



What can I do with a Major in... Psychological & Brain Sciences

What is Psychological and Brain Sciences at U of L?

The Department supports one of the largest undergraduate programs at the University of Louisville. The Department offers three undergraduate degrees: The Bachelor of Arts in Psychology - Concentration in Social Sciences, The Bachelor of Arts in Psychology - Concentration in Natural Sciences, and The Bachelor of Science in Psychology. In addition, the Department offers a Minor in Psychology.

Our department offers graduate training in a number of research areas including: Aging, Child, Maternal & Family Health, Cognitive Science, Developmental Science, Health Psychology, Neuroscience & Neuropsychology, Psychopathology, and Vision & Hearing Sciences. A Ph.D. is available in two areas: Clinical Psychology and Experimental Psychology. Over 90 graduate students are currently enrolled in the Department's two graduate programs.

Degrees in Psychological and Brain Sciences at U of L:

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology - Concentration in Social Sciences
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology - Concentration in Natural Sciences
Bachelor of Science in Psychology
Minor in Psychology
Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology
Doctoral Program in Experimental Psychology: Cognitive and Developmental Sciences
Doctoral Program in Experimental Psychology: Perception and Neural Sciences

Occupational Overview

Psychology, the study of human mind, behavior, and cognitive processes, is an exceedingly broad degree that can lead to job opportunities in many diverse fields. Most students who study psychology fall into one of two groups: the first group represents students who may choose to pursue the field out of sheer enjoyment of the subject, but may not necessarily pursue a professional psychology position, in which graduation education is usually required. In this scenario, it is critical for students to gain related experience in the intended occupation through internships, part-time employment, or volunteering. This group of students may also choose to pursue graduate or professional school in an unrelated area (e.g., law school), in which psychology provides an excellent broad, liberal arts background. The second group of students may major in psychology because they want to work in a professional psychology position (e.g., therapist, social worker, psychiatrist, psychological researcher). Many entry-level "helping positions" are available; however, the amount of direct client contact is limited for those who have a bachelor's degree. Students who wish to pursue an occupation with extensive client contact will probably need to pursue graduate education (master's or doctoral degree) in psychology, social work, counseling, college student personnel, or other related fields to increase opportunities and earning potential.



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Employment Requirements

A bachelor's degree is the minimum formal education required. However, many occupations and employers also require graduate school. For example, they may require a master's degree, and some require a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. (law degree). Student wishing to pursue graduate education should focus on maintaining a high grade point average, securing strong faculty recommendations, and gaining research or applied experience through internships, volunteer, and work opportunities. Psychology graduate programs, particularly clinical psychology, are generally very competitive.

Career Opportunities in Psychological and Brain Sciences:

Psychology graduates can be found in nearly every industry, occupation, and organization! However, if you wish to pursue a psychology-related occupation, here is a brief list of typical employers of psychology graduates:

Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Justice (probation, parole)
Veterans Administration
Children, Youth, and Families Department
Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (community mental health centers, state psychiatric hospitals, facilities for the mentally impaired)
Senior citizens' centers
United Way agencies
Nonprofit organizations
Religiously-affiliated service organizations
Hospitals
National Institute of Education
National Institute of Mental Health
Universities and colleges

Employers/Industries and Success Strategies:

Human Services: Counseling – Case Management – Mental Health Services – Advocacy – Programming – Community Relations – Administration – Federal, state, local governmental agencies – Senior citizen' centers – United Way agencies – Nonprofit organizations – Religiously-affiliated service organizations - Hospitals

Suggested Strategy: Obtain related experience in any type of “helping” role (see below for ideas), as many entry-level positions in the helping professions require one year of related experience, which can typically be fulfilled through volunteer, internship, or part-time work. Gain proficiency in a second language; Spanish is particularly useful. Obtain a graduate degree in psychology, counseling, or social work for high-level client contact or advancement into administrative work. Develop strong “transferable skills,” such as communication skills and an ability to work with and help different types of people.

Research: Federal government (Department of Health and Human Service, National Institute of Education, National Institute of Mental Health) – National headquarters of nonprofit or-



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ganizations – Universities and colleges

Suggested Strategy: Assist a professor in conducting research, develop strong quantitative and statistical skills/computer programs (e.g., SPSS), obtain a graduate degree for greater opportunities.

