



Cornell College



Psychology Department Student Handbook

Psychology Department
Cornell College
Mount Vernon, IA
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OVERVIEW OF HANDBOOK

HIGHLIGHTS OF CORNELL PSYCHOLOGY

One Course At A Time

Cornell College operates on an academic schedule in which students take one course at a time (OCAAT) for three-and-a-half weeks. Cornell's One Course At A Time curriculum allows us to use class time flexibly to fit the subject rather than fitting the subject into rigid 50-minute class periods. Most class periods are a mixture of short lectures, film clips, demonstrations, and small group discussion, but the block plan makes other ways of using class time possible. In some class periods students may watch a feature length film and discuss the psychological principles shown in the film. In other class periods, students may use their psychological knowledge to train a virtual rat or to practice counseling skills they have learned in class.

One Course At A Time also makes it possible for classes to take full-day field trips. And the schedule is ideal for internships. Psychology students who complete an internship at Cornell can work full time on-site for a block or longer, and thus be more completely integrated with the activities of the agencies and the other staff members.

In the Department of Psychology at Cornell College the OCAAT schedule allows for a creative and flexible approach to teaching which incorporates a strong emphasis on experiential learning, project-based learning, and collaborative learning. Psychology faculty at Cornell use a variety of teaching tools designed to accommodate a diverse array of student learning styles. The nature of OCAAT allows for considerable pedagogical flexibility as classes can meet up to four hours per day. This flexibility allows Cornell faculty to incorporate complex experiential projects which would not be possible on a more traditional learning schedule.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is consistently emphasized across Psychology courses at Cornell College. The primary goal is train students in the science of Psychology. The empirical underpinnings of the field are highly emphasized. In addition, a focus on the liberal arts encourages strong written and oral communication abilities, an interdisciplinary focus, quantitative reasoning skills, and critical thinking skills. These skills are fostered across the curriculum. For example, nearly every course within our curriculum includes multiple written assignments. These typically take the form of sequenced assignments. Sequenced assignments are intentionally structured to require students to complete written assignments in a progressive and stepwise fashion. Students receive ample feedback on preliminary drafts and components in order to improve their writing processes. For example, if students are completing an original research project, they may first be asked to submit an APA-style references page which cites 25 empirical articles. Then the professor will carefully critique the references page for APA-style errors but will also evaluate the selected literature to ensure it is primary and closely related to the students' thesis topic. This may be the first step in paper completion;

subsequent steps may include multiple draft of each component of the APA-style paper. Multiple drafts receive written (and sometimes oral) feedback from the professor to improve the quality of students' scientific writing. Peers are also frequently involved in the editing process. This ensures that students also learn via observation, noting the strengths and weaknesses of other students' writing styles. Professors adapt this type of sequenced learning approach for the other learning objectives within our curriculum. For example, several oral communication assignments are embedded into nearly every course we teach via formal presentations, professor-facilitated discussion, student-facilitator discussion, peer teaching exercises, etc. Students receive feedback regularly on oral presentation style and content as a function of these assignments in order to improve their oral communication skills. The OCCAT schedule allows adequate time for these types of in-depth learning exercises.

Course Highlights

Programmatic highlights include the frequent use of original research projects to augment content knowledge and liberal arts skills. The topics of student research projects vary widely from the use of electrocardiography (ECG) to examine the impact of stress on cardiovascular function to an amusement park study designed to examine the impact of arousal on attraction. Additional programmatic highlights include the creative use of pedagogical techniques to engage students in active learning. Students may apply psychological knowledge to train a virtual rat, dissect a sheep brain to learn about neural anatomy, build Playdough models to diagram the structure and function of neural networks, observe the interactions of children to understand developmental processes, visit an imaging facility to learn about the assessment of neural function, travel to sites across Europe to learn about the psychological underpinnings of the Holocaust...the list of experiential learning activities goes on and on. Experiential learning infuses most aspects of our curriculum.

