So you want to study psychology at university?

PsychologyReview*Online*

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Remember it's a science

Psychology is a science but can be studied either as a BA (Bachelor of Arts) or a BSc (Bachelor of Science) degree. Check out the differences between courses before you apply.

What if I'm not taking A-level psychology?

You can still study it as a degree — many universities will require a science A-level but not specifically psychology

The essentials

Consider

Type of degree

Study abroad?

Some UK universities offer 1 year abroad (e.g. Nottingham, Kent)

See also the Erasmus Programme for 3–12 month opportunities

If you want to do your whole degree abroad, see:

- QS World University Rankings by Subject 2012 — Life Sciences & Medicine — Psychology (**www.tinyurl.com/d9mdyyz**)
- Study in Europe (**www.study-info.eu**) is a database of courses taught in English at European universities

Specialist degrees

Degrees focusing on a specific aspect of psychology, e.g. sports psychology, counselling psychology, health psychology, forensic psychology

Combined degrees

Examples are:

- psychology + zoology (Bristol)
- psychology + art (Reading)

+ many more, but check BPS accreditation status

Sandwich degrees

Includes 1-year work placement, e.g. Bath, Loughborough

Your career options

See the *Psychology Student Employability Guide* at **www.heacademy.ac.uk** — a look ahead to employment within and beyond psychology, includes mini case studies

Does the course have BPS* accreditation?

Important. Accreditation is needed for a range of psychology professions. If your course is not BPS accredited you may later need to do a conversion course at additional cost. Further info: **www.bps.org.uk**

* British Psychological Society

Research

Attend university open days

Talk to course leaders and current students — get your questions answered: **www.opendays.com**

Watch video on UCAS website to help you prepare: **www.tinyurl.com/c8bypc8**

The Which University Guide

Compare psychology courses by type of university (e.g. rural/city/by the sea/nightlife): **http://university.which.co.uk**

UCAS website (www.ucas.ac.uk)

- Lists all undergrad courses on offer
- Entry profiles provide summary info on courses and entry requirements and links to course websites

Course rankings/comparisons

For UK psychology degree rankings, search for *Guardian*'s UK University 2013 league table for psychology degree courses

UK Course Finder website

Includes online questionnaire to suggest courses based on your interests: **www.ukcoursefinder.com**

Quick reference

University Degree Course Offers 2013 (Heap) — see your school careers library

Compare

Course content

Most courses have the same core modules but vary in optional modules available, e.g.:

- cyber-psychology
- marketing psychology
- parapsychology

Check prospectuses for details

Teaching and assessment

Like exams? Prefer coursework? Compare courses on:

- teaching methods
- lecturer contact time
- assessment methods

Go to **http://unistats.direct.gov.uk**

You can also compare:

- employability statistics
- student satisfaction
- costs

Entry requirements

GCSEs

Requirements for psychology vary, e.g. Bath requires maths *and* English at grade A, Durham requires maths only at grade C or higher.

A-levels

- Requirements vary, e.g. Bath requires A*AA including one science, Durham requires ABB in any subject
- Check UCAS entry profile website and individual uni prospectuses

Personal statements

- For essential advice see: **www.ucas.com**
- For some examples see: **www.thestudentroom.co.uk** (NB quality varies so check comments/ratings. Also be aware that universities use plagiarism detection software)

Useful

Get some career guidance

- Talk to your school's careers team
- For brief advice contact the National Careers Service: **www.tinyurl.com/cd6m7od**
- Invest in a career profile and personalised help, e.g. **www.inspiringfutures.org.uk**

Attend public lectures

- See your local university (e.g. 'Plug in your brain' talks at Westminster University); also visit **www.bps.org.uk**
- Some university websites provide downloadable podcasts of their public lectures (e.g. **www.bath.ac.uk/podcast/**)

Talk to a psychologist

Gain some insight into how they work — contact your local NHS/education/social services

Get some work experience

Useful for your personal statement and uni interview. See websites for:

- Do-it!
- TimeBank
- vInspired
- Volunteering England

Videos, magazine, blogs

- Research Digest blogspot: **www.tinyurl.com/cbnxhxe**
- PsychExchange: **www.tinyurl.com/d4h8kmp**
- **www.psychologytoday.com** — click 'Topic streams' and then develop your interests further

Above and beyond

Want to demonstrate you are an outstanding candidate?

Read

- *Scientific American MIND*, a monthly quality magazine: **www.tinyurl.com/yd25ggd**
- *New Scientist* — lots of psychology-related articles: **www.newscientist.com**

Watch

- YouTube > Psychology lectures (e.g. Harvard, UCL, Stanford)
- OpenCulture.com > Free Courses > Psychology (videos and MP3s from top universities)
- TED talks to stir your curiosity: **www.ted.com/talks**

Consider doing…

- Free courses in psychology: **openlearn.open.ac.uk**
- Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (undergrad courses for A-level students): **www.open.ac.uk/choose/yass**