

What can I do with a degree in Psychology?

Psychology.



What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and associated biological, cognitive and social processes in humans and other animals. It provides insight into understanding how the brain works, and touches on all aspects of human life.

In addition to understanding the behaviour of individuals and groups, and normal and abnormal development, there are many fascinating areas of psychology that can be studied.

Psychology can be studied as a major as part of an Arts, Science or Health Sciences degree, or the Bachelor of Psychological Science can be studied to minor in one or two of the following areas: psychological wellbeing, forensic psychology, workplace psychology, psychology for the common good, neuroscience and cognition, and Māori and indigenous perspectives.

To become a psychologist, specific qualifications and experience are required. Learn more by gathering information from the relevant professional bodies.

Learn more

It is important to do some research when planning a future career. Speak with, ask questions of, and follow relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies, thought leaders and industry professionals to learn more about:

- Career opportunities, work environments and salary information
- Education and training requirements.

Examples of professional bodies

- Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa | The New Zealand Psychologists Board
<https://psychologistsboard.org.nz>
- Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa | The New Zealand Psychological Society
www.psychology.org.nz

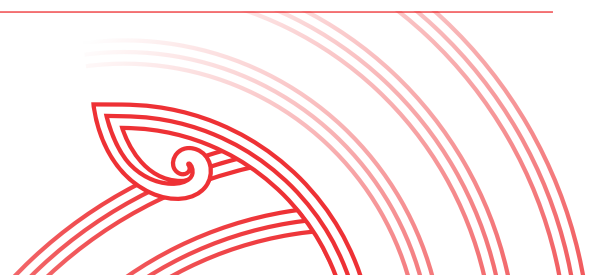
Career and study information

Some study pathways and degrees have a recommended school background, and some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional experience.

Gather helpful information from:

- Subject-specific content at
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/psychology
- Job profiles on career websites like
www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.

This resource is part of a set of brochures focused on subject majors; many can also be studied as minors.





What skills can graduates gain?

Through studying a degree in Psychology, graduates develop a valuable set of skills and competencies, which can include:

- Working knowledge of the key concepts, principles, and theories of psychology
- Applying psychological knowledge and skills for practical problem solving
- Scientific reasoning and methods to investigate psychological phenomena; an ability to interpret, design, and evaluate psychological research
- Ability to distinguish genuine findings from implausible claims
- Statistical and data competencies
- Computer literacy
- Bicultural competence and confidence
- Understanding and valuing diversity
- Verbal and written communication
- Time-management, planning and organisation
- Independent and innovative thinking
- Collaboration and teamwork.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, client/customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness, teamwork and initiative.

With technology, globalisation, and other drivers changing society, skills such as resilience, problem solving, and adaptability are important.

Skills that are likely to grow in importance include analytical and creative thinking, systems thinking and technological literacy.*

*World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

How can these skills be developed?

- Some skills are gained through studying
- Extra-curricular activities can help, such as getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities, whether it is undertaking work experience, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group.

Where have graduates been employed?

Graduates with a bachelor's degree in psychology do not work professionally as psychologists. Many enter other careers that benefit from relevant skills. Psychology graduates have been employed in:

- Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand
- Community and social assistance organisations e.g. Brackenridge, Barnados, Salvation Army, Emerge Aotearoa
- Advisory services and helplines e.g. Youthline, ADANZ, Alcohol and Drug Helpline
- Educational settings e.g. universities, technology institutes, primary or secondary schools
- Government organisations e.g. Department of Corrections, Ministry of Social Development, NZ Defence Force
- Regional government e.g. Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury
- Recruitment companies e.g. Sheffield, Hudson, Madison Recruitment, Sourced Ltd, Brannigans, Randstad
- Research e.g. New Zealand Brain Research Institute, Focus Research
- Private companies e.g. Wētā Workshop, AECOM, Downer NZ, Accenture, Airways NZ, Sovereign Insurance, Deloitte.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Psychology graduates work in a range of roles across various industries from healthcare, legal services to IT. Developing and combining interests in other disciplines can lead to unique careers, as psychology can be applied in a range of different contexts — see some examples below.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and some jobs may require further study, training or experience. It is recommended to start with the section 'How can I gain a sense of career direction?'

