**14 Career Options for Psychology Majors**

**A degree with many applications.**

When people think “psychology,” most assume it’s related to reading someone's mind or laying on a couch and sharing your feelings.

Psychology isn’t just the study of behavior, it is also the study of mental functions. Those employed in this field consider it a science, [philosophy](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/philosophy), and even an art. The main goal of psychology is to explain, predict, and control behavior and mental processes.

When deciding to major in psychology, it is important to understand the many subfields and specializations within this broad major. These areas of psychology include statistics, organization/industrial, clinical, [neuroscience](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/neuroscience), cognitive, behavioral, social, developmental, and educational. There are so many [career](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/career) options for an undergraduate psychology major to pursue.

Before you fully decide to become a psychology major, you need to decide if it is truly a discipline you want to devote time to. If you enjoy helping individuals or families going through personal problems, listening to them, interviewing/testing, analyzing and collecting data, being social and creative, researching human and [animal behavior](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/animal-behavior), then psychology is a career path for you.

To gain more information on narrowing your choices, talk to individuals that work in the field that you are interested in, school advisers, individuals already in college/university, and internet resources such as a university website, or you can continue reading this article.

After graduating with a degree in psychology, most graduates have a hard time finding a job that really suits them. According to surveys, many graduates have the wrong idea that becoming a psychology major is just a stepping stone towards higher [education](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/education), like having a Ph.D.

Most graduates do not realize that there are many choices of careers from having a Bachelor’s degree to as high as having a doctorate degree in psychology. Here are some possible job opportunities for you:

**Psychometrist/Clinician**

A clinician is someone who administers [psychological testing](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/psychological-testing-and-evaluation) and scores them. They work under a licensed psychologist and they are not allowed to interpret test results or give clinical assessments.

Psychometrists work under the clinical setting wherein one has to administer clinical tests to patients, or under the organizational setting wherein they administer tests to applicants, employees, and/ or students.

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To be qualified, you must be a graduate of clinical psychology, have extensive knowledge about administration and scoring of standardized tests. Salary ranges by state but you could expect an average base pay of around $10,000 to $20,000. This quotation is for less experienced psychometrists. More experience can equal more pay.

[**Substance Abuse**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/addiction) **Counselor**

This is one of the fastest growing careers in the United States in which one works with clients addicted to [alcohol](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/alcohol), [cocaine](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/cocaine-use-disorder), or any other illegal [drugs](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/psychopharmacology). To be qualified, you not only need an academic background, but you also need a strong [personality](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/personality) dealing with patients undergoing recovery, and thus, suffer from withdrawal symptoms.

Some state laws require certification or licensure to be a substance abuse counselor. The base pay of a substance abuse counselor ranges from $25,000 to $40,000 depending on the state and years of experience.

[**Psychiatric**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/psychiatry) **Technician**

In the clinical setting, another career you could choose is being a psychiatric technician. Psy Techs are in charge of the patient’s overall mental wellness by reporting the patient’s mental and emotional state to a medical staff. They assist in the personal hygiene, rehabilitation programs and administering of oral and inject-able medications to mentally ill patients. This could be a physically demanding job, but it offers a good average base pay of $22,000 to $47,000.

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**Human Resource Personnel**

Another entry-level job of having a psychology degree is the human resource personnel position. This is for people who prefer the organizational setting over the clinical or business setting. The main task of human resource personnel is to assist the human resource manager in implementing policies and strategies throughout the company or organization.

The human resource workforce is the backbone of a successful company because this group of individuals work together in screening and recruiting the best applicants. One of its main duties is to also maintain good performance and behavior of its employees. The base pay of human resource personnel on the entry level ranges from $10,000 to $30,000.

If you decide to take your education one notch higher, there are more available careers to psychology graduates of a master’s degree.

[**Marriage and Family**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/marriage-and-family-therapy) **Therapist**

A popular career in the clinical setting is becoming a [marriage](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/marriage) and family therapist (MFT). This requires masters in science or arts, licensure, and thousands of intern hours. They occasionally work in hospital settings beside psychiatrists and social workers, while other times in their own private practices. Their focus is facilitating [behavioral change](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/habit-formation) in the marriage and family sphere. Their average pay ranges from $40,000 to $100,000.

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**Masters in Clinical Psychology**

You don’t need any further graduate study in clinical psychology, but you need to be licensed before going into practice. However, under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist, you could already provide [psychotherapy](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/therapy) and psychological assessments.

The main duty of a clinical psychologist involves improvement in the psychological well being of patients and to make positive changes on overall mental health. In this position, you’ll work along other professionals to provide various forms of treatments. They work with clients of all ages with different mental illnesses such as [schizophrenia](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/schizophrenia), behavior and [eating disorders](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/eating-disorders), neurological disorders and [depression](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/depression). For a starting career, expect a base pay of around $50,000 to $70,000.

**Experimental Psychologists**

This is a degree wherein students are being prepared for further graduate study. Some states may require a Ph.D. in order to hold the title of psychologist. You could be a laboratory manager, research assistant, or part of a [marketing](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/consumer-behavior) research team. This is not a terminal degree. Meaning, students can focus on a specialty area like developmental, cognitive, and social psychology.

Our human behavior and mental processes are very complex which require experimental psychologists to study in different contexts. The main task of an experimental psychologist is to conduct a pilot study using statistics on a chosen field or subject before pushing through with the major study. You’d also need an exceptional understanding of the different psychological research methods and have outstanding communication skills. An excellent writing skill is also important because this job also includes writing in academic journals and studies.