Internships

The unique nature of OCAAT allows students in to pursue internships and fellowships in Psychology and related disciplines for months at a time in the Department of Psychology at Cornell. Recently, Cornell students have completed local, regional, national, and international internships and fellowships in human nutrition, behavioral neuroscience, health psychology, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, exercise psychology, social justice, public health, and several other psychology and psychology-related disciplines. The locations of these experiences include Japan, the Middle East, Vietnam, China, various locations across Europe, Texas, California, and many other distant and local environments. The flexibility of the block plan allows students to orchestrate these experiences in a wide variety of venues. The Psychology department has many courses which allow for academic credit for these types of applied experiences.

High-quality Undergraduate Education

An emphasis on developing a high-quality curriculum which conforms to national guidelines for undergraduate education in psychology defines Cornell's Psychology program. Dr. Carol Enns, a Professor of Psychology at Cornell, was a member of the American Psychological Association task force which developed these guidelines. This has allowed the

department to have a finger on the pulse of the principles guiding quality undergraduate education in psychology. Members in the Department of Psychology regularly review and revise the curriculum with national guidelines and best teaching practices guiding our decision-making processes. An intentional focus on incorporating the most highly recommended programmatic elements, combined with a focus on high quality teaching, have led to the development of a rigorous psychology curriculum at Cornell. This discipline-specific rigor, combined with a high quality general education program rooted in the liberal arts, prepares Cornell students for the demands of future professional work.

Undergraduate Research

The Psychology Department also allows students to participate in undergraduate research either alongside Cornell professors or independently. Involvement in research is an excellent way for students to learn about Psychology and expand their understanding of the scientific method regardless of their intended field of study. Student-faculty research, guided research within courses, and independent student research fosters proficiency with research methods, statistics, and all aspects of the scientific method ranging from hypothesis development to data analysis. Experience with research is a necessity for future success in a variety of fields. Participation in student-faculty research teams, research-related coursework, and other research opportunities train Cornell students to conduct and understand research at a high level of sophistication. Most students complete a minimum of 3-5 guided original research projects as one component of the Psychology curriculum at Cornell. Some students exceed this number greatly, including students on faculty-student research teams and those who pursue fellowships or internships with strong research emphases. Each year, students are able to present their research results at the Cornell Student Symposium. Many students also present their research results at other local, regional, and national research conferences. In recent years students have presented at annual conferences of the Midwest Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, the TriState Undergraduate Research Conference, the International Conference on Eating Disorders, and many other venues. Several have been primary authors or co-authors on peer-reviewed journal articles published in well-respected Psychology journals. Many of our students are selected for graduate study at top-tiered programs in our field and in closely-related fields. Several have received very distinguished national and international scholarships and fellowships.

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Academic Honesty

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/pdf/Academic%20Honesty.pdf>

Accommodations

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/academic-accommodation/index.shtml>

Dropping a Class

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/gb-resources-student/add-drop.shtml>

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Faculty in the Department of Psychology at Cornell College are dedicated to teaching, service, and professional excellence. The professional expertise and accomplishments of our faculty are diverse. Faculty lead and actively contribute to a number of different professional organizations, give presentations at professional meetings, and publish in psychology journals (the last two often with students).

To learn more go to: <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/faculty/index.shtml>

BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) REQUIREMENTS

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/academic-catalogue/index.html#p=16>

BACHELOR OF ARTS OVERVIEW

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/academic-catalogue/index.html#p=18>

SPECIFIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/academic-catalogue/index.html#p=18>

PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE OPTIONS

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/>

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR AND MINOR

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/degree-requirements/index.shtml>

PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR/MINOR CHECKLIST

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/majors-minors/Current%20Majors%20PSY%20grad%20checklist.pdf>

COURSES

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/courses/index.shtml>

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/research/index.shtml>

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/career-engagement/internships/>

Many students at Cornell have taken the opportunity to complete an internship either during a practicum course or on their own. Here is a list of previous locations where students have completed an internship:

Four Oaks

Four Oaks assures children become successful adults. Services are focused on and rooted in the family. We empower children and families to achieve stability, self-sufficiency and permanency.