Research analyst / assistant

- Organise and conduct research
- Test theories and interpret the results
- Write reports and make recommendations

Health promoter

- Identify health concerns and needs for a range of groups
- Develop strategies to motivate and help people manage their health
- Assist government and organisations to improve unhealthy conditions

Mental health worker

- Build relationships with people experiencing mental health difficulties
- Assess their needs, supervise progress
- Aid independence and intervene if needed

Social / youth / support / case worker

- Provide support and guidance to young people, individuals and whānau
- Build relationships and link people to resources, services, groups and events
- Develop programmes to address local issues
- Write reports and coordinate budgets

Human resources / recruitment officer

- Advertise vacancies and recruit staff
- Advise on workplace policies and procedures
- May oversee areas such as staff development, health and safety, pay and reward

Marketing / campaigns coordinator, sales manager

- Collect and analyse market insight
- Prepare and implement marketing plans
- Work with others to promote goods or services

Psychologist

- The title 'psychologist' is reserved for those registered under one of the defined scopes of practice outlined by Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa | The New Zealand Psychologists Board – see: <https://psychologistsboard.org.nz/want-to-register/scopes-of-practice>

Scopes of practice include, but are not limited to:

- Clinical psychologist – Diagnose, treat and prevent psychological and general health problems affecting adults, children and families. They can work in a range of different settings.
- Registered psychologist – May work more generally using evidence-based psychology interventions or depending on their area of postgraduate study in a more specialist field such as child and family, or organisational psychology.
- Other specialty areas include community, health, and corrections.

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

Education

- Teaching assistant
- Afterschool programme leader
- Careers advisor

Health and community

- Counsellor
- Community support worker
- Clinical support worker
- Allied health administrator
- Client services manager
- Alcohol and drug practitioner
- Pharmacy technician trainee
- Case manager
- Advocacy coordinator
- Assessment consultant
- Wellbeing practitioner

Business, finance, and retail

- Client experience coordinator
- Business support consultant
- Personal banker

Government, law, and safety

- Legal assistant
- Court registry officer
- Independent victims specialist
- Immigration officer

Information Technology

- UX Designer
- Web developer / software engineer.

Further study options

UC offers Psychology study at honours, diploma, master's and PhD level. Specialist postgraduate studies offered include organisational psychology, child and family psychology, and clinical psychology. A Graduate Diploma in Criminal Justice is also available.

If you wish to pursue a social services career, consider further study relating to social work or counselling.

Further study may facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability.

It is important to determine which, if any, further study options align with future career aspirations.

For further UC study options visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study

How can I gain a sense of career direction?

Understanding yourself and others is important to gain a sense of direction. This grows with experience; therefore, trying new things and reflecting on an ongoing basis is important.

Career planning checklist

Discover and reflect on:

- Your values, interests, strengths, abilities, and aspirations
- Your connection to whānau, people, and places
- Lifestyle preferences and location
- The skills you want to gain, use, or enhance

Engage in a variety of experiences to learn about:

- How you want to contribute to society, the environment, and global challenges
- The tasks, responsibilities and work environments you prefer
- Your work values, priorities and interests

Learn more and gather career and study information

(refer to page one of this resource)

- Speak with people working in careers that interest you; check the realities of a job/career
- Gather information from various sources

Identify your next steps

- Talking to a career consultant can help you to identify your next steps. Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

What have other students and graduates done?

Explore career stories of students' university experiences and UC alumni who make a difference globally in varied ways.

Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories



Milesa

Clinical Psychologist, Anxiety House, Brisbane

Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology with Distinction

Master of Arts in Psychology with Distinction

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Psychology

Why did you study Psychology?

Psychology is useful, relevant, challenging and has real-world application. I was motivated to study it to gain a better understanding of myself and the people around me. This skill is transferable and advantageous to any job setting.

I am also passionate about the welfare of vulnerable children and adults. I chose to study Clinical Psychology to ensure that my values aligned with my career.

What is your favourite thing about being a clinical psychologist?

For me being a clinical psychologist is an extremely valuable and privileged role where people express their deepest concerns, fears and hopes, and entrust us to guide them to a positive transformation.

Did you gain any work experience during your studies?

I was an Intern Psychologist at Matapuna Special Treatment Unit at Christchurch Men's Prison for one year. This was the final aspect of my three-year Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology and it allowed me to put together theory and practice.

What did the internship involve?

I was involved in delivering an intensive group-based programme for high-risk violent offenders. The treatment was set in a 'Community of Change' environment whereby people in the unit were expected to engage in meaningful activities that resemble life outside of prison.

The main aim of treatment included facilitating offenders to gain insight into underlying patterns of their offending, recognise offence-related thoughts and learn skills to successfully manage high-risk situations in the community.

How did you feel supported during your studies?

The lecturers and researchers I have worked with have gone above and beyond in their roles to support my learning. Their passion and continued support helped me enormously when I struggled with the course content or workload.

Career guidance

Career services are available for future and current students, and recent graduates. To learn more, contact:

Te Rōpū Rapuara | Careers

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

Helpful career insights

- Speaking with employers is key to finding opportunities; not all jobs are advertised
- Developing an online presence is useful as employers can search for future employees online
- Learning about recruitment patterns and where to find opportunities is important.

Study advice

Student Advisors at UC help with questions focused on starting, planning and changing studies. To connect with Student Advisors, visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/study-support-info/study-support

Future students – contact:

The Future Students team

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz

First year students – contact:

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www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/science

