So you want to be a Psychologist
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What is psychology?

Psychology is the study of people: how they think, how they act, react and interact. Psychology is concerned with all aspects of behaviour and the thoughts, feelings and motivations underlying such behaviour.

In a sense, you are already a psychologist: we all are. We are all interested in what makes people tick, and how this understanding can help us to solve major problems in society. But this booklet will show you how to go from being an ‘amateur psychologist’ to a professional one. How can you learn the science behind behaviour? How can you use it to improve people’s quality of life? How can you put your knowledge to good use in a career?

If you tell your friends you are interested in psychology, common reactions might be ‘well can you tell what I’m thinking then?’ or ‘Psychology? That’s all just common sense isn’t it?’ Because we are so familiar with our own behaviour we all have theories about it, which are often reflected in everyday sayings: ‘Absence makes the heart grow fonder’, or ‘too many cooks spoil the broth’. But what about ‘out of sight out of mind’, or ‘many hands make light work’? Common sense isn’t so simple after all.

The science of human behaviour can give us a clearer picture. To study psychology you have to learn scientific methods: observing, measuring, testing, using statistics to show that what you find is reliable evidence and not just down to chance.

But psychologists do not simply collect evidence to explain people’s behaviour; they use their understanding to help people with difficulties and bring about change for the better. For example, psychologists are concerned with practical problems such as:

- How can we ease the effects of parental divorce on children?
- How should drug awareness campaigns frame their message?
- How can we minimise accidents; on roads, rails, in the air?
- How can the courts ensure that eyewitness testimony is reliable?
- How should people act on a date – what do others tend to find attractive?
- How can footballers keep their anger in check on the pitch?
- How can we help people overcome depression, stress or phobias?
- How do you best train a person to work with a guide dog?
- How can governments promote peace between warring nations?
- How can we speed recovery from brain injury?
- How can bosses stop strong leadership spilling over into bullying?
- How can teachers or lecturers ensure students are really learning?

So psychologists have a valuable contribution to make to all areas of life today. This booklet will tell you about some key areas of psychology, how you can go from studying psychology to becoming a fully qualified psychologists, and how the British Psychological Society can help.
How to study

Psychology can be studied at school or college as a GCSE, an AS-level, A2 level, A-level or Scottish Highers subject, or as SCOTVEC modules leading to GNVQs.

GCSE psychology courses are designed to provide students with a basic level introduction. Courses vary, but all include simple practical work and an opportunity to explore some of the main areas of psychology.

In A-level or Scottish Higher courses, students look at how ideas and theories in each area of psychology have developed, learn how to critically analyse evidence, and undertake some practical research.

AS is equivalent to half an A-level and can be used as the first year of a two-year A-level course or as a qualification in its own right.

SCOTVEC National Certificate Modules are short courses of study lasting for about 40 hours. They cover many different subject areas and may be grouped together to form group awards such as GSVQs. There are seven SCOTVEC modules in the area of psychology.

University admissions tutors tend to be flexible about which A-levels, AS or Scottish Higher or GNVQ subjects are necessary for entry to a psychology degree, but undergraduates need to be able to handle scientific concepts, to be numerate and to develop writing skills.

Biology, mathematics, English, history, economics or similar arts or social science subjects are all useful preparation for a degree course. Maths at the Scottish Standard Grade or at GCSE level A–C is usually required.

A- or AS-level psychology is never required for entry to a degree course, but many students do find that this gives a useful insight into the subject and helps them decide if they will be suited to study psychology at degree level.

The number of students wishing to study psychology has risen dramatically over the last ten years, with admissions tutors reporting up to 50 applicants for every place. This has resulted in fairly high A-level or Higher grades being required.

Choosing a degree

University courses (whether single, joint or combined honours degrees) typically cover all the main areas of psychological knowledge necessary to go into further training. As an independent professional body the British Psychological Society cannot recommend one course above another. The University Central Admissions Service (www.ucas.com) will help you identify which universities and colleges offer psychology degrees and various combination degrees. UCAS also publishes University and College Entrance: The Official Guide (£24.95 plus p+p) which details courses, entrance requirements and how to apply (see contact details opposite).

