WHAT CAN I DO WITH A MAJOR IN … Psychology

OCCUPATIONAL OVERVIEW:

Psychology is the study of human mind, behavior, and cognitive processes and is an exceedingly broad degree that can lead to many job opportunities in diverse fields. A large majority of students who study psychology fall into one of two groups: the pursuit of knowledge in the field for of sheer enjoyment of the subject that may not lead to a professional psychology position in which a graduate degree is required. For this type of student, it is vital to gain related experience in the projected occupation through internships, part-time employment, or volunteering. Students may also choose to pursue graduate or professional school in a dissimilar area (e.g., law school), in which psychology offers an exceptionally broad, liberal arts background.

The other group of students may choose psychology because they want to work in a professional psychology field (e.g., therapist, social worker, psychiatrist, psychological researcher). Although entry-level “helping positions” are available, the amount of direct client contact is limited for those who have a master’s degree. Students who wish to pursue a career with extensive and direct client contact will probably need to pursue a graduate education (master’s or doctoral degree) in psychology, social work, counseling, college student personnel, or other related fields.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS:

A bachelor’s degree is the minimum formal education required, and is excellent preparation for entering a variety of diverse occupations that require excellent writing skills, competency in research, and strong interpersonal skills. However, depending upon the student’s career interests, some occupations may require a graduate degree (Master’s, Ph.D., J.D.). Consult O’Net for more information on the specific KSAs (Knowledge, Skill, Ability) that are required for this career.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO:

The UNM Department of Psychology offers a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, a PhD Program, and an Undergraduate Minor degree. You can find further information on the UNM Department of Psychology website.

INDUSTRIES & TARGET EMPLOYERS:

A variety of employers specifically recruit UNM students and alumni. Consult UNM’s Lobo Career Connection for a complete list of employers and current job postings. Speak with a Career Development Facilitator at the UNM Office of Career Services for help with identifying employers or additional resources for your occupation of choice.

Government

City or town management, translation/interpretation, regional planning, public policy, intelligence, community affairs, campaigning, legislative assistance, public information, research, lobbying, conflict negotiation, program administration, general services, social services, foreign service, legislative, executive, or judicial services

Communications/Education

Public relations representative, technical writer, researcher, columnist/journalist, editor, publications, elementary or secondary educator, professor, principal, admissions, financial aid, academic advising, alumni affairs, international education and study abroad, career services, residence life, student activities and Greek life, orientation, leadership, multicultural student programming

Museums and Galleries

Administration, curatorial, preservation and conservation, restoration, collections management, exhibit design/preparation, archive management, art authentication, education, publications, development, docent coordination, public relations, reproductions and retailing, museums: university, public, private, archives, historical homes, special collections, historical societies, natural history museums, living history museums, art galleries, state and local government, federal government, particularly the National Archives and Records Administration, non-profit organizations, research institutions, corporations

Research/preservation

Exhibit preparation coordinator, historical background analyst, librarian, biography creationist, preservationist, museum specialist, curator, conservator, restorer, research association
Human Services
Counselor, Youth counselor, social work specialist, case worker, volunteer services coordinator, community planning specialist, community organization worker, employment counselor, parole/probation officer, development officer, welfare, investigator

Business/Nonprofit
Market research analyst, personnel officer, sales/marketing representative, investment researcher, underwriter, insurance agent, loan administrator, manpower planner, organizational planner, management trainee, campaign planner, corporation, historian/archivist, consultant/research, consultant/cultural resource management, banker, stockbroker, account coordinator, customer supply analyst, arts council director, fundraising director, grants specialist, tour guide, foundation administrator, policy analyst, hospitals and other healthcare organizations, print and electronic media, retail stores, restaurants, hotels, manufactures

Communication
Journalism, creative writing, freelance writing, copy writing, editing, research and analysis, advertising, newspapers, magazines, broadcast media companies including television and movie industry, trade, professional, or consumer publications, Internet sites, advertising agencies, publishing house, self-employment/freelance

Student Affairs:
Administration, Greek affairs, advising, multicultural affairs, residence life, student activities

Suggested Strategies
• Gain professional experience in your area of interest through involvement in internships, student employment, Co-ops, and/or volunteer opportunities.
• Consider working in multiple departments throughout campus to gain experience in areas you are interested in through work study or student employment.
• Make strong connections throughout campus organizations by networking and attending campus events and activities.
• Consider earning a second degree, minor, or pursuing additional coursework in a complementary field of study (e.g., business).
• Focus on developing “transferable skills” such as computer competency, written/verbal communication, and project management.
• Seek leadership opportunities on campus. Some positions may require an advanced degree.
• Students who are interested in graduate school should maintain a high undergraduate GPA and develop relationships with faculty and community leaders.
• Speak with mentors and faculty about career opportunities.
• Research government internship program and think about interning with a government agency to get a foot in the door, as well as building your resume.
• Make sure to research organizations’ values, so it could be congruent with yours. Knowledge about organizations is critical, because it shows to employers that you’ve done your research and committed to work for them.

WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN?
USA Jobs (official job site of the federal government) www.usajobs.gov
Idealist.org (comprehensive site of international nonprofit opportunities) http://www.idealist.org/

STATE AND NATIONAL WAGES
Adapted from CareerOneStop (2013):

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PSYCHOLOGISTS, ALL OTHER
INFORMATIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL WEBSITES

UNM Department of Psychology
American Psychological Association
American Counseling Association
National Association of Social Workers
American School Counselors Association
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
National Board for Certified Counselors
Council on Social Work Education
Association of Social Work Boards
National Association of School Psychologists
American Board of Professional Psychology
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
American College Personnel Association

http://psych.unm.edu/index.html
www.apa.org
www.counseling.org
www.socialworkers.org
www.schoolcounselor.org
www.cacrep.org
www.nbcc.org
www.cswe.org
www.aswb.org
www.nasponline.org
www.aswb.org
www.naspa.org
www.acpa.nche.edu

OTHER INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES


REFERENCES