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For the least experienced, the base pay is around $30,000 to $75,000 depending on the sector of employment and location. Salary could go as high as $80,000 for those more experienced.

Lastly, one could consider having a master’s degree in applied psychology. Under applied psychology, students could find a career in [forensic](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/forensic-therapy) psychology, [sports](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/sport-and-competition) psychology and industrial and organizational psychology or, if they prefer, a teaching position instead.

It is suggested by the U.S. Department of Labor that there is higher opportunity for students in the applied psychology field because they could work directly in their specialty area.

**Forensic Psychologists**

Forensic psychology works in between psychology and the [criminal](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/punishment) justice system. The forensic psychologist must understand the standards of the American justice system in order to be a credible witness. The court designates the forensic psychologist as an expert witness and is duly assigned to evaluate if the defendant is competent in standing trial.

The task of a forensic psychologist is to prove if the accused is sane or mentally ill through psychological questioning and testing. A forensic psychologist is also expected to translate his or her psychological findings in legal terms. They provide treatment recommendations, evaluate the defendant’s risk in behavior, determine if the witness is credible, and recommend months or years of sentencing.

Forensic psychologists usually work with the police force, law enforcement personnel, the State attorney, and public defenders. Salary varies in different states but usually averages from $45,000 to $75,000. Again, salary depends on years of experience.

**Sports Psychologist**

In sports psychology, the sports psychologist is concerned on the effects of physical activity to the psychological health and performance of athletes. These psychologists work on the academic level and serve as consultants for sports teams. Sports psychologists work along with training coaches in developing rehabilitation and team building programs. They also provide [counseling](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/coaching) to athletes who undergo career transitions. The base pay of a sports psychologist usually averages from $40,000 to $70,000.

**I-O Psychologists**

Industrial and organizational psychology, involves studying behavior in the workplace. The industrial and organizational psychologist, or I-O psychologist, is geared towards the improvement of each employee’s [productivity](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/productivity) and [motivation](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation). They develop training and assess employees to further enhance the company’s workforce.

One of the I-O psychologist’s main duties is to match personalities of employees in different job positions. For example, employee A has an [outgoing](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/extroversion) personality and has high social building skills. The I-O psychologist matches employee A to a better fitting job within the company like in sales or marketing.

An I-O psychologist also exerts effort on resolving employment issues to ensure that there is balance within the workplace. Thus giving the company’s employees a sense of stability, responsibility, and [happiness](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/happiness) in their positions. Happy workers yield happy results.

I-O psychologists could also work as a consultant for different companies. This increases earning potential to as high as $100,000.

**School Counselors**

For those who prefer teaching or working in the educational setting, educational psychology, school psychology, and school counseling are the options to choose from. These positions are concerned on the overall mental welfare of the school’s employees and students.

School counselors work with troubled children, those with problems at home and in school. They help parents in addressing the concerns of their child. Base pay for a school counselor is around $50,000 annually. Earning potential could be increased with curriculum development.

**Educational Psychologists**

Psychologists who develop learning materials and understand the aspects of human learning are called educational psychologists. They could, for example, enhance one’s reading skills through a developed or new technique. They also assess the effects of educational interventions to learning and development.

Most educational psychologists focus on gifted children and those with disabilities. They study individual differences in terms of [intelligence](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/intelligence), [creativity](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/creativity), motivation and cognitive style. This is a profession that also works at a strategic level to carry out research in improving a school’s educational policy. Their base pay is around $66,000 to $108,000 depending on the state and years of experience.

These are the common jobs offered to those who have a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in psychology.

For further professional advancement, one may pursue a Ph.D. or PsyD. This is a major step that needs realization of one’s goals and commitment. It is a major achievement that is not for everyone. Licensing increases financial compensation. Here are various career paths:

**Psychiatrists**

After completing medical school, a doctor of psychiatry specializes in the treatment of severely disturbed patients. Requirements on being a doctor of psychiatry differ from state to state. Others may only require a bachelor’s degree while some states need you to finish medical school before being qualified. Psychiatrists tend to be the most prestigious achievement among mental health professionals. Average base pay of a doctor of psychiatry ranges from $153,000 to $228,000.

**Clinical Psychologist**

An average clinical psychologist’s salary ranges from $50,000 to $85,000. Expect your salary to be on the higher end if you already have your PsyD.

The doctor of philosophy in psychology or Ph.D. on the other hand is the higher level of expertise in doctors. It requires 3-6 years of study beyond bachelor’s degree and 2-4 years of study beyond master’s degree.

There are many areas of specialization for a Ph.D. graduate. Earnings will highly depend on the chosen field. Advanced level of health psychologists for example receives an annual pay of around $85,000.

So what are the advantages and disadvantages of having a bachelor’s, master's and doctorate degree in psychology?

Graduate schools require more time and needs a higher level of commitment in terms of work and intellectual energy. However, a master’s degree gives a lot of choices in terms of changing career paths while having a Ph.D. requires focus on a certain field. Master’s degree also allows specialization within a field and requires lesser time than Ph.D.

The world of psychology is vast as it works on studying the human mind and behavior. There are thousands of psychology-related jobs everywhere, but these are the most common positions companies look for. It is without doubt that having a psychology degree is one of the best degrees that offer good salary and career satisfaction as well.