

PSYCHOLOGY, B.A. (LIBERAL ARTS)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park, World Campus

Program Description

This major is designed for students who want to learn about behavior, normal and abnormal, how it is studied, and its relation to applied areas. Students are encouraged to conduct research with members of the faculty and/or take a practicum in an applied setting. Graduates are equipped for various positions in human service agencies, industrial settings, or laboratories. Others go on to professional school, e.g., medical school, law school, or to continue their training in psychology working toward a master's or a doctoral degree. Majors may elect either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science program.

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of thought, behavior, and experience. Many people associate psychology with psychological therapy and the practice of clinical psychology. There are also many other important areas of scientific psychology, such as cognitive, developmental, industrial/organizational, and social psychology. What these subfields of psychology have in common is the use of the scientific method to understand human behavior and apply that understanding to the development of theory and practice. Psychologists are increasingly making use of neuroscience methods and theories to understand psychological phenomena. As a profession, psychology is related to fields such as health, education, marketing, human resources, social work, and more. The principles of psychology are relevant to almost all areas of human endeavor, and the career paths of psychology students reflect this wealth of possibilities.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to better understand people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- You want to learn about how the brain works, how it malfunctions, and how it recovers.
- You are interested in child development, mental health, personality, social interactions, organizations, and neuroscience.
- You want a career as a psychologist, counselor, social worker, or other human services professional.
- You want a broad understanding of human behavior to help you pursue a career in any of many fields.

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to the PSYBA major, a student at any location must have:

1. attained at least a 2.00 cumulative grade-point average;
2. completed PSYCH 100 with a grade of C or better;
3. completed STAT 200 or PSYCH 200, at least 3 credits of GQ courses (not including STAT 200), and at least 3 credits of GS courses (not including PSYCH 100) with a grade of C or better.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	7-13
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	47

0-6 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes 0-6 credits of GQ courses.

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
PSYCH 100	Introductory Psychology	3
PSYCH 105	Psychology as a Science and Profession	3
PSYCH 301W	Basic Research Methods in Psychology	4
PSYCH 490	Senior Seminar in Psychology	3
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 6 credits of GQ courses		6
PSYCH 200 or STAT 200	Elementary Statistics in Psychology Elementary Statistics	4
Select 12 credits of 200-level PSYCH courses ¹		12
At least 3 credits must be from each group a, b, and c:		
a.		
PSYCH 253	Introduction to Psychology of Perception	
PSYCH 256	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology	
PSYCH 260	Neurological Bases of Human Behavior	
PSYCH 261	Introduction to Psychology of Learning	
b.		
PSYCH 212	Introduction to Developmental Psychology	
PSYCH 221	Introduction to Social Psychology	
PSYCH 231	Introduction to the Psychology of Gender	
PSYCH 238	Introduction to Personality Psychology	
c.		

PSYCH 243	Introduction to Well-being and Positive Psychology
PSYCH 269	Evolutionary Psychology
PSYCH 270	Introduction to Abnormal Psychology
PSYCH 281	Introduction to Industrial-Organizational Psychology
Select 12 credits of PSYCH courses at the 400 level ²	
12	

¹ Selection not to include PSYCH 294, PSYCH 296, or PSYCH 297.

² Selection not to include PSYCH 490, and including no more than 3 credits of PSYCH 493, PSYCH 494, PSYCH 495, or PSYCH 496.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

Content Knowledge:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of major psychological concepts, theories, and empirical findings
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply psychological concepts and theories to research and real life situations.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge about the history, values, and scientific foundations of the field of psychology.*

Thinking Skills:

1. Students will use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
2. Students will demonstrate critical thinking in the analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of information in the scientific literature to distinguish the scientific literature from other sources.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate and defend one’s own scholarly opinion based on reading, interpreting, and synthesizing psychological literature.*

Communication Skills:

1. Students will communicate effectively (in writing and/or orally) the results of a project or internship.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively extract central points and summarize psychological research literature and to write in the format of psychological research.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to translate psychological knowledge into everyday language.*

Research Skills:

1. Students will differentiate among the research methods used in psychology and apply the designs in evaluation or development of a research study.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret quantitative psychological data using statistics, graphs, and data tables.

Diversity and Ethical Considerations:

1. Students will show evidence of knowledge and appreciation for cultural diversity and relativity in human. Students will experience and for the complexity of human behavior and interactions.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge, and the application of, basic principles of scientific and professional ethics
3. Students will demonstrate sensitivity to ethical concerns and professionalism (including cultural considerations) in settings where applications of psychology and/or psychological research occur.

