

CAREER GUIDE

PSYCHOLOGY: A DEGREE THAT OPENS DOORS



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



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WHY COLLEGE?

When most people consider the value of a college education, the first thought is economic advantage. And indeed, that benefit is widely documented. A recent report in the Washington Post estimates that an individual with a bachelor's degree is likely to earn a million dollars more over the course of a lifetime than their companions who have only completed high school. Using those calculations, the study estimates that the value of a college degree is somewhere in the environs of \$970,000¹.

The financial benefits aren't just for those with a bachelor's or more advanced degree. When a student completes just a year or two of college, earnings increase accordingly². During the recent recession, the population that suffered the greatest job loss was that group with no post-secondary education, followed by the group with some post-secondary education. The group that suffered the least was that with college degrees and advanced college degrees. According to the study, 86 percent of college graduates find their college education worth the money they put into it³.

A college education offers benefits far beyond those of financial comfort and increased job security. A report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy indicates that college graduates enjoy greater savings, a wider range of personal and professional options, a better quality of life and more leisure activities⁴. A study by the Carnegie Foundation indicates that college educated citizens tend to become more open-minded, cultured, rational, more consistent and less authoritarian⁴.

Studies also show that higher education is better for families. The same study by the Carnegie Foundation shows a correlation between higher education and health, not only for graduates, but also for their children⁴. For working mothers the news is especially good as another study shows that college-educated women tend to spend more time with their children with the aim of better preparing them for the future. Another benefit: college graduates tend to have a more optimistic view of both the past and the future⁵.

MORE BENEFITS OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

PSYCHOLOGY

Why pursue a degree in psychology?

One of the benefits of a psychology degree is that it can open the door to a broad range of employment options. Many people pursue a degree in psychology because they have a fascination with understanding human relationships and the way people think; later they discover the insight they gain is useful no matter where they find employment. Even if you are not interested in a career in psychology, with a degree you will have the transferable skills that all employers require, such as communication, critical thinking, independent learning and the ability to work in teams.

While many graduates with a bachelor's degree in psychology pursue careers in human or social service, a degree in psychology provides great training for a wide variety of career paths. A degree in psychology provides an excellent foundation for the pursuit of a master's degree in diverse fields like communications, theology, education, law, medicine and more.

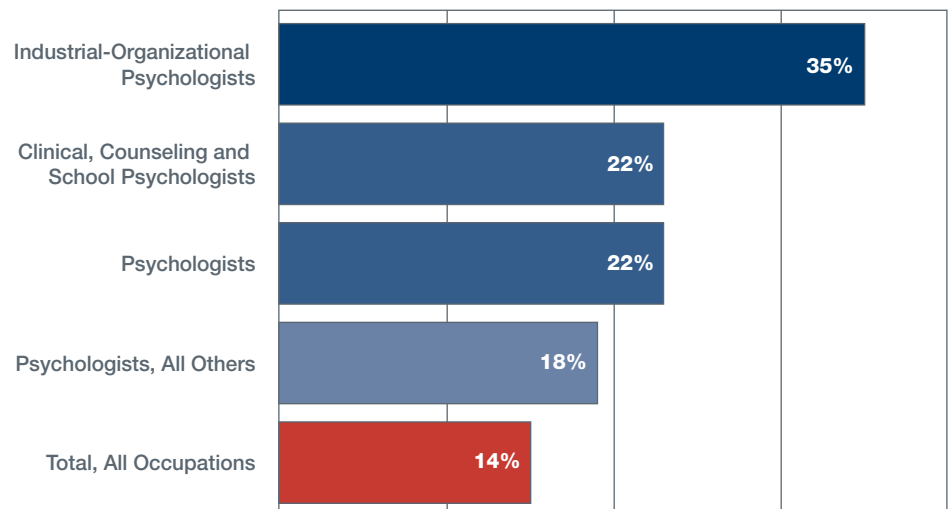
What jobs are available for psychology majors?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, job growth in the field of psychology is expected to increase more than 20 percent, outpacing the average projected for all professions from 2010 to 2020. The opportunity will be greatest for those with advanced degrees, such as doctoral degrees with a specialty focus, particularly those with a specialty or doctoral degree in school psychology⁶.

Employment in the field of psychology is projected to outpace other professions in coming years.

