

PSYCHOLOGY

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

HUMAN SERVICES

Direct Care:

Counseling
Psychotherapy
Applied Behavior Analysis
Art Therapy
Music Therapy
Case Management
Mental Health Services
Physical Health and Wellness
Crisis Work
Rehabilitation Services
Performance Enhancement
Testing/Assessment
Law Enforcement

Administration:

Advocacy
Programming
Community Relations
Management
Development/Fund Raising
Grant Writing

EMPLOYERS

Federal government including Departments of:
Health and Human Services
Justice
Veterans Affairs
State government including:
Departments of Human Services
Departments of Mental Health
Departments of Justice
Community mental health centers
State psychiatric hospitals
Facilities for individuals with intellectual impairments
Boards of probation and parole
Local government
Senior citizens' centers
Nursing homes
Social service/nonprofit organizations
Religiously-affiliated service organizations
Hospitals/healthcare providers
Private psychiatric facilities
Outpatient clinics
Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
College and university counseling centers and career centers
Pain clinics
Rehabilitation facilities
Testing centers
Private practice

STRATEGIES

Obtain essential practical experience through part-time or summer jobs such as camp counselor, tutor, or resident hall advisor.
Complete an internship for academic credit.
Gain experience through volunteering with organizations such as crisis hotlines, Big Brother or Sister, Special Olympics, service groups, etc.
Many entry-level helping positions require one year of related experience. Volunteer experience and internships can typically fulfill this requirement.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
Develop strong communication skills.
Cultivate the desire to help others.
Earn a minor in a specialized field of interest (e.g., child & family studies, sociology, or political science).
Take courses to build valuable counseling-related skills (e.g., techniques of counseling).
Become fluent in a foreign language to serve clients who may not speak English.
Acquire knowledge of government and community resources available for those in need.
Obtain a graduate degree in psychology, counseling, or social work for positions involving substantive counseling or psychotherapy or for advancement into administrative/supervisory positions.
Many specialties exist at the graduate level, for example school counseling, mental health counseling, counseling psychology, etc. Pursue particular degrees depending upon interests and career goals. See General Information on the last page for more details on this topic.
Pursue graduate training or certification programs to establish test administration and interpretation qualification.
Maintain an excellent academic record.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

RESEARCH

Social Research
Market Research
Data Analysis
Testing/Test Development
Experimental Psychology
Neuroscience
Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology

Federal, state, and local government agencies (e.g., National Institute of Health)
National headquarters of non-profit organizations
Universities and colleges
Market research firms
Market research departments of consumer goods and manufacturing firms
Private research organizations
Consulting firms

Pursue research experience by working on faculty projects through independent study classes, as a student employee, as a volunteer in their lab, or through other departmental programs.
Take additional math and statistics courses to develop strong quantitative and statistical skills.
Take additional science courses or consider a minor in Neuroscience.
Obtain related experience through part-time or summer jobs or internships with a market research firm.
Get involved in the American Marketing Association.
Earn a graduate degree in experimental psychology, educational psychology, I/O psychology, statistics, or marketing.

EDUCATION

Teaching
Adult Learning/Community Instruction (e.g., GED classes, life skills, parenting, etc.)
Information/Library Science
Higher Education Administration and Student Support Services including:
Admissions
Financial Aid
Academic Advising
Development
Alumni Affairs
International Education and Study Abroad
Career Services
Residence Life
Student Activities and Greek Life
Orientation
Leadership
Multicultural Affairs
Recreational Sports

Public and private K-12 schools
Colleges and universities
Government agencies
Federal Trio programs (e.g., Upward Bound, Talent Search)
Nonprofit organizations (e.g., Project Grad College prep programs)