Career-related Skills:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of professional options and required training for careers in the major subfields of psychology.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify personally-relevant career options to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

* Indicates a University Park specific learning objective

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their

intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

World Campus

Undergraduate Academic Advising

301 Outreach Building

University Park, PA 16802

814-863-3283

advising@outreach.psu.edu

SUGGESTED ACADEMIC PLAN

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 academic year. To access previous years’ suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Psychology, B.A. at University Park Campus and World Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15, 30H, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H [†]	3 CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T [†]	3
PSYCH 100 ^{*#}	3 PSYCH 2xx Level (Group A, B, C or Additional) [*]	3
General Education Course (GQ) ^{*†##}	3 World Language Level 2	4
World Language Level 1	4 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
First-Year Seminar/General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GS) ^{*#}	3

16

14.5

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
STAT 200 or PSYCH 200 ^{*#}	4 PSYCH 105 [*]	3
PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C or Additional) [*]	3 PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C, or Additional) [*]	3
World Language Level 3	4 General Education Course (GQ) ^{**†}	3
General Education Course (Integrative Studies)	3 General Education Course (Integrative Studies)	3
General Education Course (IL)	3 General Education Course (US)	3
	17	15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
BA Knowledge Domains Course	3 PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3
PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3 PSYCH 301W or 301M (WAC) [*]	4
PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C or Additional) [*]	3 BA Other Cultures Course	3
General Education Course	3 BA Knowledge Domains Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	
	16.5	16

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡]	3 PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3
PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3 PSYCH 490 [*]	3
General Education Course	3 BA Knowledge Domain Course	3
Elective	3 General Education	3
Elective	1 Elective	3
	13	15

Total Credits 123

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain

attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- All incoming first-year students must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

Psychology, B.A. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
ENGL 15, 30H, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H [†]	3	CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T [*]	3
PSYCH 100 [*]	3	PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C, or Additional) [*]	3
General Education Course (GQ) ^{‡#†}	3	World Language Level 2	4
World Language Level 1	4	General Education Course (Integrative Studies)	3
First-Year Seminar/General Education Course	3	General Education Course	3
	16		16

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
STAT 200 or PSYCH 200 ^{*#}	4	PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C, or Additional) [*]	3
PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C or Additional) [*]	3	General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3
World Language Level 3	4	General Education Course (Integrative Studies)	3
BA Knowledge Domain Course	3	General Education Course (US)	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	General Education Course	3
	15.5		15

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
PSYCH 2XX Level Course (Group A, B, C or Additional) [*]	3	PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3
PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3	PSYCH 301W or 301M [*]	4
PSYCH 105 [*]	3	BA Other Cultures Course	3
General Education Course (IL)	3	General Education Course	3
Elective	3	General Education Course	3
	15		16

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3	PSYCH 4XX Level Course [*]	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡]	3	PSYCH 490 [*]	3
BA Knowledge Domain Course	3	BA Knowledge Domain Course	3
Elective	3	General Education Course	3
Elective	3	Elective	1

General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
15	14.5

Total Credits 123

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Career Paths

Psychology students pursue a wide variety of careers. Many earn graduate degrees that qualify them for careers in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, social work, or other helping professions. Others work in health, business, research, school, or government settings. Many businesses seek psychology majors for their knowledge of human behavior, research methods, and data analysis.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM (<https://psych.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/planning-and-career-resources/graduate-school-and-career-planning/>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Some psychology students pursue research-oriented doctoral degrees, entering Ph.D. programs in a variety of areas of psychology. These degrees prepare students for careers in academic, research, business, or government settings. Others pursue the practice-oriented Psy.D. degree. Masters degrees in counseling, school psychology, social work, counselor

education, and other fields prepare students for a variety of practice settings. Some psychology students also prepare for health-services degrees. Law school or MBA programs are also possibilities.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://psych.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/planning-and-career-resources/graduate-school-and-career-planning/>)

Professional Resources

- American Psychological Association (<https://www.apa.org/>)
- Association for Psychological Science (<https://www.psychologicalscience.org>)

Contact

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125 Moore Building

University Park, PA 16802

814-863-1811

ugpsychupwc@psu.edu

<https://psych.la.psu.edu>

World Campus

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<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-psychology-bachelor-of-arts-degree> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-psychology-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)