

Appleby's Careers in Psychology

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Introduction

Some psychology majors enter the world of work immediately after graduation, while others continue their education to prepare for more specialized employment. This chapter will help both groups prepare for, obtain, and succeed in the careers to which they aspire. It contains employment opportunities/strategies, an employment-planning time-line for the student with a bachelors degree in psychology, advice for successful employment in the 21st century, explains the value of a liberal arts education for career preparation, and answers questions often asked by career-seeking psychology majors. It describes job-related skills acquired by psychology majors that are valued by prospective employers and provides 174 job titles in human services for which psychology graduates are qualified. It explains how and where baccalaureate psychology graduates and master's- and doctorally-prepared psychologists are employed, and the range of salaries they receive. A list of publications on careers in psychology are also included.

What Do Psychologists Do and What Is Their Employment Outlook?

The Occupational Outlook Handbook is a wonderful source of information for undergraduates that provides them with valuable information about their occupational choices. The information in this section is taken verbatim from the psychology section the 1994-95 edition of this publication.

Nature of the Work

Psychologists study human behavior and mental processes to describe, understand, predict, and change people's behavior. They may study the way a person thinks, feels, or behaves. Research psychologists investigate the physical, cognitive, emotional, or social aspects of human behavior. Psychologists in applied fields counsel and conduct training programs; do market research; apply psychological treatments to a variety of medical and surgical conditions; or provide mental health services in hospitals, clinics, or private settings.

Like other social scientists, psychologists formulate hypotheses and collect data to test their validity. Research methods depend on the topic under study. Psychologists may gather information through controlled laboratory experiments; personality, performance, aptitude, and intelligence tests; observation, interviews, and questionnaires; clinical studies; or surveys. Computers are widely used to record and analyze this information.

Since psychology deals with human behavior, psychologists apply their knowledge and techniques to a wide range of endeavors including human services, management, education, law, and sports. In addition to the variety of work settings, psychologists specialize in many different areas. *Clinical psychologists*, who constitute the largest specialty, generally work in independent or group practice or in hospitals or clinics. They may help the mentally or emotionally disturbed adjust to life and are increasingly helping all kinds of medical and surgical patients deal with their illnesses or injuries. They may work in physical medicine and rehabilitation settings, treating patients with spinal cord injuries, chronic pain or illness, stroke and arthritis and neurologic conditions, such as multiple sclerosis. Others help people deal with life stresses such as divorce or ageing. Clinical psychologists interview patients; give diagnostic tests; provide individual, family, and group psychotherapy; and design and implement behavior modification programs. They may collaborate with physicians and other specialists in developing treatment programs and help patients understand and comply with the prescribed treatment. Some clinical psychologists work in universities, where they train graduate students in the delivery of mental health and behavioral medicine services. Others administer community mental health programs. *Counseling psychologists* use several techniques, including interviewing and testing, to advise people on how to deal with problems of everyday living—personal, social, educational, or vocational.

Developmental psychologists study the patterns and causes of behavioral change as people progress through life from infancy to adulthood. Some concern themselves with behavior during infancy, childhood, and adolescence, while others study changes that take place during maturity and old age. The study of developmental disabilities and how they affect a person and others is a new area within developmental psychology.

Educational psychologists evaluate student and teacher needs, and design and develop programs to enhance the educational setting. *Experimental psychologists* study behavior processes and work with human beings and animals such as rats, monkeys, and pigeons. Prominent areas of experimental research include motivation, thinking, attention, learning and retention, sensory and perceptual processes, effects of substance use and abuse, and genetic and neurological factors in behavior.

Industrial and organizational psychologists apply psychological techniques to personnel administration, management, and marketing problems. They are involved in policy planning, applicant screening, training and development, psychological test research, counseling, and organizational development and analysis. For example, an industrial psychologist may work with management to develop better training programs and to reorganize the work setting to improve worker productivity or quality of worklife. *School psychologists* examine people's interactions with others and with the social environment. Prominent areas of study include group behavior, leadership, attitudes and interpersonal perception.

Some relatively new specialties include cognitive psychology, health psychology, neuropsychology, and geropsychology. *Cognitive psychologists* deal with the brain's role in memory, thinking, and perceptions; some are involved with research related to computer programming and artificial intelligence. *Health psychologists* promote good health through health maintenance counseling programs that are designed, for example, to help people stop smoking or lose weight. *Neuropsychologists* study the relation between the brain and behavior. They often work in stroke and head injury programs. *Geropsychologists* deal with the special problems faced by the elderly. The emergence and growth of these specialties reflects the increasing participation of psychologists in providing direct services to special patient populations.

Other areas of specialization include psychometrics, psychology and the arts, history of psychology, psychopharmacology, and community, comparative, consumer, engineering, environmental, family, forensic, population, military, and rehabilitation psychology.

Working Conditions

A psychologist's specialty and place of employment determine working conditions. For example, clinical, school, and counseling psychologists in private practice have pleasant, comfortable offices and set their own hours. However, they often have evening hours to accommodate their clients. Some employed in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health facilities often work evenings and weekends, while others in schools and clinics work regular hours. Psychologists employed by academic institutions divide their time among teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Some maintain part-time consulting practices as well. In contrast to the many psychologist who have flexible work schedules, most in government and private industry have more structured schedules. Reading and writing research reports, they often work alone. Many experience deadlines, tight schedules, and overtime work. Their routine may be interrupted frequently. Travel may be required to attend conferences or conduct research.