Public Relations: Research – Programming – Writing/editing – Event planning – Media placement – Public speaking - Fundraising

Suggested Strategy: Obtain related experience, such as through serving as an admissions tour guide, working in alumni relations, or other PR-related functions on campus or in the community. Volunteer as a fundraiser or political canvasser. Join the campus chapter of Public Relations Society of American (PRSA). Gain internship experience. Develop strong writing and speaking skills.

Advertising: Creative – Media – Account Services – Research – Advertising agencies – Companies with in-house advertising

Suggested Strategy: Obtain relevant experience with the campus newspaper, TV, or radio station. Obtain an internship, even if unpaid, with a market research or advertising firm. Develop a portfolio of your work. Consider a business or communications/journalism minor or double major for account services positions.

Market Research: Market research firms – Market research departments of consumer goods and manufacturing firms

Suggested Strategy: Develop a strong background in math and statistics. Get involved in the American Marketing Association. Obtain related experience with a market research firm, or in business research. Serve as a canvasser or phone interviewer for a nonprofit organization or political campaign. Earn a graduate degree in statistics or marketing for the greatest number of opportunities.

Teaching: Public and private schools – Colleges and universities

Suggested Strategy: Obtain teaching certificate for public school positions (seek guidance from the College of Education). Volunteer as a tutor. Gain experience working with school-age children, preferably in an educational setting. A Ph.D. is required for university-level teaching (a master's degree may suffice for two-year colleges).

Retailing: Management – Department stores – Specialty stores – Discount stores – Super retailers

Suggested Strategy: Secure leadership positions. Work part-time in a retail store. Be willing to start in a management-trainee program. Consider taking marketing, merchandising, or other courses that focus on consumer behavior.

Sales: Retailers – Service providers – Wholesalers – Manufacturers – Insurance companies – Real estate companies

Suggested Strategy: Obtain relevant experience through internships or sales positions. Take business courses. Seek leadership roles. Must work well under pressure and be comfortable in a competitive environment.

Related Links in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Discipline:

[Professional Association Links](#)

American Counseling Association, <http://www.counseling.org/>



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

American Psychological Society, <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

APA of Graduate Students, <http://www.apa.org/apags>

Professional Organizations, <http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/soc30.00.00>

Kentucky Psychological Association

University of Louisville Department of Psychiatry

Career Planning Links

Accredited Graduate Programs in Counseling (from CACREP), <http://www.cacrep.org/directory.html>

Careers in School Psychology, <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Ediv16/G&O.html>

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

Eye on Psi Chi, <http://www.psi-chi.org/pubs/eye>

GradSchools, <http://www.gradschools.com>

Graduate School Handbook, <http://www.gradschools.com/feedback/hbk.html>

Non-Academic Careers in Psychology, http://www.apa.org/science/nonacad_careers.html

PsycCrawler, <http://www.psychcrawler.com>

Psych Web, <http://www.psywww.com>

PsychGrad, <http://www.psychgrad.org>

Psychology Careers, <http://www.apa.org/students/brochure/>

Social Psychology Network (info for all areas of psychology), <http://www.socialpsychology.org>

Ideas for Volunteer/Internship/ Co-op

As a major in psychology, you may wish to enhance your undergraduate experience and preparation for professional or graduate education by participating in the Departmental Honors Program.

University honors program (find out more at <http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/honors/> or find out more about the Psychology Honors program by visiting <http://louisville.edu/a-s/psychology/content/honors.html>)

Other chances for enhancing your undergraduate experience can be found through Internships and Coops (when applicable) and Service Learning (links to the Service Learning websites <http://campuslife.louisville.edu/service> and <http://www.louisville.edu/student/islp>). You can also enhance your degree through Study Abroad/International Programs (find out more information at <http://www.louisville.edu/provost/intcent>). You could also participate in the International Service Learning Project (find out more at <http://www.louisville.edu/student/islp>)

Many Psychology faculty mentor undergraduate students in Independent Study (Psyc 401) or research. Most faculty welcome queries from motivated and interested students. You can find out more about Undergraduate Research at <http://www.research.louisville.edu/students>



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Salary

Median annual earnings of wage and salary clinical, counseling, and school psychologists in May 2004 were \$54,950. The middle 50 percent earned between \$41,850 and \$71,880. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$32,280, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$92,250. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of clinical, counseling, and school psychologists in May 2004 were:

Offices of other health practitioners	\$64,460
Elementary and secondary schools	58,360
Outpatient care centers	46,850
Individual and family services	42,640



<http://online.onetcenter.org>



<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>