

# Career Ideas for Psychology Graduates

Although across the UK a significant proportion of graduates enter employment which is open to 'any discipline', many Psychology students are keen to explore career areas which relate more directly to their degree subject. This handout aims to help you identify areas of interest and to signpost you to resources which will enable you to investigate further.

## What do Psychology Graduates Do?

There are nine areas of Psychology in which it is possible to become a Chartered Psychologist: Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Health Psychology, Neuropsychology, Occupational Psychology, Sports and Exercise Psychology and Academia, Research and Teaching. Further information about each of these areas is available on the BPS website at <http://careers.bps.org.uk/>. Seven of the above areas of psychology are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council <http://www.hpc-uk.org/>; in order to practise in the UK under any of these titles: Clinical, Counselling, Educational, Forensic, Health, Occupational, and Sport and Exercise Psychology, it is necessary to be registered with the HCPC. You will also occasionally hear titles such as child psychologist, business psychologist, consumer psychologist or animal psychologist, but these terms are not specifically recognised by the HCPC. The NHS Careers website contains information about options for working in Psychological Therapies within the National Health Service at <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/psychological-therapies/>.

In addition there are a number of areas of work which relate to Psychology such as psychotherapy, psychiatry and counselling, but these are separate professions and have distinct training routes. For more information refer to the Prospects website at [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs/browse/all.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs/browse/all.htm) and the NHS Careers site at <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/psychological-therapies/differences-between-psychology,-psychiatry-and-psychotherapy/>.

The majority of psychology graduates will enter areas of work where they will use some of the specific skills developed through their study of Psychology. For more information about the skills developed through your degree, refer to the 'Skills acquired by Psychology Graduates' leaflet on the Careers Service website at <http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/students/skills/skillspsy.pdf>. For an overview of the destinations of Psychology graduates in the UK, refer to 'Options with Psychology' on the Prospects website at [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options\\_psychology.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_psychology.htm)

Psychology graduates are well placed for careers and further training in many fields and often go on to work in disciplines such as health and social care e.g. in relation to mental health issues; marketing and PR; management; human resources; education and public sector work. A good starting point if you would like to know more about graduate opportunities in these employment sectors is to refer to the relevant Job Sector information on the Prospects website e.g. Health and Social Care, Charities and Voluntary Work, Recruitment and HR.

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/sectors.htm>

The Higher Education Academy 'Psychology Student Employability Guide' provides a good introduction to entry and training routes for Psychology Graduates and also includes a number of case studies: [http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas\\_resources/431-Psychology-Employability-Guides-#1](http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/431-Psychology-Employability-Guides-#1)



## **Careers in Mental Health**

Apart from Clinical Psychology, which is a highly competitive field to which to gain entry, there are also a wide variety of jobs which involve working within the Mental Health field. These might include educational, medical, social, political, therapeutic or voluntary sector roles. Areas which are commonly of interest to Psychology graduates are Mental Health Nursing, Social Worker (Mental Health) and newer roles such as Low Intensity Therapist and Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner, which have come into existence through the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) initiative.

Other roles which you might like to consider include art therapist, cognitive behaviour therapist, counsellor, disability support worker, drama therapist, employment retention worker, mental health advocate, health promotion, music therapist, occupational therapist, play therapist and substance misuse worker. For more information about what this work involves and the entry requirements, refer to the occupational profiles on the Prospects and National Careers Service websites:

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs\\_browse\\_all.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_browse_all.htm)

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/pages/default.aspx>

## **Don't Know Where to Start?**

If at this stage your future career plans are unclear, start by referring to the degree specific webpages of the Careers Service site, download a copy of the Careers Service publication 'See the Bigger Picture: Planning Your Career' and refer to some of the resources listed at the end of this handout:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/degree/psy>

[http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/bigger\\_picture/see\\_the\\_bigger\\_picture.pdf](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/bigger_picture/see_the_bigger_picture.pdf)

## **Getting Relevant Experience**

Many Psychology students are keen to gain relevant work experience whilst at university. This might be to try out an area of work that interests them, to assist entry onto postgraduate study, which will enable them to work toward achieving the status of Chartered Psychologist status, or simply to have a greater chance of obtaining graduate employment in a field which uses their knowledge and skills.