<http://www.fouroaks.org/Default.aspx>

Tanager Place

Navigating the complex world of mental and behavioral health treatment for children and families can be a daunting experience. Tanager Place's caring, supportive environment and commitment to excellence in practice results in professional, research-based and innovative solutions offered through a variety of on- and off-site programs for children.

<http://www.tanagerplace.org/>

Linn County Juvenile Detention Center

Juvenile Detention and Diversion Services (JDDS) provides a variety of services to youth and families in Linn County. Our mission is to provide secure temporary residential care for youth, ages 12 to 18 years, who are or are alleged to be delinquent, and who pose a threat to themselves or to the community.

<http://www.linncounty.org/141/Juvenile-Detention-Diversion-Services>

Foundation II

Foundation 2 is a not-for-profit human service agency that offers crisis prevention and intervention programs to people of all ages. We are committed to positive youth development, suicide prevention, and helping build the foundation for stronger and healthier families and safer communities for everyone.

<http://www.foundation2.org/default.aspx>

Waypoint

To strengthen and empower individuals who are homeless, living in poverty, or victims of domestic violence; and give children access to gaining the essential skills vital to reaching their full potential through quality child care.

<http://www.waypointservices.org/>

REM

The mission of REM Iowa is to offer adults, children, young people and their families innovative, quality services and supports that lead to growth and independence, regardless of the physical, intellectual or behavioral challenges they face. <http://www.remiowa.com/welcome.aspx>

ARC of East Central Iowa

Service, advocacy, inclusion, family, and community are what The Arc is about. We improve the quality of life for individuals and families affected by epilepsy, autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, ADHD, and brain injury. We believe in building better lives for people with disabilities and their families.

<http://www.arceci.org/>

Willis Dady Shelter

Willis Dady Emergency Shelter (WDES) provides services to both prevent homelessness for those at risk of becoming homeless and rehouse those who currently find themselves homeless. Willis Dady serves single men and families by providing shelter, case management, resource referrals, and basic necessities such as food, clothing, linens, and toiletries. Willis Dady is a participant in Operation Home and works to serve homeless veterans. <http://www.willisdady.org/>

Mission of Hope

Mission of Hope's vision is to provide a 24/7 Christ-centered ministry offering physical, emotional, and spiritual help to former offenders and others in need. Just as our Shelter is open 24/7, we desire that the Mission be also – providing Bible studies, worship services, and prayer around the clock, day and night.

<http://www.missionofhopecr.org/>

Catherine McAuley Center

The Catherine McAuley Center offers hope and opportunity through basic education for adults and transitional housing for women. Through education and housing, the Catherine McAuley Center helps individuals transform their lives by gaining greater stability, self-sufficiency, and becoming more engaged in the community.

<http://cmc-cr.org/>

Rape Victim Advocacy Program (I.C.)

RVAP is a sexual assault victim advocate and prevention agency that provides a variety of support and educational services that also hosts the Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline. Our priority is to provide all persons affected by sexual violence with free, confidential and trauma-informed support. We are here as a resource and advocate in healing and creating a community free from sexual violence. <http://rvap.uiowa.edu/>

Johnson County Crisis Center

When any situation has become too difficult for you to cope with alone, we can help. Everyone at The Crisis Center is passionate about treating those in crisis as valuable human beings. The Crisis Center provides immediate support through our Crisis Intervention, Food Bank & Emergency Assistance, and Community Intervention Programs.

<http://jccrisiscenter.org/>

Equipping Youth

Equipping Youth programs afford youth the opportunity to develop skills that enable them to make the healthiest choices when faced with pressures to conform to risky behaviors prevalent among teens today. Goals: To make all inclusive risk avoidance prevention education more accessible for youth; To teach youth the benefits they gain by avoiding negative consequence risk behaviors; To assist youth in making a commitment to save sexual relationships for their marriage.