You can also gain an idea of the relative quality of each department by looking at the following websites: www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/subjrev/intro.htm (for quality assessment) and www.hero.ac.uk/rae (for research assessment).
Will your degree be accredited?

Even if you have no plans at the moment to practice psychology when you graduate, you are strongly advised to keep your options open by taking a degree which is accredited by The British Psychological Society and confers the ‘Graduate Basis for Registration’ (GBR). This will allow you to go on to further Society-accredited postgraduate training before you can call yourself a Chartered Psychologist and become eligible for the Society’s Register of Chartered Psychologists. Employers often prefer to appoint a Chartered Psychologist because the title is the public’s guarantee that the person is properly trained and qualified, and is answerable to an independent professional body.

The Society accredits joint, combined and modular honours degrees as well as single honours. More and more degrees are becoming modular and it is often necessary to choose particular modules to qualify for the GBR. Check with individual course organisers to ensure that you follow an accredited pathway of courses within your degree.

If your course is not accredited, you can gain the GBR by:

◆ Taking a Society-accredited conversion course, on a full- or part-time basis (MSc, MA, Med, Diploma); or

◆ Sitting the Society’s Qualifying Examination.

See www.bps.org.uk/careers/search.cfm for accredited degrees, conversion and postgraduate courses, or use the order form on p.29.

Changing your career – mature students

If you are planning a change of career and have a degree in a subject other than psychology, you need to look at doing a conversion qualification to gain the GBR. Typically these courses take one or two years full-time, or can be studied by distance learning (up to four years part-time) with the Open University.

The course organisers will give you more information on entry requirements and fees. See www.bps.org.uk/careers/search.cfm for a full list of accredited courses, or use the order form on p.29.

While studying psychology you can become a Student Subscriber of the British Psychological Society – at the time of writing this costs just £13 a year. For this you will receive a monthly magazine (The Psychologist), the Appointments Memorandum for job vacancies, and a range of other benefits including discounts on journals, access to a web database of UK researchers, and membership of the Society’s Student Members Group. Application forms are available from the Leicester office.
Work experience

It is difficult to work alongside psychologists because of the confidential nature of their work. You might consider voluntary work within the type of organisation you would like to work with in the future (the health service, education etc.).

Unfortunately the Society cannot directly help you to find posts or work experience. Information on the few vacancies open to students before completing their degrees is normally sent to university psychology departments rather than to the Society. The Society’s monthly *Appointments Memorandum*, sent free to most members and student subscribers, carries advertisements for jobs and courses, but nearly all of them are for qualified psychologists.

Funding for courses

Courses themselves are best placed to give advice on funding. The Society has no student bursaries, but information on some postgraduate awards is available at [www.bps.org.uk/careers/funding.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/careers/funding.cfm).

If you are an overseas student intending to study in the UK, or a UK student looking to study overseas, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU, John Foster House, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H OPT) publishes a directory *International Awards*. This is found in many libraries, and lists a range of scholarship schemes for study in various countries, including the UK. Awards included are available from universities, charities/trusts and other funding sources. These are offered at various levels, though there are relatively few specifically at undergraduate level for international students. The ACU also administers several international scholarship schemes, the principal one being the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Full details on these and other general information for study in the Commonwealth are available at [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk).

(NB: The ACU does not offer awards for UK students intending to study in the UK.)
Psychologists are probably best known for their work in the health and education services, but psychology graduates can be found in almost any area of life.

A psychology degree opens up a wide range of career opportunities, and new areas such as sports psychology and environmental psychology are being developed all the time. This booklet will cover areas in which you can register as a Chartered Psychologist with the Society — where there is a recognised training route leading to membership of a Division of the Society (see p.27). These areas are:

◆ Clinical psychologists, working in health and care settings;
◆ Counselling psychologists, in private practice and commercial settings;
◆ Educational psychologists, in local education authorities, schools and special schools;
◆ Forensic psychologists, working in penal establishments, special hospitals and with young offenders;
◆ Health psychologists, working in hospitals, health authorities and health research departments;
◆ Neuropsychologists, helping people with brain injury;
◆ Occupational psychologists, in management, personnel, training, selection and careers services;
◆ Research and teaching in institutions of higher education.