Admissions tutors for psychology training programmes will often require you to demonstrate relevant work experience to gain a place on their course – further details will be given on the website for each programme. Work experience is a great way to gain insight into a psychology career and can give you the opportunity to find out whether you enjoy this type of work. Don't wait until your final year to start building this up, but try to actively seek out any opportunities which will bring you into contact with the client group you are ultimately keen to work with. So for instance, if your goal is eventually to train as a Clinical Psychologist, experience of working with adults or children with mental health issues will be invaluable. If it is hard to get paid work of this type, voluntary work can help you to gain relevant experience. Consider what type of people you want to work with and contact relevant local organisations and charities.

You may find it hard to organise placements directly with psychologists until you have completed your degree, but to identify psychologists working in your area you may wish to search the British Psychological Society's (BPS) 'Directory of Chartered Psychologists', via their website:

<http://www.bps.org.uk/psychology-public/find-psychologist/find-psychologist>

The Careers Service also runs an e-Mentoring programme which offers the opportunity to connect with a professional doing a job that interests you. Further information is available at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes/careermentoring>

For a more detailed insight into what type of experience is most relevant for each of the chartered psychology career pathways, refer to the relevant section of the BPS website: <http://careers.bps.org.uk/>

The Careers Service has a leaflet entitled Getting Psychology Related Work Experience which is available through the Careers Service website at

<http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/careersdegree/psychologyworkexp.pdf>

## **Useful Websites**

There are numerous website which will provide further information about the career options which you are considering, but below is a selection which will be of particular interest to Psychology Students:

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy  
<http://www.bacp.co.uk/crs/Training/careersincounselling.php>

British Psychological Society Appointments Memorandum <http://www.appmemo.co.uk/>

British Psychological Society Careers Webpages <http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-in-psychology>

BPS Psychology Careers Videos – <https://www.youtube.com/user/bpsmediacentre> - see the Careers in Psychology section

Careers in Psychology <http://www.careersinpsychology.co.uk/>

Careers Service E-mentoring programme:  
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes/careermentoring>

Chartered Institute of Marketing Careers resources <http://www.getin2marketing.com/>

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development HR Careers <http://www.cipd.co.uk/cipd-hr-profession/hr-careers/default.aspx>

Chartered Institute of Public Relations <http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/careers-advice>

Clearing house for Clinical Psychologists - <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/>

Education Alternatives <http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/edalt.pdf>

H.E. Academy Psychology Student Employability Guide [http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas\\_resources/431-Psychology-Employability-Guides-#1](http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/431-Psychology-Employability-Guides-#1)

I Could website – Video career stories <http://www.icould.com>

Jobs in the Justice System <http://www.justice.gov.uk/jobs>

Market Research Society <https://www.mrs.org.uk/careers/#features>

NHS Careers Website – What can I do with my degree? -  
<http://www.whatcanidowithmydegree.nhs.uk/LandingPageViewer.aspx?DegreeId=2309>

NHS Careers Website - Psychological Therapies –  
<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/psychological-therapies/>

NHS Jobs Website: <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

Options with psychology – [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options\\_psychology.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_psychology.htm);  
<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/degree-subjects-your-options/301050-what-can-i-do-with-a-psychology-degree>

Play Therapy – <http://www.playtherapy.org.uk>

Public Sector careers information [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/public\\_services\\_administration\\_sector.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/public_services_administration_sector.htm)  
: <http://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/public-service-charity-and-social-work>

Sheffield Volunteering - <http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffield-volunteering>

Teaching – Get into Teaching website at <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/> and UCAS Teacher Training information at <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training>