<http://www.equippingyouth.org/>

Planned Parenthood – Iowa City

We are a trusted health care provider, an informed educator, a passionate advocate, and a global partner helping similar organizations around the world. Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of women, men, and young people worldwide. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

Linn County Home Health

The General Homemaker Program can help you when health problems limit you in doing your day-to-day activities. The general program's direct care workers (DCWs) provide in-home, nonmedical help to elderly and/or disabled people. Services are provided by DCW's who are professionally trained and supervised by either a nurse or a social worker in accordance with national standards and approved by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

<http://www.linncounty.org/138/Home-Health>

Hope Lodge – American Cancer Society

Each Hope Lodge offers cancer patients and their caregivers a free place to stay when their best hope for effective treatment may be in another city. Not having to worry about where to stay or how to pay for lodging allows guests to focus on getting well. <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/supportprogramsservices/hopelodge/>

Horizons

We are committed to raising the standard of living for the underserved, and to increasing the quality of life for those in our community. Our services are designed to serve people of all ages and from all walks of life. We help people feeling stuck, anxious and overwhelmed know that they are not alone. <http://www.horizonsfamily.org/default.aspx>

School Counselors – Anamosa, Mount Vernon, Cedar Rapids Catholic Schools

HONOR SOCIETY AND CLUBS

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/honor-society/index.shtml>

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

SOME SUBFIELDS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Clinical psychologists assess and treat mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. These range from short-term crises, such as difficulties resulting from adolescent conflicts, to more severe, chronic conditions, such as schizophrenia. Some clinical psychologists treat specific problems exclusively, such as phobias or clinical depression. Others focus on specific populations— for instance, youths; families or couples; ethnic minority groups; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals; or older people. They also consult with physicians on physical problems that have underlying psychological causes.

Cognitive and perceptual psychologists study human perception, thinking, and memory. Cognitive psychologists are interested in questions such as how the mind represents reality, how people learn, and how 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.

Community psychologists work to strengthen the abilities of communities, settings, organizations, and broader social systems to meet people's needs. They help people access resources and collaborate with others to improve their lives and communities. Instead of helping individuals cope with negative circumstances (e.g., trauma, poverty), community psychologists help empower people to change those circumstances, prevent problems, and develop stronger communities. Examples of community psychology interventions include improving support for hurricane victims, partnering with neighborhoods to prevent crime, collaborating with schools to prevent bullying, and helping change policies to improve health outcomes. Community psychologists blend research and practice, partnering with diverse citizens to plan and implement community changes, advance social justice, and use research to inform and evaluate this work.

Counseling psychologists help people recognize their strengths and resources to cope with everyday problems and serious adversity. They do counseling/psychotherapy, teaching, and scientific research with individuals of all ages, families, and organizations (e.g., schools, hospitals, businesses). Counseling psychologists help people understand and take action on career and work problems, they pay attention to how problems and people differ across the life span, and they have great respect for the influence of differences among people (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability status) on psychological well-being. They believe that behavior is affected by many things, including qualities of the individual (e.g., psychological, physical, or spiritual factors) and factors in the person's environment (e.g., family, society, and cultural groups).

Developmental psychologists study the psychological development of the human being that takes place throughout life. Until recently, the primary focus was on childhood and adolescence, the most formative years. But as life expectancy in this country approaches 80 years, developmental psychologists are becoming increasingly interested in aging, especially in researching and developing ways to help older people stay as independent as possible.

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 diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures that make up America.

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 in people? 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.

Environmental psychologists study the dynamics of person–environment interactions. They define the term *environment* very broadly, including all that is natural on the planet as well as built environments, social settings, cultural groups, and informational environments. They examine behavior evolving at various scales and from various processes (e.g., localization, globalization). They have a broad and inherently multidisciplinary focus. They recognize the need to be problem oriented, coordinating as needed with researchers and practitioners in the other fields of psychology, in related disciplines (e.g., sociology, anthropology, biology, ecology), as well as in the design fields (e.g., regional, urban, and community planning; landscape architecture; architecture; and engineering).

