

Psychologists

(All information, except UB degree program information, is from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004-2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook.)

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- **UB Undergraduate Programs:**
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Significant Points

- More than 1 out of 4 psychologists are self-employed, nearly four times the average for professional workers.
- Most specialists, including clinical and counseling psychologists, need a doctoral degree; school and industrial-organizational psychologists need a master's degree.
- Opportunities in psychology are limited for those with only a bachelor's degree.

Employment

Psychologists held about 139,000 jobs in 2002. Educational institutions employed about 3 out of 10 salaried psychologists in positions other than teaching, such as counseling, testing, research, and administration. Three out of 10 were employed in health care, primarily in offices of mental health practitioners and in outpatient care facilities, private hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities, and individual and family service organizations. Government agencies at the State and local levels employed 1 in 10 psychologists, primarily in public hospitals, clinics, correctional facilities, and other

settings. Some psychologists work in, research organizations, management consulting firms, marketing research firms, religious organizations, and other businesses.

After several years of experience, some psychologists—usually those with doctoral degrees—enter private practice or set up private research or consulting firms. More than 1 out of 4 psychologists were self-employed.

In addition to the jobs described above, many psychologists held faculty positions at colleges and universities, and as high school psychology teachers.

Job Outlook

Overall employment of psychologists is expected to [grow faster than the average](#) for all occupations through 2012, due to increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies. Clinical, counseling, and school psychologists will [grow faster than the average](#), while industrial-organizational psychologists will have average growth.

Among the specialties in this field, school psychologists may enjoy the best job opportunities. Growing awareness of how students' mental health and behavioral problems, such as bullying, affect learning is increasing demand for school psychologists to offer student counseling and mental health services. Clinical and counseling psychologists will be needed to help people deal with depression and other mental disorders, marriage and family problems, job stress, and addiction. The rise in healthcare costs associated with unhealthy lifestyles, such as smoking, alcoholism, and obesity, has made prevention and treatment more critical. The increase in the number of employee assistance programs, which help workers deal with personal problems, also should spur job growth in clinical and counseling specialties. Industrial-organizational psychologists will be in demand to help to boost worker productivity and retention rates in a wide range of businesses. Industrial-organizational psychologists will help companies deal with issues such as workplace diversity and antidiscrimination policies. Companies also will use psychologists' expertise in survey design, analysis, and research to develop tools for marketing evaluation and statistical analysis.

Demand should be particularly strong for persons holding doctorates from leading universities in applied specialties, such as counseling, health, and school psychology. Psychologists with extensive training in quantitative research methods and computer science may have a competitive edge over applicants without this background.

Master's degree holders in fields other than school or industrial-organizational psychology will face keen competition for jobs, because of the limited number of positions that require only a master's degree. Master's degree holders may find jobs as psychological assistants or counselors, providing mental health services under the direct

supervision of a licensed psychologist. Still others may find jobs involving research and data collection and analysis in universities, government, or private companies.

Opportunities directly related to psychology will be limited for bachelor's degree holders. 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

Median annual earnings of wage and salary clinical, counseling, and school psychologists in 2002 were \$51,170. The middle 50 percent earned between \$38,560 and \$66,970. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$30,090, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$87,060. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of clinical, counseling, and school psychologists in 2002 were as follows:

Offices of other health practitioners	\$59,600
Elementary and secondary schools	54,480
Offices of physicians	51,140
Outpatient care centers	44,010
Individual and family services	37,490

Median annual earnings of wage and salary industrial-organizational psychologists in 2002 were \$63,710. The middle 50 percent earned between \$48,540 and \$81,880. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$36,620, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$112,660.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A doctoral degree usually is required for employment as an independent licensed clinical or counseling psychologist. Psychologists with a Ph.D. qualify for a wide range of teaching, research, clinical, and counseling positions in universities, healthcare services, elementary and secondary schools, private industry, and government. Psychologists with a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) degree usually work in clinical positions or in private practices.

A doctoral degree usually requires 5 to 7 years of graduate study. The Ph.D. degree culminates in a dissertation based on original research. Courses in quantitative research methods, which include the use of computer-based analysis, are an integral part of graduate study and are necessary to complete the dissertation. The Psy.D. may be based on practical work and examinations rather than a dissertation. In clinical or counseling

psychology, the requirements for the doctoral degree usually include at least a 1-year internship.

Persons with a master's degree in psychology may work as industrial-organizational psychologists or school psychologists. They also may work as psychological assistants, under the supervision of doctoral-level psychologists, and conduct research or psychological evaluations. A master's degree in psychology requires at least 2 years of full-time graduate study. Requirements usually include practical experience in an applied setting and a master's thesis based on an original research project. Competition for admission to graduate programs is keen. Some universities require applicants to have an undergraduate major in psychology. Others prefer only coursework in basic psychology with courses in the biological, physical, and social sciences; and statistics and mathematics.

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. They may work as research or administrative assistants or become sales or management trainees in business. Some work as technicians in related fields, such as marketing research.

In the Federal Government, candidates having at least 24 semester hours in psychology and one course in statistics qualify for entry-level positions. However, competition for these jobs is keen because this is one of the few areas in which one can work as a psychologist without an advanced degree.

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, also is involved in the accreditation of advanced degree programs in school psychology. The APA also accredits institutions that provide internships for doctoral students in school, clinical, and counseling psychology.

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 in all States and the District of Columbia. Licensing laws vary by State and by type of position and require licensed or certified psychologists to limit their practice to areas in which they have developed professional competence through training and experience. Clinical and counseling psychologists usually require a doctorate in psychology, completion of an approved internship, and 1 to 2 years of professional experience. In addition, all States require that applicants pass an examination. Most State licensing boards administer a standardized test, and many supplement that with additional oral or essay questions. Most States certify those with a master's degree as school psychologists after completion of an internship. Some States require continuing education for license renewal.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) awards the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) designation, which recognizes professional competency in school psychology at a national level, rather than at a State level. Currently, 22 States recognize the NCSP and allow those with the certification to transfer credentials from one State to another without taking a new State certification exam. In those States that recognize the NCSP, the requirements for State licensure and the NCSP often are the same or similar. Requirements for the NCSP include completion of 60 graduate semester hours in school psychology; a 1,200-hour internship, 600 hours of which must be completed in a school setting; and a passing score on the National School Psychology Examination.

The American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) recognizes professional achievement by awarding specialty certification, primarily in clinical psychology, clinical neuropsychology, and counseling, forensic, industrial-organizational, and school psychology. Candidates for ABPP certification need a doctorate in psychology, postdoctoral training in their specialty, 5 years of experience, professional endorsements, and a passing grade on an examination.

Aspiring psychologists who are interested in direct patient care must be emotionally stable, mature, and able to deal effectively with people. Sensitivity, compassion, good communication skills, and the ability to lead and inspire others are particularly important qualities for persons wishing to do clinical work and counseling. Research psychologists should be able to do detailed work independently and as part of a team. Patience and perseverance are vital qualities because achieving results from psychological treatment of patients or from research usually takes a long time.