Employment

Psychologists held about 144,000 jobs in 1992. Educational institutions employed nearly 4 out of 10 salaried psychologists in positions involving counseling, testing, special education, research, and administration; hospitals, mental health clinics, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, and other health facilities employed 3 out of 10; and government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels employed one-sixth. The Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Public Health Service employ the overwhelming majority of psychologists working for federal agencies. Governments employ psychologists in hospitals, clinics, correctional facilities, and other settings. Psychologists also work in social service organizations, research organizations, management consulting firms, marketing research firms, and other businesses.

After several years of experience, some psychologists, usually those with doctoral degrees, enter private practice or set up their own research or consulting firms. A growing proportion of psychologists are self-employed.

Besides the jobs described above, many persons held positions as psychology faculty at colleges and universities, and as high school psychology teachers.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A **doctoral degree** generally is required for employment as a psychologist. Psychologists with a Ph.D. qualify for a wide range of teaching, research, clinical, and counseling positions in universities, elementary and secondary schools, private industry, and government. Psychologists with a Psy.D. (Doctor of Psychology) qualify mainly for clinical positions.

Persons with a **master's degree** in psychology can administer tests as psychological assistants. Under the supervision of doctoral level psychologists, they can conduct research in laboratories, conduct psychological evaluations, counsel patients, or perform administrative duties. They may teach in high schools or 2-year colleges or work as school psychologists or counselors.

A **bachelor's degree** in psychology qualifies a person to assist psychologists and other professionals in community mental health centers, vocational rehabilitation offices, and correctional programs; to work as research or administrative assistants; and to take jobs as trainees in government or business. However, without additional academic training, their advancement opportunities in psychology are severely limited.

In the federal government, candidates having at least 24 semester hours in psychology and one course in statistics qualify for entry level positions. Competition for these jobs is keen, however. Clinical psychologists generally must have completed the Ph.D. or Psy.D. requirements and have served an internship; vocational and guidance counselors usually need 2 years of graduate study in counseling and 1 year of counseling experience.

In most cases, 2 years of full-time graduate study are needed to earn a master's degree in psychology. Requirements usually include practical experience in an applied setting or a master's thesis based on a research project. A master's degree in school psychology requires about 2 years of course work and a 1-year internship.

Five to 7 years of graduate work usually are required for a doctoral degree. The Ph.D. degree culminates in a dissertation based on original research. Courses in quantitative research methods, which include the use of computers, are an integral part of graduate study and usually necessary to complete the dissertation. The Psy.D. is usually based on practical work and examinations rather than a dissertation. In clinical or counseling psychology, the requirement for the doctoral degree generally include a year or more of internship or supervised experience.

Competition for admission into most graduate programs is keen. Some universities require an undergraduate major in psychology. Others prefer only basic psychology with courses in the biological, physical, and social sciences, statistics, and mathematics.

Most colleges and universities offer a bachelor's degree program in psychology; several hundred offer a master's and/or Ph.D. program. A relatively small number of professional schools of psychology, some affiliated with colleges or universities, offer the Psy.D. The American Psychological Association (APA) presently accredits doctoral training programs in clinical, counseling, and school psychology. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, with the assistance of the National Association of School Psychologists, is also involved in the accreditation of advanced degree programs in school psychology. APA also accredits institutions that provide internships for doctoral students in school, clinical, and counseling psychology.

Although financial aid is difficult to obtain, some universities award fellowships or scholarships or arrange for part-time employment. The Veterans Administration (VA) offers predoctoral traineeships to interns in VA hospitals, clinics, and related training agencies. The National Science Foundation, the Department of Health and Human Services, and many other organizations also provide grants to psychology departments to help fund student stipends.

Psychologists in independent practice or those who offer any type of patient care, including clinical, counseling, and school psychologists, must meet certification or licensing requirements. All states and the District of Columbia have such requirements. Licensing laws vary by state, but generally require a doctorate in psychology, completion of an approved internship, and 1 to 2 years of professional experience. In addition, most states require that applicants pass an examination. Most state boards administer a standardized test and, in many instances, additional oral or essay examinations. Very few states certify those with a master's degree as psychological assistants or associates. Some states require continuing education for license renewal. Most states require that licensed or certified psychologists limit their practice to those areas in which they have developed professional competence through training and experience.

The American Board of Professional Psychology recognizes professional achievement by awarding diplomas primarily in clinical psychology, clinical neuropsychology, and counseling, forensic, industrial and organizational, and school psychology. Candidates need a doctorate in psychology, 5 years of experience, and professional endorsements; they also must pass an examination.

Even more so than in other occupations, aspiring psychologists who are interested in direct patient care must be emotionally stable, mature, and able to deal effectively with people. Sensitivity, compassion, and the ability to lead and inspire others are particularly important for clinical work and counseling. Research psychologists should be able to do detailed work independently and as part of a team. Verbal and writing skills are necessary to communicate treatment and research findings. Patience and perseverance are vital qualities because results from psychological treatment of patients or research often are long in coming.

Job Outlook

Employment of psychologists is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005. Largely because of the substantial investment in training required to enter this specialized field, psychologists have a strong attachment to their occupation; only a relatively small proportion leave the profession each year. Nevertheless, replacement needs are expected to account for most job openings, similar to most occupations.

Programs to combat the increase in alcohol abuse, drug dependency, marital strife, family-violence crime, and other problems plaguing society should stimulate employment growth. Other factors spurring demand for psychologists include increased emphasis on mental health maintenance in conjunction with the treatment of physical illness; public concern for the development of human resources, including the growing elderly population; increased testing and counseling of children; and more interest in rehabilitation of prisoners. Changes in the level of government funding for these kinds of services could affect the demand for psychologists.