Psychologists

Percent change in employment, projected 2010-20



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

You can find psychology majors in a wide variety of professions, including:

- Entry-level counseling in a government-funded agency or hospital
- Academic counselors within educational facilities
- Vocational counseling
- Career counselors
- Counselors for at-risk youth
- Human resources
- Sales and marketing
- Journalism
- Administrative and executive assistants
- Criminal justice
- Probation/detention officers
- Law enforcement
- Elementary school teachers
- Child care workers
- Retail management
- Community managers
- Hospice workers
- Social services caseworkers
- Activities coordinators

Graduates of an undergraduate psychology program are candidates for admission into a graduate program at the master's or doctoral level. With an advanced psychology degree, graduates may pursue careers as:

- Psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- Rehabilitation counselors
- Career counselors
- Social workers
- School counselors

Who hires psychology majors?

Psychology graduates are excellent candidates for any career that requires strong interpersonal and communication skills, like sales, marketing, organizational development, human resources, team management and more. Some of the most reliable employers of psychology majors, both undergraduate and graduate, are:

- Schools
- State/federal government
- Colleges/universities
- Private practices
- Mental health agencies
- Community agencies
- Rehabilitation agencies
- Business and industries
- Correctional facilities

THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY
is expected to grow
MORE THAN 20%
OUTPACING THE AVERAGE
projected for all professions
from 2010 to 2020.

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

Why pursue a degree in counseling psychology?

Counseling psychologists advise people on how to deal with their problems and help them understand issues in the home, workplace, or community. Through counseling, they work with patients to identify the strengths or resources they can use to manage problems.

An advanced degree in counseling psychology academically qualifies students to be eligible for licensing as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT), a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), or both. The LPCC licensure is for students interested in pursuing the practice of individual or group counseling. The MFT license is designed for students who wish to pursue the practice of individual, couples, family, adolescent and child psychotherapy. A master's degree in counseling psychology also prepares students for the pursuit of doctoral studies in practitioner-oriented programs such as counseling or clinical psychology.

Counselors in private practice may focus on marriage and family therapy, trauma, adoption, mental health, depression, anxiety, adolescent counseling, psychiatry, psychology, addiction and recovery, substance abuse, grief and loss, suicide, stress management, personal growth, mid-life transition, mid-life crisis, career counseling and divorce.

Generally, people who hold a master's degree in counseling psychology pursue careers as:

- Academic counselors
- At-risk youth counselors
- Career counselors
- Disabled student services counselors
- Hospice workers
- Mental health practitioners
- Private practices
- Social workers
- Therapists

Who hires counseling psychology graduates?

The field of mental health is poised for robust growth from now through 2020; projections indicate a 36 percent increase, which is considerably higher than the average for all occupations. In the field of mental health, the greatest growth is anticipated in the area of marriage and family therapy. These projections are based on population growth, the increasing likelihood of insurance reimbursement for psychological services, and the relative affordability of counselors and marriage and family therapists vs. psychiatrists and psychologists⁷.

Some counseling psychologists work in medical settings while others work in academic or research settings, teaching others and conducting studies. The types of organizations that hire psychologists is broad, ranging from educational facilities at every level, mental health services organizations, domestic violence shelters, developmentally delayed care centers, hospices, juvenile detention centers, social services departments and even local and state government offices.

Employers of counseling psychologists include:

- At-risk youth organizations
- Colleges and universities
- County mental health services
- Developmentally delayed care centers
- Domestic violence shelters
- Hospice care and hospitals
- Juvenile detention centers
- Local and state government

The National University
Master of Arts in Counseling
Psychology degree
academically qualifies
students to be **eligible for**
licensing in California for the
Marriage and Family Therapist
(MFT) license, the Licensed
Professional Clinical Counselor
(LPCC) license, or both.

ADDICTION COUNSELING

Why pursue a degree in substance abuse and behavioral disorder counseling?

Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors advise people who have alcoholism or other types of addiction, eating disorders, or other behavioral problems. They provide treatment and support to help the client recover from addiction or modify problem behaviors⁸.

Professionals in this field typically evaluate the mental and physical health of patients. They assess a patient's willingness to receive treatment, then develop a patient's treatment goals and plan. They typically work both one-on-one and in group settings to help patients develop the skills and behaviors necessary to recover from their addictions as well as help families of their patients to develop skills and strategies to cope with these issues.

Students who earn a degree in alcohol and drug counseling may seek careers as:

- Addiction counselors
- Rehabilitation counselors
- School and career counselors
- Social and community service managers

With an advanced degree, students may seek employment as:

- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Mental health counselors
- Marriage and family therapists

Who hires alcohol and drug counseling graduates?

