

Major in Psychology (BA or BSc)

Degree Requirements (for students who enrolled in 2003-2006)

Students of the BA or BSc (Psychology) will complete the following programme of study:

100-Level

Foundations in Psychology A

Introduces students to the science of psychology. Content will focus on the way the individual's biological and psychological systems function. In particular, the subject will examine the biological bases of human behaviour, lifespan development, motivation and emotion, personality, and consciousness.

Foundations in Psychology B

Examines the way in which individuals perceive and learn about their world, the ways in which group membership influences behaviour, the nature of psychological dysfunction, and the role of psychology in influencing health. Topics covered include learning, perception, memory, cognition, psychology of abnormality, social psychology, and human relations.

Theory, Design and Statistics in Psychology

Introduces students to scientific methods, the design of psychological research, data analysis and interpretation. Emphasis will be placed on the acquisition of fundamental statistical skills and a capacity for critical evaluation of research design, in both experimental and non-experimental applications. Ethical issues in psychological research will be addressed.

200-Level

Statistics & Measurement 1

(Note: From 2007, Quantitative Methods will count instead of Statistics & Measurement 1).

The emphasis of this subject in research methods and statistics is to provide the student with the skills necessary to understand variability and probabilistic behaviours. These skills will be developed around an understanding of experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Thus, the focus of much of this subject is on an understanding of experimental methods and choice of appropriate statistical analysis for a given experimental design. Considerable attention is given to explaining the conceptual rationale underlying each analysis covered in the course, and its application to research in the behavioural sciences. The content of the practical classes entails extensive use of SPSS, a statistical package.

Personality

Provides overviews of, and bases of comparison between, many of the major approaches to personality. These include psychoanalysis, behaviourism, existentialism, personal construct psychology, neo-Freudian approaches, trait theory, social learning theory and humanistic psychology. Coverage includes both accounts of normal and abnormal personalities, individual differences, developmental dimensions, relevant research and therapeutic relevance where appropriate.

Developmental and Social Psychology

Discusses core issues in child and adolescent development with an emphasis on individual behaviour in the social context. The first half of the course provides a developmental framework from the pre-natal stage to the transition to adulthood. The second half emphasises the contributions of social psychology to understanding individual behaviour.

Biological Psychology and Learning

Introduces the physiological mechanisms underlying behaviour and changes in behaviour brought about by experience, as well as the psychophysiological measures frequently employed to study these processes. Topics include the nervous and endocrine systems, arousal, attention, learning, memory, language, Pavlovian and instrumental conditioning, habituation and orienting reactions.

Cognition and Perception

Provides an overview of two broad content areas in experimental psychology. Perception is the study of how information is acquired from the environment through sensory organs. Cognition is concerned with the storage, manipulation and retrieval of such information. Topics covered include visual and auditory perception, memory, language, categorisation and reasoning.

Students may also choose to study as electives:

Applied Psychology

The aim of this subject is to introduce students, as early as possible, to applications of psychology and to demonstrate how main principles of psychology are applied in diverse settings. Topics to be covered include health psychology, organisational psychology, and forensic psychology. The seminar program will illustrate applications of psychology with specific reference to the main lecture topics. Case studies in each area will be highlighted

Psychology of Physical Activity

Examines key aspects of the body of evidence on the health benefits of physical activity, how physical activity habits may be conceived of and measured; and, how physical activity is distributed in populations and its major determinants. It also considers relevant theory and method from health psychology and exercise science and has a strong health-outcomes, epidemiological and population-health flavour. It deals with how psychological theories or models can guide both smaller- and large-scale interventions to promote physical activity; with the evidence base on which interventions can be developed; and, with the evidence on the effectiveness of individual, small group, community and mass-reach intervention strategies.

300-Level

24 credit points, including Psychology of Abnormality

Psychology of Abnormality

Involves a systematic examination of the variety of mental disorders found in adults and children. In addition to the descriptive psychopathology, necessary to identify the disorders,

contemporary issues relating to theories of causation and treatment are examined. Clinical assessment and methods of therapeutic intervention make up an important component of this course.

And at least one of:

Advanced Topics in Cognition

This subject offers more advanced training in experimental psychology, and particularly the method and theories of cognitive psychology. It is one of the subjects that provides a solid grounding in empirical psychology. The subject will extend students' knowledge of cognitive psychology from the framework acquired in PSYC236. It provides a detailed examination of a number of areas which may include short-term-memory, the psychology of reading, face recognition and reasoning. The practical program involves extensive experience of experimentation in cognitive psychology where students will act both as participants and researchers. Some of these experiments will be written up as lab reports or short assignments.

Visual Perception

This subject covers the following aspects of visual perception - lightness and colour; motion; shape and object perception; depth and stereopsis; spatial and temporal resolution - and the applications of each, uniting them by focusing on the environmental variables to which the visual system is sensitive, and the neural mechanisms underlying these sensitivities.

Psychophysiology

Concentrates on psychophysiology as the systematic examination of peripheral and central physiological correlates of perceptual and cognitive functioning. Students will attain a basic level of proficiency in the electrical recording and assessment of a range of autonomic measures (muscle, respiratory, cardiovascular, and electrodermal activity), as well as the traditional central indicators (EEG and event related potentials).

Further available choices are:

Change Throughout the Lifespan

This subject focuses on the kinds of changes that occur to people throughout their life and on ways to facilitate and cope with those processes. Changes in intelligence, personality, and social interactions in adulthood and old age are considered. Theories concerning the nature of life-span change are addressed, along with relevant empirical studies. One approach to understanding and facilitating changes, personal construct psychology, will be considered in detail. Some personal exploration will be undertaken by those enrolled.

Assessment and Intervention

This subject provides students with an overview of widely used psychological assessment procedures (including personality and intelligence assessments). Intervention programs and their efficacy will also be discussed, as well as ethical and legislative requirements and consumer and carer participation. Areas of focus will include both clinical and non clinical settings. The subject will also deal with the counselling process by introducing students to basic interviewing skills used in counselling. Seminar and Workshop Sessions will provide

students with an opportunity to observe counselling micro-skills and participate in group discussions and seminars.

Social Behaviour and Individual Differences

This subject allows students to study selected topics in social psychology in more detail. The emphasis is on the extent to which one can explain social behaviours (eg. prejudice, crime, close relationships, particular adolescent behaviours) in terms of individual differences and personality traits. An integral part of the subject will include the formulation of a research proposal by each student.

History and Metatheory of Psychology

Introduces (1) the origins and development of major approaches in modern psychology, and (2) important conceptual issues in psychology. Topics include materialist and causal views of psychology, behaviourist analyses of mental processes, psychoanalytic explanation, rationalist and phenomenological accounts of mind and ethical and ideological considerations in psychology.

Design and Analysis

Develops skills in the design and analysis of research investigations involving statistics. Topics covered: statistical techniques in psychological research, experimental and observational research designs, analysis of survey data; analysis of variance and covariance; regression; factor analysis; multivariate analysis. Statistical computing is an essential part of the course.

Intending Honours students entry requirements

Students who intend to progress to an honours degree will have completed 76 credit points of psychology at 200 – and 300 – levels. Core requirements for Honours candidates include the 200 – level major requirements and **Statistics & Measurement 2, (or Applied Psychology), Psychology of Abnormality, History & Metatheory of Psychology and Design & Analysis**. Entry to honours is competitive and will require a minimum of at least a very good credit average at 200 – and 300 – levels. More information about honours is available in the School's psychology honours brochure.

See the [Honours Guide](#) for more information about the program.