Environmental psychologists explore such issues as common property resource management, the effect of environmental stress on human effectiveness and well-being, the characteristics of restorative environments, and human information processing. They also foster conservation behavior, helping people to craft durable behavioral responses to emerging biophysical limits.

Evolutionary psychologists study how evolutionary principles such as mutation, adaptation, and selective fitness influence human thought, feeling, and behavior. Because of their focus on genetically shaped behaviors that influence an organism's chances of survival, evolutionary psychologists study mating, aggression, helping behavior, and communication. Evolutionary psychologists are particularly interested in paradoxes and problems of evolution. For example, some behaviors that were highly adaptive in our evolutionary past may no longer be adaptive in the modern world.

Experimental psychologists are interested in a wide range of psychological phenomena, including cognitive processes, comparative psychology (cross-species comparisons), and learning and conditioning. They study both human and nonhuman animals with respect to their abilities to detect what is happening in a particular environment and to acquire and maintain responses to what is happening.

Experimental psychologists work with the empirical method (collecting data) and the manipulation of variables within the laboratory as a way of understanding certain phenomena and advancing scientific knowledge. In addition to working in academic settings, experimental psychologists work in places as diverse as manufacturing settings, zoos, and engineering firms.

Forensic psychologists apply psychological principles to legal issues. Their expertise is often essential within the judicial system. They can, for example, help a judge decide which parent should have custody of a child or evaluate a defendant's mental competence to stand trial. Forensic psychologists also conduct research on jury behavior or eyewitness testimony. Some forensic psychologists are trained in both psychology and the law.

Health psychologists specialize in how biological, psychological, and social factors affect health and illness. They study how patients handle illness, why some people don't follow medical advice, and the most effective ways to control pain or change poor health habits. They also develop health care strategies that foster emotional and physical well-being.

Health psychologists team up with other health care professionals in independent practice and in hospitals to provide patients with complete health care. They educate health care professionals about psychological problems that arise from the pain and stress of illness and about symptoms that may seem to be physical in origin but actually have psychological causes. They also investigate issues that affect a large segment of society and develop and implement programs to deal with these problems. Examples include teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, smoking, lack of exercise, and poor diet.

Industrial/organizational (I/O) psychologists apply psychological principles and research methods to the workplace in the interest of improving productivity, health, and the quality of work life. Many serve as human resources specialists, helping organizations with staffing, training, and employee development. They may provide employers with testing and other valid selection procedures in their hiring and promotion processes. Others work as management consultants in such areas as strategic planning, quality management, and coping with organizational change.

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 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, neuropsychologists are working with health care teams to help brain-injured people resume productive lives.

Quantitative and measurement psychologists focus on methods and techniques for designing experiments and analyzing psychological data. Some develop new methods for performing analyses; 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.

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 and improve their lives, and they frequently work with other health care professionals. They deal with issues of personal adjustment, interpersonal relations, the work world, and pain management.

Rehabilitation psychologists are also involved in public health programs to prevent disabilities, including those caused by violence and substance abuse. And they testify in court as expert witnesses about the causes and effects of a disability and a person's rehabilitation needs.

School psychologists are engaged in the delivery of comprehensive psychological services to children, adolescents, and families in schools and other applied settings. They assess and counsel students, consult with parents and school staff, and conduct behavioral interventions when appropriate. Most school districts employ psychologists full time.

Social psychologists study how a person's mental life and behavior are shaped by interactions with other people. They are interested in all aspects of interpersonal relationships, including both individual and group influences, and seek ways to improve such interactions. For example, their research helps us understand how people form attitudes toward others and, when these are harmful—as in the case of prejudice—provides insight into ways to change them.

Social psychologists are found in a variety of settings, from academic institutions (where they teach and conduct research), to advertising agencies (where they study consumer attitudes and preferences), to businesses and government agencies (where they help with a variety of problems in organization and management).

Sport psychologists help athletes refine their focus on competition goals, become more motivated, and learn to deal with the anxiety and fear of failure that often accompany competition. The field is growing as sports of all kinds become more competitive and attract younger children.