Job opportunities in health care should remain strong, particularly in health care provided networks, such as health maintenance and preferred provider organizations, that specialize in mental health, and in nursing homes and alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation programs. Job opportunities will arise in businesses, nonprofit organizations, and research and computer firms. Companies will use psychologists' expertise in survey design, analysis, and research to provide personnel testing, program evaluation, and statistical analysis. The increase in employee assistance programs, in which psychologists help people stop smoking, control weight, or alter other behaviors, also should spur job growth. The expected wave of retirement among college faculty, beginning in the late 1990's, should result in job openings for psychologists in colleges and universities.

Other openings are likely to occur as psychologists study the effectiveness of changes in health, education, military, law enforcement, and consumer protection programs. Psychologists are also increasingly studying the effects on people of technological advances in areas such as agriculture, energy, the conservation and use of natural resources, and industrial and office automation.

Opportunities are best for candidates with a doctoral degree. Persons holding doctorates from leading universities in applied areas such as school, clinical, counseling, health, industrial, and educational psychology should have particularly good prospects. Psychologists with extensive training in quantitative research methods and computer science may have a competitive edge over applicants without this background.

Graduates with a master's degree in psychology may encounter competition for the limited number of jobs for which they qualify. Graduates of master's degree programs in school psychology should have the best job prospects, as schools are expected to increase student counseling and mental health services. Some master's degree holders may find jobs as psychological assistants in community mental health centers; these positions often require direct supervision by a licensed psychologist. Others may find jobs involving research and data collection and analysis in universities, government, or private companies.

Bachelor's degree holders can expect very few opportunities directly related to psychology. Some may find jobs as assistants in rehabilitation centers or in other jobs involving data collection and analysis. Those who meet state certification requirements may become high school psychology teachers.

Earnings

According to a 1991 survey by the American Psychological Association, the median annual-salary of psychologists with a doctoral degree was \$48,000 in counseling psychology, \$50,000 in research positions, \$53,000 in clinical psychology, \$55,000 in school psychology, and \$76,000 in industrial/organizational psychology. In university psychology departments, median annual salaries ranged from \$32,000 for assistant professors to \$55,000 for full professors. The median annual salary of master's degree holders was \$35,000 for faculty, \$37,000 in counseling psychology, \$40,000 in clinical psychology, \$48,000 in research positions, \$50,000 in industrial/organizational psychology, and \$52,000 in school psychology. Some psychologist have much higher earning, particularly those in private practice.

The federal government recognizes education and experience in certifying applicants for entry level positions. In general, the average starting salary for psychologists having a bachelor's degree was about \$18,300 a year in 1993; those with superior academic records could begin at \$22,800. Clinical psychologists having a Ph.D. or Psy.D degree and 1 year of internship could start at \$33,600; some individual could start at \$40,300. The average salary for psychologists in the federal government in nonsupervisory, supervisory, and managerial positions was about \$54,400 a year in 1993.

Related Occupations

Psychologists are trained to conduct research and teach, evaluate, counsel, and advise individuals and groups with special needs. Other who do this kind of work include psychiatrists, social workers, sociologists, clergy, special education teachers, and counselors.

Sources of Additional Information

- For information on careers, educational requirements, financial assistance, and licensing in all fields of psychology, contact the American Psychological Association, Education in Psychology and Accreditation Offices, Education Directorate, 750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.
- For information on careers, educational requirements, and licensing of school psychologists, contact the National Association of School Psychologists, 8455 Colesville Road, Suite 1000, Silver Spring , MD 20910
- Information about state licensing requirement is available from the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, P.O. Box 4389, Montgomery, AL 36109.
- Information on traineeships and fellowships is available from colleges and universities that have graduate departments of psychology.

The Bachelors Degree in Psychology

Employment Opportunities and Strategies

A simple response to the question, "What can I do with a major in psychology?" might be, "just about anything that involves working with people." Another approach would be to list all of the occupations that psychology majors have successfully pursued. Neither of these approaches by itself, however, helps YOU to make career decisions. The purpose of this section is not only to provide you with some information about potential employment opportunities after completing your psychology degree, but also to make some suggestions about how to handle occupational decisions and successfully land that first job.

Let us begin with some important facts. The undergraduate major in psychology is a liberal arts degree, not a professional degree. It does not make you a psychologist or a professional counselor. These occupations require specific training at the graduate level and are regulated by state law. If such occupations interest you, be prepared to continue your education in graduate school.

While some occupations in psychology require graduate training, there are many interesting and rewarding career opportunities available to individuals with a bachelors degree in psychology. Your selection of an appropriate occupation, however, requires some self-analysis and research. Ultimately, successful employment depends on your efforts to (1) make informed decisions about your career, (2) learn about prospective

occupations, (3) acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, and characteristics for such occupations, and (4) learn how to conduct a well-planned job search. This section will address each of these four points.

Making Decisions About Your Career

An occupational choice can be one of the most difficult decisions a person makes, with consequences for both life satisfaction and life style. Unfortunately, many students approach this decision in a haphazard and informal manner; they neither explore potential occupations systematically nor prepare themselves adequately to successfully obtain a particular job. In fact, many students simply do not worry about careers until their senior year, when they discover that they lack courses or have failed to develop necessary skills for occupations that interest them.