A third of graduates who go into permanent employment as psychologists enter public services (such as the health service, education, the Civil Service and the Armed Forces), and a third go into industry or commerce (market research, personnel management etc). Of the remainder, about a tenth teach and research in schools, colleges and universities.

It has been calculated that 15 to 20 per cent of psychology graduates end up working as professional psychologists. This does not mean that the majority of graduates do not use the skills they have learnt; on the contrary, they are likely to use some of them whatever job they do.

There are also related professions sometimes confused with psychology. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor (unlike a psychologist), and can prescribe drug treatment for serious mental illness. Contact the Royal College of Psychiatrists for further information (see p.25). A psychotherapist or counsellor may or may not have training in medicine or psychology, and uses a variety of non-medical based treatments to overcome difficulties and facilitate change in a variety of situations, including severe psychological disorders and everyday problems. Contact the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (see p.25), or the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (see p.8).

We now turn to the various areas of psychology accredited by the Society. If you are considering studying psychology you will find it a useful summary of some of the areas of research you would cover on your course. If you are already studying for a psychology degree and are considering further training to become a professional psychologist, this booklet will tell you how. You should read it alongside www.bps.org.uk/careers/careers.cfm. This website has extensive careers information and is updated regularly.
Clinical psychology aims to reduce psychological distress and to enhance and promote psychological well-being. A wide range of psychological difficulties may be dealt with, including anxiety, depression, relationship problems, learning disabilities, child and family problems, and serious mental illness.

To assess a client, a clinical psychologist may undertake a clinical assessment using a variety of methods including psychometric tests, interviews and direct observation of behaviour. Assessment may lead to therapy, counselling or advice.

**Where?**

Clinical psychologists work largely in health and social care settings including hospitals, health centres, community mental health teams, child and adolescent mental health services and social services. They usually work as part of a team with, for example, social workers, medical practitioners and other health professionals. Most clinical psychologists work in the National Health Service, which has a clearly defined career structure, but some work in private practice.

The work is often directly with people, either individually or in groups, assessing their needs and providing therapies based on psychological theories and research. Clinical psychology is a rapidly developing field and adding to the evidence base through research is very important. Some clinical psychologists work as trainers, teachers and researchers in universities.

**How?**

**Qualifications and training**

See flowchart on p.14

A clearing house scheme operates for applications to all clinical psychology training courses. Candidates make one application to the Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology (see opposite for address), which is then distributed to the selected institutions. Application packs and handbooks are available from September to December for courses commencing in September/October of the following year.

Places for clinical psychology training are in short supply with around three applicants for each place, and a first- or an upper-second-class degree is required. Relevant experience is also important: this could involve working as a psychological assistant, research assistant, or care nurse/assistant, either before or after graduation. These posts are usually advertised in the
Society’s monthly Appointments Memorandum, or in the national press. Some graduates get their foot in the NHS door by working as an assistant psychologist on a voluntary basis, or get involved in charities working with mental health client groups. The Clearing House website below gives more detailed information about the experience needed.

An understanding of the profession is important. Mature applicants are welcomed, but for all age groups there is fierce competition to get funded training. The majority of individuals entering postgraduate training through the NHS are employed as trainee clinical psychologists. A very limited number of self-funded places are also available. The Clearing House handbook includes details of the sources of funding for each course.

Some psychologists, either with other professional qualifications in applied psychology or with clinical qualifications from abroad, may apply to the Society’s Committee for the Scrutiny of Individual Clinical Qualifications who will assess what additional training – if any – might be required for them to practice as a clinical psychologist in the UK. An application pack can be requested from the Society’s office.

Pay, prospects and conditions

Due to a national shortage, job opportunities for qualified clinical psychologists are very good. Salaries within the NHS start at Grade A (points 20-24) – the accepted grade for newly qualified psychologists. Salaries start at £17,000. For more experienced psychologists salaries range from £27,500 to £36,000.

Grade B applies to senior experienced psychologists managing departments or large specialist sections. They are usually responsible for the psychology service and its staff. Salaries range from £37,000 to £60,000+. Copies of the most recent salary scales for clinical psychologists are available from the Society website or on request from the Leicester office.