GRADUATE STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Types of Degrees

Master's degrees are earned as either a stand-alone degree (often called **the terminal master's**), or in some doctoral programs you earn a master's degree as part of your work on your thesis. Here we will discuss the terminal master's degree. Individuals entering terminal master's programs usually have one of two goals:

To gain extra training and credentials to enter a doctoral program. To acquire skills and knowledge to advance further in a specific career or work environment.

Individuals with master's degrees find employment in a wide variety of settings — private business or government, schools, hospitals or mental health settings. When considering a master's degree, you should ask each program what career path its graduates pursue and how the program prepares them for that path. If you are interested in providing health services, you should be aware that most state licensing boards of psychology require a doctoral degree to be a licensed therapist.

Doctoral programs engage students in greater depth of knowledge and skills in a specialized subfield of psychology. Students interested in the production of new knowledge through scientific research — setting up experiments, collecting data, comparing experimental groups and learning statistical and analytical techniques — usually apply to PhD programs. Some PhD programs, however, offer both training in providing psychological services and the production of new knowledge. Programs conferring the PsyD degree focus heavily on the application of psychological science to provide a service to individuals or groups. When gathering information about particular programs, it is important you understand what training and education the program provides so you understand what skills and abilities you will acquire and how that will prepare you for a career after you get your doctorate.

Doctoral programs differ in the type of doctoral degree awarded. The two most common doctoral degrees are the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) and the PsyD (Doctor of Psychology). Programs in colleges of education may offer the EdD (Doctor of Education) degree.

The **PhD** is generally regarded as a research degree. Although many professional psychology programs award the PhD degree — especially those in university academic departments — these programs typically have a greater emphasis on producing new knowledge and engaging in research.

The **PsyD** is a professional degree in psychology (similar to the MD in medicine or a JD in law). Programs conferring the PsyD degree focus heavily on the application of psychological science to provide a service to individuals or groups.

Admission Requirements

Requirements for admission vary from program to program, so you will need to research what each program requires before submitting an application. Most, but not all, psychology programs prefer or require significant undergraduate coursework in psychology, often the equivalent of a major or minor. In addition, many graduate programs prefer students with substantial research experience, beyond laboratory classwork. Having completed an undergraduate honors thesis or served as a research assistant in a research lab usually meets this requirement.

Other requirements programs may have include one or more of the following:

- Previous work experience.
- Clinically related public service.
- Extracurricular activity.
- An interview.
- Additional information may include previous research activities, letters of recommendation, statement of goals and objectives, a major or minor in psychology, and undergraduate GPA.

When providing additional information about yourself, such as research or volunteer experience, be sure to accurately represent the responsibilities you had and explain how they relate to the graduate program.

Sample Admission Requirements

Scores presented as: minimum score required, median score of students entering.

Loyola University of Chicago — Chicago, IL

Social Psychology, PhD: GRE-V no minimum stated, 670; GRE-Q no minimum stated, 700.

University of North Dakota — Grand Forks, ND

Counseling Psychology, PhD: GRE-V no minimum stated, 154; GRE-Q no minimum stated, 147.

Harvard University — Cambridge, MA

Clinical Psychology, PhD: GRE-V 80, 90; GRE-Q 68, 79; GRE-Analytical 73, 86.

University of Denver — Denver, CO

Developmental Psychology, PhD: GRE-V no minimum stated, 161; GRE-Q no minimum stated, 151; Overall undergraduate GPA no minimum stated, 3.89.

University of Iowa — Iowa City, IA

Health Psychology, PhD: GRE-V no minimum stated, 164; GRE-Q no minimum stated, 159

The Importance of Accreditation

Accreditation is the mechanism used to ensure educational quality at the institutional and programmatic level, as appropriate. At the institutional level, there are regional and national accrediting agencies. There are six regional accrediting bodies that accredit colleges and universities in different geographic regions. National accrediting bodies accredit institutions or specific vocations. Specialized and professional accrediting bodies generally accredit at the program level. To ensure the accrediting body acts in a reputable manner, both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognize—or “accredit”—the accrediting bodies.