Successful career planning requires careful and objective self-assessment, a realistic understanding of your aptitudes and skills, an awareness of responsibilities associated with potential employment settings, careful selection of experiences designed to develop marketable skills and knowledge, and an action plan for conducting a successful job search. The following sections are designed to give you some guidance in each area.

Learning About Occupations

Surveys of employers and psychology graduates indicate that the jobs obtained by psychology majors with a bachelors degree are most often in social service and business settings, such as:

- Business: personnel administrator, loan officer, retail sales management, occupational analyst, industrial relations specialist, claims specialist, and marketing representative
- Social Services: group home attendant, case worker, probation officer, admissions counselor, occupational therapist, substance abuse counselor, youth counselor, employment counselor, social service aide, public health administrator, parole officer, social-urban planner, community relations officer, affirmative action officer, vocational rehabilitation, and day care center supervisor

An excellent resource for learning about various occupations is the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OH), which is published every two years by the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics. This book is a comprehensive guide to occupations. It includes job descriptions, education and training requirements, advancement possibilities, salaries, and employment outlooks for 250 occupations. Go to the index at the back of the books and look up the page references for the occupations you are interested in pursuing. Note the titles of related jobs listed at the end of each occupational description, find these job titles in the index, and then read about them. Reading the OH can provide you with a wealth of information about a wide range of jobs in a short time with relatively little expenditure of effort.

You may also want to do some research on starting salaries for occupations that interest you. The CSO has survey data on salaries organized by type of degree and occupation which is updated regularly.

Developing Knowledge, Skills, and Characteristics

Part of knowing and marketing yourself involves a clear understanding of the specific knowledge, skills, and characteristics (KSCs) valued by employers and obtained through completing the bachelors degree in psychology. Numerous studies have documented the KSCs employers look for in prospective employees, and they are summarized in the following lists. Psychology courses that emphasize specific skills or types of knowledge are indicated in parentheses. It is important that you develop and communicate your proficiency in these KSCs to be successful on the job market.

Knowledge Learned by Psychology Majors That Employers Seek

- How attitudes and opinions are formed and changed (Social Psychology)
- Principles and techniques of personnel selection and organizational development (Industrial Psychology)
- How people think, solve problems and process information (Human Information Processing)
- Structure and dynamics of small groups (Social Psychology)
- Effects of the environment on people's feelings and actions (Psychology of Motivation)
- Principles of human learning and memory (Psychology of Learning)

Skills Learned By Psychology Majors Who Employers Seek

- Identifies and solves problems based upon a knowledge of research methodology and understanding of human behavior (General Psychology and Experimental Methods in Psychology)
- Performs statistical analyses (Statistical Methods)
- Designs and conducts research projects (Directed Research in Psychology)
- Selects, administers, and interprets psychological tests (Psychological Tests and Measurement)
- Gathers and organizes information from multiple sources (Senior Seminar)
- Works productively as a member of a team (History and Systems of Psychology)
- Plans and carries out projects successfully (Independent Study)
- Ability to manage stress (Stress Management)
- Conducts interviews (Clinical Psychology)
- Writes proposals and reports (any psychology class that requires a paper)
- Speaks articulately and persuasively (any psychology class that requires an oral presentation)

Characteristics Rated Highly by Employers

- Satisfactory grades
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Outgoing personality
- Ability to present oneself in a positive manner
- Relevant previous employment
- Enthusiasm
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Problem solving abilities
- High energy level
- Maturity

As you can see, many of the skills listed above are important components of the psychology curriculum. In fact, the core of courses that all psychology majors take emphasizes skill development in all of these areas. When it comes to content areas in psychology, however, it is important to carefully select courses that best match your potential career.

Another important, yet often overlooked, aspect of skill and knowledge development is your selection of elective courses. For example, many graduates with a bachelors degree in psychology are employed in business settings. Therefore, it would be wise to consider taking some business courses. Courses offered by other departments can be essential in obtaining job skills and knowledge for your future occupation as well. These courses can be used as electives or applied to a minor. Once you have narrowed down your potential employment settings, you should meet with your advisor to discuss the best selection of courses to help you obtain your career objective.

Potential employers also value some practical experience. There are several options to obtain this experience. One strategy is to seek part-time or full-time jobs related to your desired employment setting. You may also want to consider obtaining cooperative education credit by enrolling in PSY 475 Service Practicum in Psychology, which combines an individual's on-site practical experience with individual meetings in which the practicum experience is discussed with the supervising faculty member. Enrollment in this course requires sophomore status and a cumulative GPA of 2.50 and a Psy GPA of 3.0. Active involvement in leadership positions in student organizations (e.g., Psychology Newsletter and Psi Chi) can also provide you with practical experience in developing, organizing, and running service programs.

The Job Search

By the beginning of your senior year, you should have decided on a career path and obtained the basic skills and knowledge necessary for an entry position in that field. Unfortunately, your future employers will not seek you out; you will have to aggressively seek out and convince them that you are the employee that they should hire. To

accomplish this (1) identify position openings and make contacts, (2) develop an effective resume, and (3) learn to interview successfully. Some strategies for each of these are discussed below. However, your best resource for all aspects of preparing to get your first job is the CSO.

Identifying Potential Job Openings

First, ask people you know to identify individuals with whom you might talk to about your career interest. Friends, family, past or present employers, and people with whom you have done volunteer work are all excellent resources for contacts. Another strategy is to use the yellow pages of the phone book to identify companies, agencies or organizations that may employ people in your career interest area. Call these companies or agencies and ask to speak to a person who holds the type of position that you are seeking.

