching and learning take place. They consider a variety of factors, such as human abilities, student motivation, and the effect on the classroom of the diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture that makes up America. (from the American Psychological Association website, 2008)

Sports Psychology Sports psychologists are concerned with the psychological factors that improve athletic performance. They also look at the effects of exercise and physical activity on psychological adjustment and health. Sports psychologists typically work in academic settings and/or as consultants for sports teams. For more information about sports psychology, visit the home page of Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology) and the division information page of the American Psychological Association and locate Division 47.

Teaching and Research

If you're interested in *teaching* undergraduate, master's-level, or doctoral-level students, you will probably work in a university setting, where you will probably also do research. If you are not interested in teaching and want to focus on *research*, you can work for government agencies (for example, the Centers for Disease Control) or for private research organizations. To work as a psychologist in these settings, you typically will need a Ph.D. in psychology--not in another field such as education or social work. You might be able to get a teaching job at a two-year school with a master's degree in psychology; however, the job market is glutted, and Ph.D.'s are taking many of these jobs. For more information about the various subfields in psychology, see "Areas of Specialization in Psychology" and visit the division information page of the American Psychological Association.

Counselors

Counselors assist people with personal, family, educational, mental health, and career problems. Their duties vary greatly depending on their occupational specialty, which is determined by the setting in which they work and the population they serve.

School counselors at all levels help students to understand and deal with social, behavioral, and personal problems. These counselors emphasize preventive and developmental counseling to provide students with the life skills needed to deal with problems before they worsen and to enhance students' personal, social, and academic growth. Counselors provide special services, including alcohol and drug prevention programs and conflict resolution classes. They also try to identify cases of domestic abuse and other family problems that can affect a student's development.

Vocational counselors, also called *employment* or *career counselors*, provide mainly career counseling outside the school setting. Their chief focus is helping individuals with career decisions. Vocational counselors explore and evaluate the client's education, training, work history, interests, skills, and personality traits. They may arrange for aptitude and achievement tests to help the client make career decisions. They also work with individuals to develop their job-search skills and assist clients in locating and applying for jobs. In addition, career counselors provide support to people experiencing job loss, job stress, or other career transition issues.

Rehabilitation counselors help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or other causes. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. Rehabilitation counselors interview both individuals with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports, and confer with physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and employers to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual.

Mental health counselors work with individuals, families, and groups to address and treat mental and emotional disorders and to promote mental health. They are trained in a variety of therapeutic techniques used to address issues, including depression, addiction and substance abuse, suicidal impulses, stress, problems with self-esteem, and grief. They also help with job and career concerns, educational decisions, issues related to mental and emotional health, and family, parenting, marital, or other relationship problems.

Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors help people who have problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, and eating disorders. They counsel individuals who are addicted to drugs, helping them to identify behaviors and problems related to their addiction. Counseling can be done on an individual basis, but is frequently done in a group setting. These counselors will often also work with family members who are affected by the addictions of their loved ones. Counselors also conduct programs aimed at preventing addictions.

Marriage and family therapists apply family systems theory, principals and techniques to individuals, families, and couples to resolve emotional conflicts. In doing so, they modify people's perceptions and behaviors, enhance communication and understanding among family members, and help to prevent family and individual crises. Marriage and family therapists also may engage in psychotherapy of a non-medical nature, make appropriate referrals to psychiatric resources, perform research, and teach courses about human development and interpersonal relationships.

Social Workers

Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse.

Child, family, and school social workers provide social services and assistance to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the well-being of families and the academic functioning of children. They may assist single parents, arrange adoptions, or help find foster homes for neglected, abandoned, or abused children. Some specialize in services for senior citizens. These social workers may run support groups for the children of aging parents; advise elderly people or family members about housing, transportation, long-term care, and other services; and coordinate and monitor these services.

In schools, social workers often serve as the link between students' families and the school, working with parents, guardians, teachers, and other school officials to ensure students reach their academic and personal potential. In addition, they address problems such as misbehavior, truancy, and teenage pregnancy and advise teachers on how to cope with difficult students. Increasingly, school social workers teach workshops to entire classes.

Medical and public health social workers provide psychosocial support to people, families, or vulnerable populations so they can cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses, such as Alzheimer's disease, cancer, or AIDS. They also advise family caregivers, counsel patients, and help plan for patients' needs after discharge from hospitals. They may arrange for at-home services, such as meals-on-wheels or home care.

Mental health and substance abuse social workers assess and treat individuals with mental illness or substance abuse problems, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Such services include individual and group therapy, outreach, crisis intervention, social rehabilitation, and teaching skills needed for everyday living. They also may help plan for supportive services to ease clients' return to the community. Mental health and substance abuse social workers are likely to work in hospitals, substance abuse treatment centers, individual and family services agencies, or local governments.

Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists are the primary caregivers in the area of mental health. They assess and treat mental illnesses through a combination of psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, hospitalization, and medication. Psychotherapy involves regular discussions with patients about their problems; the psychiatrist helps them find solutions through changes in their behavioral patterns, the exploration of their past experiences, or group and family therapy sessions. Psychoanalysis involves long-term psychotherapy and counseling for patients. In many cases, medications are administered to correct chemical imbalances that cause emotional problems. Psychiatrists also may administer electroconvulsive therapy to those of their patients who do not respond to, or who cannot take, medications.