The administration of services in Northern Ireland differs somewhat from the rest of the UK. The provision of health and social services is combined and is administered by four Health and Social Services Boards. This gives opportunities for clinical psychologists employed within the NHS to have greater involvement with the work of the social services departments. However, the practice of clinical psychology within Northern Ireland is similar to that of the rest of the UK, as are careers structures, opportunities and conditions of service.

In Scotland, NHS services are organised in Acute and Primary Care Trusts for each Health Board area. The relationships between primary and secondary care are, therefore, closer and there is an increasing divergent legislative framework for health and social care with accountability to the Health Department of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament. Overall organisation of Psychology Services, however, is similar to England and Wales and career structure and prospects remain much the same.
Counselling psychology

‘The best thing about being a counselling psychologist is the diversity of work that you get to be involved in. Seeing patients, doing research, writing books lecturing and even giving media interviews are all in a day’s work. I love my job: it’s fulfilling at all levels and although I work very hard it’s never, ever monotonous!’

Dr Linda Papadopoulos, London Guildhall University.

Counselling psychologists apply psychology to working collaboratively across a diverse range of human problems. These include helping people manage difficult life events such as bereavement, past and present relationships and working with mental health issues and disorders. Counselling psychologists explore underlying issues and use an active collaborative relationship to empower people to consider change. They utilise a ‘holistic’ stance, treating the whole person rather than the physical symptoms alone by examining the issues in a wider context of what has given rise to them.

Where?
Counselling psychologists work within the NHS in general and psychiatric hospitals and GP surgeries; in private hospitals and in independent practice; within education in schools, colleges and universities; in industry and in public and private corporate institutions. They may work directly with individuals, couples, families and groups, or act as consultants.

How?
Qualifications and training
See flowchart on p.14
Postgraduate training is most likely to be self-financed and total costs (including fees) will be approximately £2,500 per year. Institutions may be able to provide information on Research Councils and other funding agencies (such as charitable trusts, foundations and companies).

Pay, prospects and conditions
Based upon the nationally agreed scales for clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists should expect to receive between £16,000 to £60,000 depending on age, experience and level of responsibility. For counselling psychologists working as lecturers the nationally agreed lecturers’ scales apply.

Posts are advertised in the Society’s Appointments Memorandum, and in relevant editions of The Guardian and The Independent.
‘The best thing about educational psychology is the chance to work in a variety of educational settings with children and parents from all walks of life and diverse cultures to help make a difference to children’s learning. I get a real kick out of ensuring that everyone involved gets the support and guidance they need.’
Shungu M’gadzah, Chartered senior educational psychologist for EduAction in Waltham Forest.

Educational psychologists tackle the problems encountered by young people in education, which may involve learning difficulties and social or emotional problems. They carry out a wide range of tasks with the aim of enhancing children’s learning and enabling teachers to become more aware of the social factors affecting teaching and learning. Reports may be written about children for allocation of special educational places, or as part of court proceedings or children’s panels.

The work of an educational psychologist can be either directly with a child (assessing progress, giving counselling) or indirectly (through their work with parents, teachers and other professionals). Direct work involves some form of assessment to uncover the problem through consultation with professional colleagues, observation, interview, or use of test materials. Interventions might plan learning programmes and collaborative work with a teacher. Recommendations are then made to determine the most appropriate educational provision for children experiencing educational difficulties. Indirect work requires consultation and careful discussion, as the psychologist’s contribution needs to be seen as relevant to people who know little about psychology.

In their role within a local authority, educational psychologists are often called upon to advise or join working/consultation groups on issues concerned with organisation and policy planning. With their research background they are in an ideal and often unique position within the education authority to plan and carry out research activities.

Where?
The majority of educational psychologists are employed by local education authorities, working in schools, colleges, nurseries and special units, primarily with teachers and parents. They regularly liaise with other professionals from the departments of education, health and social services. A growing number work as independent or private consultants.