Obtain a teaching certificate for public school positions. Multiple certification will increase marketability. Seek guidance from the education department of your college.
Earn a doctoral degree in psychology for post-secondary teaching.
Pursue graduate training in information science for library positions.
Earn a master's in Counseling with a specialty in career development if interested in career services.
Seek a master's degree in college student personnel, higher education administration for student affairs or administrative positions.
Maintain a high GPA and secure strong personal recommendations.
Gain experience working with children, adolescents, or college students through tutoring or other volunteer positions.
Acquire related experience on campus as a resident hall advisor, orientation leader, admissions tour guide, or peer mentor.
Develop strong communication skills and learn to speak well in front of a group.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

HUMAN RESOURCES

Employment and Recruitment
Selection
Labor Relations
Compensation and Benefits
Organizational Development
Training

Large companies
Government agencies
Staffing and employment services
Large non-profit organizations
Hospitals
Educational institutions

Gain relevant experience in human resources by completing an internship.
Earn a minor in business or supplement curriculum with business courses.
Seek leadership positions in student organizations.
Develop strong computer skills.
Earn an MBA or a graduate degree in human resources to attain higher level positions.

BUSINESS

Sales
Customer Service
Public Relations
Marketing
Advertising
Product Design
Management
Insurance:
 Claims Management
 Underwriting
Real Estate:
 Sales
 Property Management

Service providers
Wholesalers
Manufacturers
Retail stores including:
 Department stores
 Specialty stores
 Discount stores
 Super retailers
 Online retailers
Call centers
Financial institutions
Insurance companies
Real estate companies
Property management firms
Apartment complexes
Public relations departments of large companies or nonprofit organizations

Develop career goals and seek relevant experiences to prepare for those goals.
Earn a minor in business or supplement curriculum with business or communication courses.
Obtain relevant experience through part-time jobs or internships.
Work a part-time or summer job in a retail store.
 Demonstrate a willingness to take on additional responsibilities such as "assistant manager."
Participate in student organizations and seek leadership roles.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
 Develop a strong commitment to customer satisfaction.
For sales, develop the ability to work well under pressure and be comfortable in a competitive environment.
Be willing to start in a management-trainee program or other entry-level positions.
When job searching, seek employers interested in hiring "any major."
Understand the top skills employers desire and be prepared to demonstrate them, such as communication (oral and written), computer, interpersonal, leadership and teamwork, etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Psychology provides a broad, liberal arts background.
- Some students may choose to study psychology because they enjoy the subject but wish to pursue careers requiring "any major." In this scenario, it is critical to develop desirable skills through internships, part-time or summer jobs, or volunteer experiences. Some skills valued most by employers include: communication, interpersonal, leadership, teamwork, and computer skills.
- Other students may major in psychology because they want to work in a related field. Many entry-level helping positions are available, however the amount of direct client contact is limited for those who only have a bachelor's degree. Students may wish to pursue graduate education in psychology, social work, counseling, college student personnel, or other related fields to increase opportunities and earning potential. Research career fields to learn what type of degree (master's, educational specialist, doctoral) and subject area are most appropriate for your interests and desired population.

The following list provides some examples:

Master's Degree

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Professional Counselor

Educational, Vocational, and School Counselors

Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors

Rehabilitation Counselors

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapists

Educational Specialist

School Psychologist

Doctoral Degree

Counseling Psychologist

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Experimental Psychologist

Sport Psychologist

Industrial/Organizational Psychologist

Social Psychologist

Developmental Psychologist

Forensic Psychologist

Health Psychologist

Neuroscience Psychologist

Psychiatry (M.D.) *

- For those wishing to pursue graduate education, maintain a high grade point average, secure strong faculty recommendations, gain experience through volunteer or work opportunities, and assist a faculty member with research.
- Many applied positions require licensure. This can take an additional one to three years of supervised experience after earning a graduate degree depending upon state requirements. Graduate programs in clinical work should be accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) in order to ensure a smooth transition towards licensure. Graduate programs in counseling should be accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- Research the availability of certifications for specialties like the Board Certified Behavior Analyst if interested in working with people with disabilities.
- Note (*): If Psychiatry is a career interest take additional science courses for admission to medical school; see your school's pre-health advisor.