When you contact someone, explain that you are a student at GSU nearing graduation and that you are interested in obtaining a job in their profession. Ask if they would be available to meet with you for an "information interview" to discuss their profession. The worst that can happen is that they will say "no." Be prepared to offer them several potential meeting times. Do not attempt to conduct the interview on the phone at that moment. The person may be busy and only able to give you cursory information. Be sure you go to the interview with a list of well thought-out questions. Toward the end of the interview, ask if they can suggest other people to talk to about the profession. This helps expand your contacts.

Finally, another source of job openings is the newspaper. Every day numerous jobs are listed under heading such as administrative assistant, customer service, sales, day care, and management. Call of which are potential career options with your psychology degree. Read the job descriptions in advertisements very carefully, or you may miss a good potential opportunity. For example, there was a recent advertisement for a "resident manager" in the Sunday edition of the Indianapolis Star. Although you may have quickly skipped over this, the advertisement was seeking a resident manager for a girl's group home, a job relevant for career interest in social services.

Developing an Effective Resume

Your resume is a critical element of an effective job search. It may be the only initial contact you have with a potential employer. In other situations, your resume is the only record the employer has after the interview. An effective resume is neat, easily read, and provides a concise summary of your professional goals, education, and experience. You may even want to develop more than one resume for different occupational goals. Begin working on your resume during the summer prior to graduation. This allows plenty of time to get feedback on your resume and to revise it as necessary.

The Job Interview

Your interview with prospective employer is your opportunity to impress them with your potential as a future employee. Although few initial interviews result in an immediate job offer, the first interview plays a crucial role in identifying candidates that the company may look at more closely. Therefore, it is critical that you make a strong, favorable first impression. The most important personal qualities that employers look for are good communication skills, clearly defined professional goals, and an honest, outgoing personality.

Take interviews very seriously and prepare for each one in advance. Make an appointment with one of the psychology faculty to do a video-taped practice interview. In addition, be knowledgeable about the employer with whom you are interviewing. This will enable you to ask specific questions about the company that will generate a favorable impression. Finally, follow up the interview with a thank-you note. This reinforces the favorable impression you made during the interview and keeps you fresh in the interviewer's mind.

A Time-Line for Preparing for Employment with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology

Freshman Year

- Schedule a meeting with your academic advisor to discuss your career interests and options. This meeting should not simply focus on what courses to take during the next semester.
- Begin to consider various careers. Investigate employment opportunities with a bachelors degree in psychology using resources available from your advisor and the GSU Career Development Center. Realize that some careers require graduate training either at the entry level or for eventual advancement.
- Begin a self-assessment process focusing on your interests, strengths, skills, and values. How well do they match your preliminary career goals?

Sophomore Year

- Complete your self-assessment process. Compile a list of your interests, strengths (academic and personal), skills, and knowledge. Use this list to help focus your career choice.
- Continue the process of narrowing down your specific interests in the field of psychology and consider the type of employment you wish. Use the results of your self-assessment and on-campus resources (e.g., GSU Career Development Center) to identify career options. You should focus your career choice by the end of your sophomore year so that you have time to take the appropriate preparatory course work.

- Finish up the majority of your general education requirements, and begin you work your way through more of your psychology requirements.
- Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your progress toward degree completion and your career plans and options. You should discuss upper level course offerings in psychology that will best prepare you for your career.
- Begin to prepare a resume if you have not already done so.

Junior Year

- Re-evaluate your career choice. Are you still on the right track?
- Make plans to obtain relevant experience outside the classroom before the end of your senior year (e.g., volunteer work, Co-op in Psychology, or a directed study involving independent research).
- Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your progress toward degree completion and your career plans and options. Review your course selections for the major field in psychology and your minor, if you have one.
- Contact people in the profession you are seeking to enter, and conduct some "information interviews" to learn more about career options.

Summer Between Junior and Senior Year

- Use the summer months to build your job information network, prepare a polished resume, and continue to refine your career aspirations.

Senior Year

- Meet with your academic advisor during fall semester to discuss your progress toward degree completion and your career plans and options. Review your course selections for the major field in psychology.
- Obtain a copy of your transcript from the Registrar and review it carefully for any errors.
- Identify three individuals (e.g., faculty members and past employers) who are willing and able to write STRONG letters of recommendations for you.
- Review your resume.

Putting Your Liberal Arts Skills to Work

College students often overlook the relevance of their liberal arts education to the world of work. While the primary purpose is to provide its students with a well-rounded education rather than training them for one specific job, many of the skills developed in the classroom have direct bearing on success in the workplace. Throughout their years at GSU, students are required to develop and refine their writing, speaking, and research skills. These skills are fundamental to career success. Part of what distinguishes a liberal arts education is its breadth of exposure to different disciplines. Students must learn to write and speak clearly about and conduct scholarly research on topics outside their majors. The ability to adapt to different environments, to understand viewpoints different

from their own, and to comprehend unfamiliar information is important in many careers and essential to job advancement (e.g., promotions and raises). To become aware of the skills you are developing, reflect on the assignments you have completed in your classes and use the following lists to compare what you are acquiring with what will be expected of you in your future job.