For graduates with a specialty in substance abuse and behavioral disorders, job opportunity is also projected to grow at a healthy pace (27 percent) as more people seek treatment for addictions and other behavioral disorders. These numbers are bolstered by the fact that jail time for drug offenders is on the decrease, with the trend leaning toward treatment rather than incarceration⁸.

Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors in private practice must be licensed and hold a master's degree. In addition, counselors must pass a state-recognized exam and complete continuing education every year.⁸

Typical employers of substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors include:

- Individual and family services
- Residential mental health and substance abuse facilities
- Outpatient mental health and substance abuse centers
- Hospitals; state, local, and private
- State and local government

EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING

Why pursue a degree in educational counseling?

A master's degree in educational counseling prepares students and educators for a counseling position in academia helping students develop the social skills to succeed in school, academic guidance and assistance, as well as offer support in choosing a career or educational direction. Educational counselors work in a variety of academic settings, including K-12 and higher education.

Students who earn a master's degree in educational counseling may seek careers as:

- Academic advisors
- Admissions advisors
- Athletic academic advisors
- Career/guidance counselors
- Counselors – disabled student services
- Counselors – financial aid
- Counselors – international students
- Counselors – multi-cultural services
- Counselors – psychological services
- Learning specialists
- Residential life coordinators
- Student services/affairs coordinators
- School counselors

Who hires educational counseling graduates?

Job opportunities for school and career counselors are expected to grow at a steady pace through 2020 as population growth continues and schools in turn experience growth. Opportunities for school counselors will increasingly be found in public and private schools, while career counselors will find opportunities in colleges as well as government career centers and private practice⁹.

While educational counseling graduates are commonly employed by schools and school districts, there is a wide range of employers who seek out employees with this degree, including:

- Colleges/universities
- Community centers
- Learning centers
- Nonprofits
- Pre-schools/day-care centers
- Prisons/juvenile detention
- Private/public schools
- State government
- Federal government

A person with a
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
can expect to earn
\$2.27 million
over a lifetime, compared to
\$1.30 million
for those with just a
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.¹

Why pursue a degree in gerontology?

Gerontologists are specialists from a variety of fields, including social services, health services, government, and business, who focus on the physical, mental, and social changes in people as they age. According to the Administration on Aging, there will be approximately 72.1 million older persons by 2030—more than twice the number in 2000¹⁰. The growth of the population over the age of 65 affects many aspects of society by challenging families, businesses, healthcare providers, and policymakers, among others, to meet the needs of aging individuals¹¹.

Because gerontology is a diverse field, practitioners may find employment working directly with the elderly, such as counseling older patients and their families about issues of caregiving, death, or mental health. Other professionals may find opportunities working indirectly and on behalf of older persons by performing duties such as conducting research, educating college and university students, or designing products for older persons, among many other areas.

Graduates who earn a master's degree in gerontology may use their knowledge and expertise in aging to pursue a variety of careers including:

- Advisors for business, industry and labor
- Counselors
- Healthcare practitioners
- Hospice care workers
- Mental health practitioners
- Program administrators/directors
- Product developers
- Public policymakers
- Researchers
- Social workers
- Teachers/instructors

Who hires gerontology graduates?

Employment opportunities in the field of aging are promising as many adults reach the age of 65 years and older while their life expectancy is projected to reach beyond their 75th year. The growth in the aging population continues to create new opportunities for professionals with knowledge and expertise in aging who can meet the diverse demands of older persons through innovation, new products and programs¹².

Potential employers of gerontologists may include:

- Business and industry
- Colleges/universities
- Community services
- Human services
- Hospitals/healthcare clinics
- Nursing homes
- Non-profits
- Religions organizations
- Retirement communities
- Local/state/federal government

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Why pursue a degree in organizational behavior?

The behavior of individuals and groups in an organization directly affects the success of the organization. Knowledge of human behavior, psychology and business is critical in helping people lead productive lives and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. The ever-changing business world requires professionals with the skills to manage this change to improve organizational performance.

Students in this field learn how people use information and make decisions, how they interact with one another and how to improve these interactions. They learn to apply these skills for conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity and team leadership. They also learn how to diagnose, plan, implement, and manage organizational change and technological innovation.

Graduates may also apply their skills to human resource development and training as applied to organizational effectiveness, performance management, motivation, and achieving individual, group, and organizational goals.

A degree in organizational behavior provides a solid foundation for applying knowledge to the workplace and increasing the effectiveness of both individuals and work teams.