Creative Arts Therapist

Creative Arts Therapists are human service professionals that help individuals, families, and groups improve their overall physical and mental health. They apply the principles and techniques of each art form in an effort to improve communications, allow expression of feelings, improve coordination, and increase cognitive and social function. Creative arts therapists usually specialize in a single area such as dance and movement therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, music therapy, or poetry therapy. They begin by interviewing patients and consulting other health professional to determine the psychotherapeutic needs of the patient. They then develop and implement a customized creative arts therapy program.

Mental Health Therapy Aid

As a Mental Health Therapy Aide, you would provide personal care, treatment and rehabilitation to individuals diagnosed with mental illness. Under supervision, you would groom, feed, and wash individuals who are unable to take care of themselves. You would help individuals to participate in games and recreational programs; coach and encourage individuals to develop daily living skills; and provide a clean, safe and comfortable environment. You would work with other staff to develop, carry out and record care plans and, in accordance with special instructions, you may administer medication. These positions may be physically demanding. You would need to be prepared to act to insure the health and safety of patients in emergency situations.

Recreation Therapist

As a Recreation Therapist, you would, individually or as a member of a treatment team or treatment program, plan and conduct activities for client/patient groups. The goal of each program is to bring about positive change in a client's/patient's mental, physical and/or social behavior. You would lead life skills training groups and leisure activities.

Occupational Therapist

As an Occupational Therapist, you would evaluate, plan and carry out individual treatment procedures for patients based on their needs and treatment goals. You would perform the duties of a first level professional clinician under the supervision of a Senior Occupational Therapist. You might supervise Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Corrections Officers

Correctional officers, also known as *detention officers*, are responsible for overseeing individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to serve time in a jail, reformatory, or penitentiary.

The jail population changes constantly as some are released, some are convicted and transferred to prison, and new offenders are arrested and enter the system. Correctional officers in local jails admit and process about 12 million people a year, with about 700,000 offenders in jail at any given time. Correctional officers in State and Federal prisons watch over the approximately 1.5 million offenders who are incarcerated there at any given time.

Childcare Workers

Child care workers nurture and care for children who have not yet entered formal schooling. They also supervise older children before and after school. These workers play an important role in children's development by caring for them when parents are at work or away for other reasons. In addition to attending to children's basic needs, child care workers organize activities and implement curricula that stimulate children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth. They help children explore individual interests, develop talents and independence, build self-esteem, and learn how to get along with others.

Child care workers generally are classified into three different groups based on where they work: private household workers, who care for children at the children's home; family child care providers, who care for children in the provider's own home; and child care workers who work at separate child care centers.

Human Resources, Training, and Labor Relations Managers and Specialists

Every organization wants to attract the most qualified employees and match them to jobs for which they are best suited. However, many enterprises are too large to permit close contact between top management and employees. Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists provide this connection. In the past, these workers performed the administrative function of an organization, such as handling employee benefits questions or recruiting, interviewing, and hiring new staff in accordance with policies established by top management. Today's human resources workers manage these tasks, but, increasingly, they also consult with top executives regarding strategic planning. They have moved from behind-the-scenes staff work to leading the company in suggesting and changing policies.

The content was adopted from the following websites:

<http://www.mshealthcareers.com/careers/creativeartstherapist.htm>

<http://www.bls.gov>

<http://www.psywww.com/careers/masters.htm>

<http://www.siop.org>

<http://www.apa.org/topics/psychologycareer.html>

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Career Resources for Psychology Majors



Specific Resources

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>

Association for Women in Psychology: <http://www.awpsych.org/>

Encyclopedia of Psychology: <http://www.psychology.org/links/Career>

MentalHealth.Net: <http://www.mentalhelp.net>

Online Psychology Career Center: <http://www.socialpsychology.org/career.htm>

PsycCareers: <http://www.psyccareers.apa.org/>

Psych Web: <http://www.psychwww.com/>

General Resources

*CareerSearch: <http://www.careersearch.net/Hofstra>
(username-hofstra, password-career)

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco>

Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com>

*Spotlight On Careers: <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org>
(username-lacn, password-holland)

*Vault: http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=6123
(You will be prompted for your Novell username and password)

*These websites require you sign in using a username and password.

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Famous Psychology Majors

Ted Allen

Playwright, Senior Editor of Chicago Magazine, Food & Wine Specialist on
“Queer Eye for the Straight Guy”

Herb Brooks

Hockey Coach of 1980 Olympic Team (“Miracle”)

Jerry Bruckheimer

Executive Producer of “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation”, “Crimson Tide,”
“Pirates of the Caribbean”

Peter M. Butterfield

President and CEO of KIA Motors America

Yanni Chryssomallis

New Age Musician

Wesley Craven

Horror Film Director

Gloria Estefan

Singer

Hugh Hefner

Playboy Magazine Founder

Jim McCann

Found and President of 1-800-FLOWERS

Natalie Portman

Actress

John Stewart

Comedian and Host of “The Daily Show”

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