Writing Skills

In College

term papers and essay tests
laboratory reports
peer reviewing
notebooks and journals
creative writing

On the Job

writing reports, briefs, and proposals
composing letters and memos
editing and proofreading
keeping clear and accurate records
preparing copy for sales, advertising, and publications

Speaking Skills

In College

speeches and presentations
study groups
discussions and debates
group projects
answering questions in class

On the Job

interviewing, supervising, and counseling
persuading, negotiating, and selling
making presentations to peers and clients
surveying and soliciting funds and support
working with the public and answering their questions

Research Skills

In College

library and laboratory research
independent studies
co-op or internship projects
literature reviews
case studies

On the Job

planning and decision making
developing ideas and brainstorming
designing and conducting research
gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data
developing programs and market plans

These are only a few of the skills developed in the classroom that have direct on-the-job application. GSU also provides numerous extracurricular opportunities for students to develop other career-related skills (e.g., leadership and problem-solving). Students should use the following three-part strategy to prepare them for success in today's increasingly competitive job market.

- Become aware of the skills you will need to obtain and succeed in the job to which you aspire.
- Take full advantage of the opportunities that GSU provides to enable you to develop these skills.

- Make prospective employers aware of your skills (e.g., learn how to write an effective resume and develop persuasive interviewing skills).

What Do Employers Look for in a Psychology Major They Are Interviewing for a Job?

The items in the three major categories of the following outline (taken directly from Edwards & Smith, 1988) are arranged in descending order of importance as rated by a large sample of employers from midwestern government, nonprofit, and commercial agencies, organizations, and companies that often hire undergraduate psychology majors. Psychology students are urged to take advantage of all their undergraduate opportunities to maximize the attainments of these skills, abilities, knowledge, and personal traits.

Skills and Abilities

- Writing proposals and reports
- Identifying and solving problems based on research and knowledge of behavior
- Conducting interviews
- Performing statistical analyses
- Designing and conducting research projects
- Performing job analyses
- Coding data
- Using computer programs to analyze data
- Systematically observing and recording behavior
- Constructing tests and questionnaires
- Administering standardized tests

Knowledge

- Formation and change of attitudes and opinions
- Principles and techniques of personnel selection
- How people think, solve problems, and process information
- Structure and dynamics of small groups
- Effects of the environment on people's feelings and actions
- Organizational development
- Principles of human learning and memory
- How people perceive and sense their environment
- Theories and research on personality and individual differences
- Principles of human needs and motivation
- Theories and research on organizational behavior, work, and productivity
- Theories and research on human development and stages of life
- Symptoms, causes, and treatments of abnormal behaviors

Personal Traits

- Ability to work with others in a team
- Motivation to work hard
- Positive attitude toward work and the organization
- Organization
- Leadership
- Maturity
- Flexibility
- Ability to communicate well
- Intelligence
- Problem-solving ability
- Integrity
- Tolerance for stress and ambiguity

Where are Psychology Majors Employed and How Does a Liberal Arts Education Help Graduates in Their Careers?

A report from the National Science Foundation (1986) on employed bachelors-level graduates in psychology revealed that the following percentages were employed in five major areas one year after graduation.

50% Business and industry
27% Science and engineering
15% Educational institutions
10% Nonprofit organizations
8% Federal, state, or local government

The work that these graduates performed in these various areas included the following broad range of areas, skills, and responsibilities.

30% Management and administration
28% Sales and professional services
16% Teaching
12% Production and inspection
14% Other

These data clearly demonstrate that students who graduate with a psychology major are versatile individuals capable of gaining and maintaining meaningful employment in many different career areas.

More than 2,000 graduates of the University of Virginia recently identified the following five skills as critical factors in their current job success (Benner & Hitchcock, 1986).

More than 91% of the respondents in this study confirmed the value of a liberal arts education as the best preparation for their current careers.

Oral Communication - presenting ideas to others orally, both one-on-one and in groups

Written Communication - writing effective letters, reports, and other documents.

Interpersonal - understanding and dealing effectively with the behavior of others

Critical Thinking - identifying and analyzing problems, formulating and testing ideas

Problem Solving - thinking and solving problems effectively

These are the same skills that psychology majors can master if they take full advantage of the curricular and extracurricular opportunities that are available to them at GSU. It is important to note that many of those surveyed by Benner and Hitchcock were employed in areas not normally associated with the liberal arts, but it was the broad skills of a liberally educated person that helped them to succeed in their professions instead of the technical methods or information they gained in their specific disciplines (e.g., accounting or business).

Advice to Job-Seeking Psychology Majors from Alumni Who Are Successfully Employed

- Don't wait until you are a senior to think about what you will put on your resume. Start this process when you are a freshman.
- Do things that will make it easy for people to write good letters of recommendation for you in the future.
- Don't be a loner. Develop a network of people who can help you to learn about and obtain the job you want.
- Try to personalize your education to fit your specific career goals.
- Develop specific career goals as early in your education as possible and then do everything you can to achieve these goals.
- Do some volunteer work or participate in a practicum, internship, or Co-op program to gain experience and to make contacts.
- Develop interpersonal skills. If you are shy, do everything you can to overcome your shyness.
- Develop computer and statistical skills.
- Don't just learn things to pass tests. Learn things so that you can apply the knowledge that you learn in the job you want to obtain.
- Learn to become an articulate and persuasive writer and speaker.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities and assume leadership roles in these activities.
- Learn how to deal with stress and how to manage your time.
- Demonstrate to people that you are enthusiastic and motivated by actively seeking opportunities to become involved in activities that will broaden your experience and increase your network of people who can help you to increase your future career possibilities.

- Don't expect a good job to fall into your lap after graduation. Good jobs are a result of hard work, persistence, and planning.
- Realize that the world is full of people who are very different from you, and that you must learn to deal successfully with different kinds of people if you are to be successful.
- Become familiar with the Career Services Office when you are a freshman, and continue to use its services throughout your college career.
- Don't choose electives just because they are easy or offered at a convenient time. Choose electives that will increase your strengths and strengthen your weaknesses.
- Find out what skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics you must have to obtain and succeed in the job you want, and then take advantage of your college opportunities to develop them.

