

## Career Options

- Affirmative Action Officer
- Caseworker
- Child Development Specialist
- College Student Affairs Administrator
- Community Organizer/ Planning Specialist
- Consumer Researcher
- Criminologist
- Curriculum Designer
- Employment Recruiter
- Environmental Psychologist
- Experimental Researcher
- Field Health Officer
- Health Policy Planner
- Human Resource Manager
- Industrial Relations Coordinator
- Industrial/Organizational Psychologist (see SCDC sheet detailing corresponding major)
- Labor Relations Coordinator
- Market Research Analyst
- Marketing Manager
- Media Director
- Policy Analyst
- Probation/Parole Officer
- Professor
- Psychiatric Social Worker
- Psychotherapist
- Relocation Worker
- Statistical Report Writer
- Teacher (K-12)
- Technical Writer
- Training Specialist
- Volunteer Services Director
- Youth Counselor

## What is Psychology?

Psychology courses familiarize students with the scientific study of mind and behavior. This discipline relies on methods ranging from simple observation to rigorous experimentation. Its subjects include how we develop and learn, how our actions are motivated, how we perceive the world around us, how we respond to it intellectually and emotionally, and how these processes change throughout life and are integrated into the personality under social influences. The department offers courses that apply psychology to a variety of practical settings, including the workplace, clinical, legal, and school environments. To be licensed as a clinical or counseling psychologist, you usually need a Ph.D. About half of psychologists are self-employed. Because psychology is about behavior, many people do not realize that it uses scientific methods and that students are expected to have competencies in this area.

## Occupational Opportunities

An undergraduate degree in Psychology does not make you a Psychologist or professional counselor. A degree in psychology provides students with skills and abilities that may serve as building blocks toward any number of occupations and career paths, particularly those focused on a humanitarian concern for people. As with many Liberal Arts degrees, a majority of undergraduate psychology majors are working in areas unrelated to their major. A bachelor's degree in psychology can lead directly to careers in market research, human resources, social services, and management.

## Skills & 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. The skills developed through a psychology major may be applied to job responsibilities in a variety of occupational settings. For example, while a clinical psychologist, a personnel director, or a marketing specialist might have very different responsibilities, each may use the skill of critical analysis of human behavior on a daily basis. A sampling of representative skills and abilities follows:

### Analysis

- Interprets data and statistics
- Evaluates ideas and theory
- Analyzes information qualitatively and quantitatively
- Reasons logically
- Understands components of complex problems

### Communication

- Articulates and defends positions
- Writes effectively
- Reads critically
- Presents alternative explanations
- Understands and motivates groups
- Prepares reports
- Conveys complex information

### Research and Project Development

- Defines hypotheses
- Plans/designs projects
- Gathers data and interview
- Works with research
- Translates theory into action
- Works as a team member

### Human Relations

- Identifies cultural/social norms
- Assesses needs
- Understands human relationships
- Recognizes social processes
- Understands prejudice and discrimination



### **Career Snapshot: Psychologist**

Licensed psychologists pay their dues by spending many years in school. A Ph.D. will enable you to work in the widest range of positions. Besides the years of study and internships, psychologists offering patient care must be certified and licensed by the state in which they intend to practice. Health facilities employ approximately 30% of all working psychologists, while 40% of them work in educational environments, in such positions as counselors, educators, and researchers. Most often, these academically connected psychologists maintain a private practice while teaching or conducting research. Psychologists working in academic settings have flexibility in their schedules, but the demands on their time are high. Private practice is the goal of many psychologists. This is a major benefit but also can mean long hours accommodating patients in the evenings and on weekends. A government or corporate psychologist, by contrast, works in a more structured environment. Their hours are fixed, and they often work alone. Despite potentially grueling schedules and emotional demands, psychologists report great satisfaction in their jobs; the gratification they receive from helping others keeps them in the field.

### **Career Snapshot: Training Specialist**

Training specialists plan, organize, and direct a wide range of training activities. Trainers consult with training managers and employee supervisors to develop performance improvement measures, conduct orientation sessions, and arrange on-the-job training for new employees. They help employees maintain and improve their job skills and prepare for jobs requiring greater skill. They work with supervisors to improve their interpersonal skills and to deal effectively with employees. They may set up individualized training plans to strengthen employees' existing skills or teach new ones. Training specialists also may set up leadership or executive development programs for employees who aspire to move up in the organization. These programs are designed to develop or "groom" leaders to replace those leaving the organization and as part of a corporate succession plan. Trainers also lead programs to assist employees with job transitions as a result of mergers or consolidation, as well as retraining programs to develop new skills that may result from technological changes in the work place. In government-supported job-training programs, training specialists serve as case managers and provide basic job skills to prepare participants to function in the labor force.

## **Additional Resources**

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

American Psychological Association  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Association for Psychological Science  
[www.psychologicalscience.org](http://www.psychologicalscience.org)

Psychwatch.Com - online resource for professionals and students  
[www.psychwatch.com](http://www.psychwatch.com)

Chronicle of Higher Education  
<http://chronicle.com/jobs/>

Make the Difference  
[www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers](http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers)

American Counseling Association  
[www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
[www.siop.org](http://www.siop.org)

Social Psychology Network Online Psychology  
Career Center  
[www.socialpsychology.org](http://www.socialpsychology.org)

New York State Psychological Association  
[www.nyspa.org](http://www.nyspa.org)

Psychology Today  
[www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)