Membership in APA requires that one’s education and training occur in a regionally accredited institution. Accreditation of programs in psychology occurs only for the specific practice-related areas of clinical, counseling, and school psychology (as well as combinations of these areas). As such, most state licensing boards in psychology require, at a minimum, an applicant to have completed a program in a regionally accredited institution. Many also require graduation from an accredited program.

The APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) is recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and the CHEA as an accrediting body that meets their standards of recognition. The CoA accredits doctoral programs in clinical, counseling, and school psychology as well as programs that combine these areas; internship programs in professional psychology; and postdoctoral residency programs in professional psychology and in specialty areas. Increasingly, employers and health services reimbursement companies require that the psychologists whom they employ or reimburse be graduates of programs in professional psychology that are accredited by the APA CoA.

CAREERS

Job Outlook

Doctoral Graduate

Analyses of 2009 Doctorate Employment Survey data from the American Psychological Association's (APA) Center for Workforce Studies (Michalski, Kohout, Wicherski, & Hart, 2011) found that 72% of responding psychologists who earned their doctorates in 2008–2009 secured their first choice when looking for a job. In addition, at least 73% of the respondents were employed within 3 months of receiving the doctorate. Nearly 40% rated the job market as “good” or as “excellent” and 35% as “fair.” Just over three fourths of respondents to the 2009 online survey (the most recent study available) said that they were not underemployed. As might be expected, the highest paid and greatest range of jobs in psychology are available to those with doctorates in psychology. Unemployment and underemployment levels remain below those noted for other scientists and engineers. Few drop out of the field.

In general, career opportunities and employment settings have not varied greatly from those of the previous decade, although the prototype solo clinical practice is less common today than it was a decade or more ago. According to data from the Doctorate Employment Survey (see Table 3 in Michalski et al., 2011), the leading full-time employment settings for those with new doctorates in psychology in 2009 were universities/4-year colleges (25.9%) and hospitals/ other human services (25%). Other human service settings included university/ college counseling centers, outpatient clinics, and primary care offices or community health centers. About 16% of new doctorates worked in government/ VA medical center settings, 10% in business/nonprofit settings, 8% in schools/ other educational settings, 6% in medical schools/other academic settings, and slightly less than 6% in independent practice.

Master's Graduates

While the doctoral degree is the standard for independent research or practice in psychology, the number of psychology students who pursue a terminal master's degree has increased sixfold since 1960; master's degrees totaled at least 21,400 in 2008 (National Center for Health Statistics [NCES], 2009). Just under one fifth of master's graduates were full-time students in 2006, and 56% were employed outside psychology (National Science Foundation, 2006).

Graduates with a master's degree in psychology may qualify for positions in school and I/O psychology, although in most states they will be prohibited from using “psychologist” as their job or professional title. By APA policy and licensing laws, the term psychologist is reserved for individuals with doctoral education and training. Master's degree holders with several years of experience in business and industry can obtain jobs in consulting and marketing research, while other master's degree holders may find jobs in government, universities, or the private sector as counselors, researchers, data collectors, and analysts. Today, most master's degrees in psychology are awarded in clinical, counseling, and I/O psychology. Two of these three fields—counseling and I/O psychology—enjoy established occupational niches.

Persons with master's degrees often work under the direction of a doctoral psychologist, especially in clinical, counseling, school, and testing and measurement psychology.

Some jobs in industry—for example, in organizational development and survey research—are held by both doctoral- and master's-level graduates. But industry and government jobs that focus on compensation, training, data analysis, and general personnel issues are often filled by those with master's degrees in psychology.