How Are Psychologists Employed?

An education in psychology prepares individuals for a remarkable range of employment opportunities. According to Wise (1987), psychologists are employed in the five following major roles, but it is important to realize that many psychologists perform in more than one of these roles (e.g., the college teacher who counsels students, performs research, consults with other teachers to improve their testing procedures, and acts as the chairman of the department). The career paths that psychologists take are dependent upon their levels of education and their areas of interest.

Teaching

Psychologists teach in two- and four-year colleges, and universities.

Research

Psychologists are employed by universities, government agencies, the military, and businesses to conduct basic and applied studies of human behavior.

Providing Services

Psychologists work with people of all ages and backgrounds who are coping with every imaginable kind of problem, by assessing their needs and providing appropriate treatment.

Administration

Psychologists work as managers in hospitals, mental health clinics, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, universities, and businesses.

Consulting

Psychologists with expertise in a variety of areas are hired by organizations to provide consultative services on subject or problem in the consultant is an expert. These services can include designing a marketing survey and organizing outpatient mental health services" (p. 10).

With a few exceptions, preparation for these careers requires education beyond the undergraduate level or a significant amount of relevant experience. It is also important to realize that it is illegal in Indiana for people to use the term "psychologist" to describe themselves if they have not been certified by the Indiana State Board of Examiners in Psychology. This certification process requires a doctoral degree, a period of supervised practice, an interview with two of the board's members, and successfully passing a standardized test.

Employment Areas and Salaries of Bachelors-Level Psychology Graduates

According to the September, 1994 issue of Salary Survey, the average salary offered to bachelors-level psychology majors who graduated with the class of 1994 was \$20,488 with a range from \$16,249 to \$32,500. (The average salary offered to those with a master's degree in psychology was \$23,944 and a doctorate in psychology was \$43,278.) The results of their survey for 30 functional employment areas are listed below in decreasing order of salary offer.

Functional Employment Area	Number of Offers	Mean Offer
Real Estate	2	\$32,500
Chemicals and Allied Products	1	32,000
Engineering / Surveying	1	31,200
Consulting	5	31,000
Metals and Metal Products	1	28,000
Insurance	6	27,750
Electrical and Electronics	2	26,950
Research Organizations	1	26,000
Widely Diversified	1	25,400
Computer Software / Data Processing	2	24,100
Protective Services	1	24,000

Finance	2	24,000
Federal Government	3	23,689
Textiles and Apparel	5	22,500
Hospitals	6	22,025
Pharmaceuticals	2	21,985
Computers and Business Equipment	2	21,250
Transportation	2	21,030
Merchandising	20	20,945
Membership / Religious	4	20,845
Building Materials and Construction	3	20,709
Other Service Employers	7	19,474
Health Services	15	19,590
Local or State Government	8	19,213
Education	12	18,028
Communication Services	3	17,333
Other Nonprofit Employers	3	17,233
Banking	3	16,967
Hospitality (Hotels and Restaurants)	7	16,614
Social Services	29	16,249

Job Skills Possessed by Psychology Majors

"When people consider the question, 'What am I able to do with a bachelors degree in psychology,' they are usually thinking about what kind of job they might get. But there is another way of looking at this question that you should consider as part of your career planning. That is, you should seriously think about what in fact you are able to do in terms of the skills you may have acquired while majoring in psychology" (Edwards, 1989, p. 1). These wise words are the introduction to the following lists of skills that Edwards compiled for his students at Loyola University.

Human Services Skills

These are skills necessary for successful employment in situations where direct services are provided to individuals who are in need of help.

- Perform institutional research and evaluation.
- Write reports and proposals clearly and objectively.
- Organize and lead groups, organizations, or committees.
- Recognize and understand behavioral and emotional disorders.
- Select, administer, score, and interpret psychological tests.
- Respond in an unbiased and tolerant way to individual differences.
- Display fundamental counseling skills with individuals and groups.
- Collect, record, and report statistical and qualitative information.
- Perform crisis intervention techniques (e.g., listening and referral).
- Perform interviews to learn about people's history, problems, and plans.
- Contribute to program or treatment planning, evaluation, and implementation.
- Demonstrate small group skills (e.g., team building and conflict management).
- Communicate effectively and sensitively in both individual and group situations.
- Obtain information about problems through library research and personal contacts.
- Critically evaluate theories and research and apply the results to solve problems.
- Analyze problems on the basis of personal experience and psychological principles.
- Understand and modify your attitudes and actions in interactions with other people.

Research Skills

These are some of the types of skills essential to jobs in which information based on basic or applied research is provided to assist decision making.

- Construct and administer questionnaires.
- Use a variety of types of research equipment.
- Collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data.
- Present verbal presentations clearly and persuasively.
- Defend ideas in a clear, objective, nondogmatic manner.
- Be familiar with a variety of research methods and designs.
- Recruit research subjects and treat them in an ethical manner.
- Select, administer, score, and interpret various psychological tests.
- Write reports clearly, concisely, objectively, and in the correct style.
- Use library resources to research problems and prepare literature reviews.
- Identify problems and suggest solutions on the basis of research findings.
- Create easily understood graphs, tables, and verbal descriptions of results.
- Select and compute appropriate statistical tests and interpret their results.
- Assemble, interpret, and critically analyze research findings in specific areas.
- Use computers to write reports, analyze data, and perform bibliographic searches.