Graduates may seek careers in a wide array of industries and environments, including:

- Benefits analysts
- Human resource planners
- Career planning specialists
- Job analysts
- Compensation analysts
- Labor relations advisors
- EEO/affirmative action planners
- Performance appraisers
- Employment specialists
- Personnel researchers
- Recruiters
- Succession planners
- Safety managers
- Training specialists
- Commercial real estate associates
- Compensation and benefits analysts
- Information technology managers
- Project managers
- Nonprofit management
- Consultants

Who hires organizational behavior graduates?

A degree in organizational behavior prepares you for a wide variety of career paths in the business environment. In some cases, you'll work as part of managerial staff to resolve broad organizational issues. In other positions you'll be challenged as a management consultant to help solve complex business problems and often will be asked to work with staff in a human resources capacity. Students with a degree in organizational behavior are an attractive hire for any large enterprise.

Organizational behavior graduates are a natural fit for a career in human resources, a necessary function in virtually every business. Job opportunities in this field are projected to grow at a steady pace through 2020. As new companies are created and existing organizations expand, the field of human resources will expand correspondingly¹³.

ALMOST

4 OUT OF EVERY **5**
JOBS LOST

from December 2007
to January 2010
belonged to workers with
**NO FORMAL
POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION.**¹⁴

PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY

Why pursue a career in performance and sport psychology?

A degree in performance and sport psychology prepares you to seek employment as a professional coach, focusing on performance, motivation and the psychological benefits of sports and athletics. A sport psychologist works to understand the reasons and factors that influence people to participate in physical activity and to understand how a person's emotions and mental state can affect athletic performance. Graduates in sports psychology can find employment in coaching or continue on to graduate programs at the master's or doctoral level.

Sport and exercise psychology is an expanding and changing field that is expected to grow slowly but steadily through the year 2018 as people, in general, avail themselves of more psychological services¹⁵.

Students who pursue a degree in sport psychology may find careers that include:

- Counseling athletes
- Motivating clients to pursue exercise and physical activity
- Researching individual and group sports and exercise
- Working as a coach to understand the athletic experience and environment
- Teaching skills to enhance athletic performance
- Teaching at colleges and universities or conducting research
- Injured-athlete training and rehabilitation
- Coaching for children, teens and adults interested in improving performance
- Combining training strategies from sports psychology with psychotherapy to help clients who suffer from mental health problems like eating disorders and depression

Who hires sports psychologists?

Sports psychologists perform tasks related to sports performance and education, with some teaching in universities while others work directly with athletes to increase motivation and enhance performance. Other options include client counseling, scientific research and athletic consulting.

- Colleges and universities
- Medical facilities
- Professional sports teams
- Sports management agencies
- Physician offices
- Educational support services
- Military
- Scientific research and developmental services
- Individual and family services
- General medical hospitals

IN 1970
ONLY 26%
of middle-class workers
HAD EDUCATION
beyond high school.

TODAY
NEARLY 60%
OF ALL JOBS IN THE US
require higher education.²

About National University

Since 1971, National University has been dedicated to making lifelong learning opportunities accessible, challenging, and relevant to a diverse student population. As a nonprofit institution, National University invests in its students by providing them with quality educational instruction and learning technologies, superior faculty, and exemplary student services.

National University has five schools and one college, including:

- School of Business and Management
- School of Education
- School of Engineering, Technology and Media
- School of Health and Human Services
- School of Professional Studies
- College of Letters and Sciences

Dedicated to educational access and academic excellence, National University provides challenging and relevant programs that are student-centered, success-oriented, and have a proven balance of theoretical and practical attributes.

National University offers the following psychology degree programs:

- [Associate of Science in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling](#)
- [Bachelor of Arts in Psychology](#)
- [Bachelor of Arts in Sport Psychology](#)
- [Bachelor of Science in Organizational Behavior](#)
- [Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology](#)
- [Master of Arts in Human Behavior](#)
- [Masters of Arts in Applied Gerontology](#)
- [Masters of Arts in Performance Psychology](#)

National University also offers certificate programs in:

- [Graduate Certificate in Bereavement Studies](#)
- [Undergraduate Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling](#)

Contact us to discuss your possibilities with a psychology degree from National University:

- **Phone:** (800) NAT-UNIV (628-8648)
- **Email:** advisor@nu.edu
- **Visit us online:** <http://www.nu.edu/OurPrograms/CollegeOfLettersAndSciences/Psychology.html>

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