Bachelor's Graduates

According to the CIRP [Cooperative Institutional Research Program] Freshman Survey (Higher Education Research Institute, 2008), psychology was the second most popular undergraduate field in 2008, chosen by 5.1% of incoming freshmen. Only general biology was more popular (chosen by 5.2% of incoming freshmen). When regarded as a single field and not as a constellation of fields (as are business, biology, or education), psychology outdrew all other fields. In 2008, 92,587 students graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology—although many had no plans to pursue a career as a psychologist (NCES, 2009). Some students stop with a bachelor's degree in psychology and find work related to their college major (e.g., they may be assistants in rehabilitation centers). If they meet state certification requirements, they may be able to teach psychology in high schools.

The study of psychology at the bachelor's degree level is also good preparation for many other professions. In 2008, 5% of recipients of bachelor's degrees in psychology were working in psychology or in an occupation related to psychology. Of the small proportion working in psychology, over 80% were in educational settings, broadly defined.

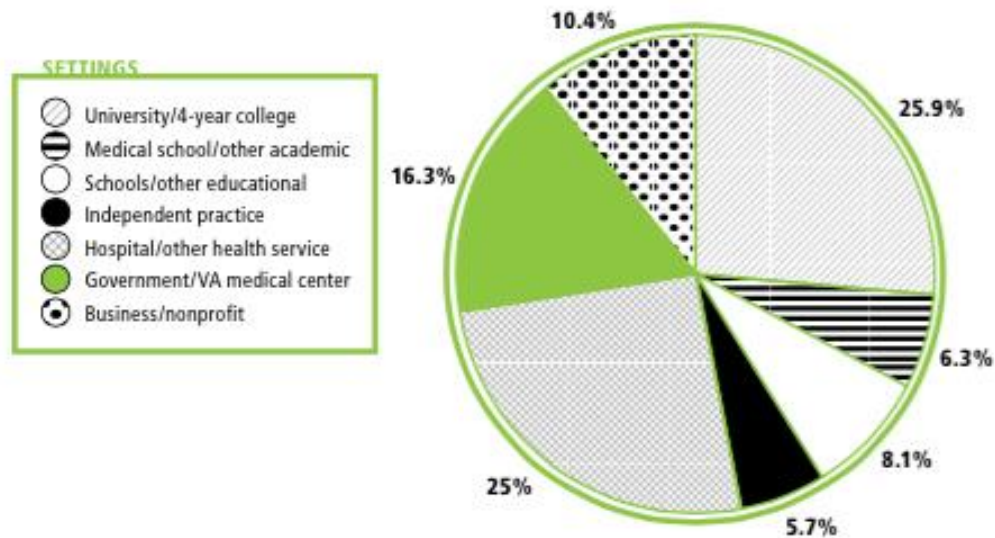
People with bachelor's degrees in psychology often possess good research and writing skills, are good problem solvers, and have well-developed, higher level thinking abilities when it comes to analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information. Many find jobs in administrative support, public affairs, education, business, sales, service industries, health, the biological sciences, and computer programming. They may also work as employment counselors, correction counselor trainees, interviewers, personnel analysts, probation officers, and writers.

Where Psychologists Work

Psychology is an extraordinarily diverse field with hundreds of career paths. Some specialties, like caring for people with mental and emotional disorders, are familiar to most of us. Others, like helping with the design of advanced computer systems or studying how we remember things, are less well known.

What all psychologists have in common is a shared interest in the minds and behaviors of both human and nonhuman animals. In their work, psychologists draw on an ever-expanding body of scientific knowledge about how we think, act, and feel, and they apply the information to their areas of expertise.

Many psychologists work in more than one setting. For instance, college professors often consult for industry or see clients on a part-time basis. Although it is possible to identify a host of different work settings, for the purpose of this booklet, we'll consider some of the most prominent examples.



Retrieved from the APA website: <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/09-doc-empl/table-3.pdf>

VALUABLE RESOURCES

<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/psychology/resources-student/index.shtml>

Psychology Information Site <http://www.cmmtypsych.net/>

Princeton Review <http://www.princetonreview.com/>

Alley Dog <http://www.alleydog.com/>

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<http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers.aspx>

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