

Industrial & Organizational Psychology

What is Industrial & Organizational Psychology?

Industrial and organizational psychology majors study psychology as it applies to the workplace—attitudes of employees and employers, organizational behavior, workplace environment and its effects, and much, much more. You'll probably study such things as personality, cognition, perception, and human development. You'll learn about the biological side of behavior and might be given the chance to take relevant business courses such as management, since you will focus on organizational settings. As an undergraduate you can expect to get well acquainted with the basics of psychology in addition to the more specific field of industrial and organizational psychology. You'll be doing a lot of research, experimentation, and documentation, as you would in other psychology subfields. You'll learn—and use—statistics and other methods for data analysis. You'll also learn about the great psychologists of the past and present, and how you might use, adapt, contradict, or support their findings with your own ideas.

Occupational opportunities

Individuals in the field of I/O Psychology work in a variety of settings including business, consulting, education or government. They might study the procedures on an assembly line and suggest changes to reduce the monotony and increase the responsibility of workers. They might advise management on how to develop programs to identify staff with management potential or administer a counseling service for employees on career development or preparation for retirement. A sampling of related occupations is listed below.

- Labor Relations Specialist
- Management Consultant
- Professor
- Industrial/Organizational Psychologist
- Organizational Development Manager
- Human Resources Manager
- Corporate Trainer
- Social Worker
- Career Counselor
- Sociologist

Career Snapshot: Human Resources Manager

Two Years

Responsibilities in the field of human resources are significant in these first two years, as are the hours. New hires are expected to learn the company's protocols and procedures while carrying out their assigned duties. Most human resources managers establish mentor relationships with more senior human resources practitioners and learn effective techniques for managing people. Satisfaction is average; the hours are long.

Five Years

Five-year veterans of small companies have become important staff members, and many of them have discrete areas of control. Individuals who work for large companies have begun to specialize in health benefits, pension plans, 401(k) plans, corporate recruiting, or another area of human resources. Many of them feel that working long hours will earn them a position as vice president or director of human resources. Salaries increase, but many people who want larger salaries move to bigger corporations. Satisfaction is high for career-track professionals.

The Psychology Department is located on the eighth floor of the Newman Vertical Campus in room 8-215. You can contact them at (646) 312-3780.

Ten Years

Many human resources professionals assume managerial duties, with the goal of heading up a large human resources department or directing benefits, recruiting, or personnel department. A significant number of human resources professionals return to graduate school to acquire more credentials that will distinguish them from other candidates. The hours can increase for individuals looking to get ahead.

Skills and Abilities

In addition to addressing the central question of human behavior, the study of psychology also develops skills in critical analysis, accurate problem definition, the relation of theory to evidence, and the interpretation of data and scientific writing. The skills developed through a psychology major may be applied to job responsibilities in a variety of occupational groups. A sampling of representative skills and abilities follows.

- Information gathering
- Active learning
- Speaking
- Critical thinking
- Problem identification
- Identification of key causes
- Active listening
- Oral comprehension
- Oral expression
- Writing comprehension
- Providing consultation and advice to others
- Communicating with others
- Teaching others
- Communicating with persons outside organization
- Written expression
- Mathematical reasoning
- Originality
- Inductive reasoning

Additional Resources

U.S. Government's Occupational Outlook Handbook
<http://stats.bls.gov/oco>

Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology
www.siop.org

American Psychological Association
www.apa.org

Society for Human Resource Management
www.shrm.org

American Society for Training and Development
www.astd.org

Association of Labor Relations Agencies
www.alra.org

World at Work
www.worldatwork.org