

# Careers involving Psychology



Psychology students are good all-rounders. They tend to be inquisitive and analytical, and are happy tackling both 'big picture' issues and fine detail. They typically have good social skills and are comfortable dealing with others. This guide should help you think about the skills you have, the jobs they can be applied to, and the options available.

If you want to become a clinical psychologist after completing your psychology degree, you will need to undertake further study. Other popular routes for psychology graduates include teaching and public sector careers such as joining the police force.

Psychology graduates excel in jobs that require them to engage with a range of complex issues and develop a strong understanding of areas that may be new to them in a relatively short space of time. These careers include law and management consulting.

Depending on the career you choose, you may need further qualifications or training after you graduate. You could consider the following job roles:

- advertising copywriter
- advice worker
- charities administrator
- child psychotherapist
- consultant
- counsellor
- government research officer
- health service manager
- human resources officer
- insurance risk surveyor
- insurance underwriter
- market research executive

- mental health nurse
- psychologist (clinical)
- psychologist (educational)

Charity and not-for-profit was the most popular career choice for students of psychology identified by a 2018 survey of more than 60,000 undergraduates carried out by Trendence UK, a partner of TARGETjobs' parent company GTI. Just over a tenth (11.3%) of psychology students who participated in the survey said they were interested in this area.

Psychology is one of the UK's most popular degree courses. As a psychology student, you're part of a large, diverse group – and your options for after your degree are just as diverse. Psychology graduates are insightful and people-focused, but also scientists and critical thinkers.

Unsurprisingly, many people enter psychology degrees with the goal of becoming a psychologist – though this is by no means the only thing you can do. In the end, around 20% of psychology graduates go on to become chartered psychologists.

As a psychologist, you'll specialise in a particular area, such as:

- Clinical psychologist – helping people with mental health disorders like depression, anxiety and anorexia.
- Educational psychologist – helping young people to overcome problems that affect their learning and school life.
- Sports psychologist – giving athletes the mental strength and skills to succeed.
- Occupational psychologist – using psychology to increase the job performance of people and teams.
- Forensic psychologist – using psychological methods to help with crime solving or assess and treat criminal behaviour.

Becoming a chartered psychologist takes up to 5 years of further training and supervised work experience, including a recognised PhD. Entry onto approved courses is extremely competitive – to be a successful applicant you'll need six months to a year of work experience in a psychology-related role. You'll also need to demonstrate dedication, academic excellence and a range of soft skills. Need some help recognising and developing your skills?

Salaries for a qualified psychologist start at £30-35K, rising up to £50K with experience.

## Teaching

Teaching is another popular route for psychology graduates able to do further study. Teaching psychology is a way to make full use of what you've learned during your degree. Insights from psychology will help with other parts of your teacher training, such as understanding learning styles, behaviour management, and safeguarding young people.

To become a qualified teacher you can either do a one-year PGCE course (PGDE in Scotland), or a take school based training route. Top companies such as TeachFirst or Ark Teacher Training offer enticing graduate schemes, or check out all of our open graduate schemes.

You don't have to teach psychology – an additional one-year conversion course will allow you to choose from a range of other subjects. You can also do a primary or early years PGCE.

If you're interested in teaching a particularly in-demand subject, such as physics, you could get a generous bursary to do a conversion course and a teaching qualification.

## Marketing

Marketing products successfully depends on getting inside the customer's head, so it's understandable that psychology graduates are highly sought-after.

Marketers need to coordinate with many other areas of the business, such as product management and web design, so well-developed communication skills are vital. Additionally, the critical thinking and analytical skills you develop during your psychology degree will help you with the business side of marketing – company goals and the bottom line.

Here's our guide to help you discover more about roles in marketing. Similar careers such as advertising, market research and PR also attract psychology graduates.

## Human resources

Psychology and Human Resource Management is a common joint degree, showing that the two disciplines are closely interlinked. To work in HR you need a good understanding of people's motivations and interactions. Your role could include hiring the right person to complement a team, mediating in workplace disputes and managing personality clashes.

While graduates from any discipline can move into HR, a psychology degree will make you especially attractive to employers. If you're serious about HR, you should also consider further training from the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development – though this can be done on the job.

### User experience design

User experience design attempts to improve the way people interact their environment through design. This might be anything from the layout of a supermarket to the user-friendliness of a website or app. In the digital industries in particular, UX design is a fast-growing and vitally important field.

While you can get a junior UX role directly from university, you're more likely to be successful if you go on to further study. Masters courses in UX design will generally ask for a 2:1 in a related discipline, such as psychology.

### Research

Even if you don't want to be an academic, a career in research is a very real possibility for a psychology graduate. As well as direct knowledge of psychiatry topics, your psychology degree develops strong research and analysis skills. Research doesn't necessarily mean a masters or PhD – as a graduate, you can go straight into work as a research analyst.

All kinds of organisations, from major corporations to government departments, are on the lookout for psychological research. You might run a fully-fledged research project into worker productivity, or gather and analyse information to brief an MP.

### Careers advice

Careers advisors are employed by schools, universities, local authorities, charities and more. There are plenty of roles out there, and entry level positions are open to graduates without further training – though you should be willing to gain professional qualifications on the job.

Psychology graduates are valued for their insight into people's personalities, needs, and ability to learn and develop, as well as soft skills like information-gathering and organisation.