- Deal effectively with financial, temporal, and personnel constraints on research.

Students should realize that they may not develop these skills if they do not take full advantage of all their undergraduate opportunities (e.g., research and extracurricular activities). It is also equally important to obtain a broad, liberal education in addition to these specific skills. Because job markets are shifting constantly, it is crucial to avoid overspecialization and to strive for flexibility.

Job Titles in Human Services for Students with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology

"What can I do with a bachelors degree in psychology?" This is a question that often concerns psychology majors who plan to enter the job market immediately after graduation. Zeller (1988) attempted to answer the question by compiling the following list of human services job titles whose descriptions and qualifications are compatible with the knowledge and skills of a college graduate with a bachelors degree in psychology. Although it took Zeller a whole year to compile his list from a wide variety of sources, it should be noted that there are also many other human services jobs for psychology majors that are not on this list.

activity director * addiction counselor * administrative program assistant * admissions market analyst * admissions public relations director * admissions recruiter * admissions representative * adolescent care technician * adolescent chemical dependency counselor * advertising trainee * adviser-educator * affirmative action officer * agency representative * airline reservations clerk * alcohol counselor * alcoholism unit manager * area administrator * arena and sports facility instructor * assistant residence manager * assistant youth coordinator * association manager * behavior analyst * camp staff director caretaker * case tracking specialist * case worker * center supervisor * chemical dependency advocate * chemical dependency coordinator * chemical dependency counselor * chemical dependency secretary * chemical dependency technician * child care counselor * child care worker * child development worker * child protection worker * circulation manager * collection assistant * collector * college admissions representative * community activist * community correctional service worker * community outreach coordinator * community organizer * community service coordinator * community worker * compliance officer * consultant * cottage treatment team * counselor * counselor aid * counselor/therapist * county personnel officer * crime prevention coordinator * customer relations * customer service trainee * daily living aid * day-care aid * demonstration coordinator * deputy juvenile probation officer * developmental reading instructor * development officer * director of activity and recreation * director of alumni relations * director of day-care center * director of displaced homemakers * director of human services * director of education * director of planned parenthood * director of planning director of security * director of youth service bureau * driving instructor * drug counselor * early childhood specialist * education prevention specialist * education daytime coordinator * educational coordinator * educational representative * educational salesperson * educational textbook

representative * employee assistance program specialist * employment counselor * employment representative * executive director * export order coordinator * field representative * foster home parent * grants coordinator * group home coordinator * group home counselor * group home parents * group leader * group worker * head of alumni affairs * head of fund raising * host/hostess * houseparent * human relations director * human services technician * infant stimulation teacher * information specialist * information referral specialist * inservice director * instructor * instructor-handicapped adult program * insurance agent * interviewer * investigator * juvenile justice planner * juvenile prevention program coordinator * juvenile specialist * living unit assistant * loading dock superintendent * management trainee * marketing manager * mental retardation professional * mental retardation unit manager * neighborhood outreach worker * occupational information developer * park and recreation director * patient service representative * personnel analyst * personnel coordinator * personnel generalist * planner-assistant * planner-evaluator * private school representative * private tutor * probation officer * program consultant * program coordinator * program director * project learning instructor * police training coordinator * public information officer * rehabilitation aid * relief houseparent * research analyst/planner * research assistant * research trainee * residence counselor * resident aid * resident caretaker * residential assistant * residential director * residential service coordinator * residential supervisor * resource developer * retail manager * salesperson * secretary * security officer * service advisor * social service director * social services supervisor * social studies teacher * social worker * social worker coordinator * statistical assistant * student activities adviser * supervisor * support service manager * task force coordinator * temporary admissions clerk * textbook coordinator * trainer * trainer-coordinator * veteran's adviser * volunteer coordinator * work activity program director * youth worker

Employment Outlook and Media Salaries for Psychologists with Masters and Doctorates

The employment outlook for psychologists with master's and doctorates is excellent, but is also dependent upon area of specialization. A 1982 survey revealed that less than 1% of all members of APA with doctorates were unemployed, a rate significantly lower than for other similarly prepared social scientists. Opportunities in both the private (i.e., business and industry) and public sectors (i.e., federal, state, and local government agencies) should increase into the 1990s as demand for the expertise of psychologists (e.g., to increase job satisfaction and performance) and support for special groups (e.g., the aged) continues to grow. The future looks particularly promising for those with advanced degrees in clinical, counseling, health, and industrial/organizational psychology. The probability of attaining challenging and rewarding employment with these degrees can be substantially enhanced with supporting education or experience in quantitative research methods and computer applications.

Pion and Bramblett conducted a survey for the American Psychological Association in 1985 to determine the median salaries of psychologists with masters and doctoral degrees in a variety of areas of psychological specialization. The following table summarizes

their results. Please note that this data is from 1985; if the survey was performed today, the median salaries would be significantly higher.

Area of Employment/Specialization	Master's	Doctorate
Administration of Research	\$46,000	\$52,000
Industrial/Organizational Psych	40,000	52,000
Educational Administration	39,000	44,000
Administration of Human Services	34,000	40,000
Research	31,000	40,000
Clinical Psychology	28,000	40,000
Counseling	30,000	33,000
School Psychology	28,000	30,000
College/University Faculty	25,000	32,000

The results of a more recent study (reported in the September, 1994 issue of Salary Survey) reported that the average beginning salary offered to those with a master's degree in psychology was \$23,944 and a doctorate in psychology was \$43,278.