How?
Qualifications and training
See flowchart on p.14
A degree in a National Curriculum subject is normally required to enter a teacher training course. Individuals wishing to pursue training in educational psychology (and thus needing a Society-accredited qualification conferring eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Registration: see p.3) are encouraged to undertake a joint/combined Honours degree in which psychology and National Curriculum subjects (for example maths, English) may be taken conjointly to fill both requirements. However, students must ensure that whatever subjects are studied, the required courses in psychology are completed for award of the GBR. Consult the course organisers for details of each course’s requirements.

Mature students are welcome; there is no upper age limit for applicants. The Society often receives enquiries from qualified and experienced teachers who are not psychology graduates but who wish to train as educational psychologists. Such people will be required to undertake an accredited qualification conferring eligibility for the GBR. Teachers will obviously not be required to undertake further teaching experience after the GBR has been achieved. However, in order to progress towards Registration as a Chartered Educational Psychologist, accredited postgraduate training will need to be undertaken (see flowchart, p.14).

Applications for entrance onto postgraduate training courses in educational psychology in England, Wales and Northern Ireland should be made to the Clearing House for Educational Psychology (see address above). The Clearing House is also able to advise on the availability of funding.

Competition for places on the professional training courses is high, around three applicants for every place, and relevant experience is becoming increasingly important. As a result, some local education authorities have created Assistant Educational Psychologist posts to provide an opportunity for trainees to acquire and develop relevant knowledge and skills.

The training route for educational psychologists is currently under discussion. The Society supports a move to a training route that would not necessarily require teacher training and teaching experience, and would consist of GBR plus three years’ postgraduate training based in part at a university and in part on placements relevant to the work of an Educational Psychologist.

The Society is consulting with relevant groups to develop an implementation plan for changes to postgraduate training and funding mechanisms. Transitional arrangements to maintain a supply of qualified educational psychologists are being considered. Further information will be available from the Society.

To register as a Chartered Educational Psychologist in Scotland, there is no requirement to become a fully qualified teacher. However, those who consider training in Scotland should remember that LEAs ‘south of the border’ usually will only employ educational psychologists
who have teaching experience. Details of accredited two year MScs in Educational Psychology which can be taken in Scotland are available on request from the Society.

**Pay, prospects and conditions**

In England and Wales, pay and conditions are negotiated with the Employers Organisation (Soulbury Committee) by the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), the educational psychologists' trade union. In Northern Ireland they are employed by the province’s five Education and Library Boards.

Structured professional assessments (SPA) have been introduced to recognise the contributions of Soulbury paid officers. These are operated locally and are discretionary. The current pay scales are approximately as follows:

- **Assistant Educational Psychologists** £21,500 – £24,000
- **Scale A** £26,000 – £35,000 (up to £37,500 SPA)
- **Scale B Senior or Principal** £34,000 – £46,500 (up to £48,500 SPA)

**London Allowance**

- Inner £2300
- Outer £1500
- Fringe £600
Forensic psychology

‘The best thing about forensic psychology is that it uses all psychology can offer to confront problems which really matter; sometimes you work at the extremes.’
Adrian Needs, Portsmouth University.

Forensic psychology is devoted to psychological aspects of legal processes in courts. The term is also often used to refer to investigative and criminological psychology: applying psychological theory to criminal investigation, understanding psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour, and the treatment of criminals.

Key tasks can include:
◆ piloting and implementing treatment programmes;
◆ modifying offender behaviour;
◆ responding to the changing needs of staff and prisoners;
◆ reducing stress for staff and prisoners;
◆ providing hard research evidence to support practice;
◆ undertaking statistical analysis for prisoner profiling;
◆ giving expert evidence in court;
◆ advising parole boards and mental health tribunals;
◆ crime analysis.

In the treatment of offenders, forensic psychologists are responsible for the development of appropriate programmes for rehabilitation. This may include anger management, social and cognitive skills training, and treatment for drug and/or alcohol addiction. In the support of prison staff, forensic psychologists may be responsible for the delivery of stress management or training on how to cope with understanding bullying, and techniques for hostage negotiation.

Where?
The largest single employer of forensic psychologists in the UK is HM Prison Service (which includes the Home Office Research and Development Unit as well as prisons). However, forensic psychologists can also be employed in the health service (including rehabilitation units and secure hospitals), the social service (including the police service, young offenders units, and the probation service), and in university departments or in private consultancy.
How?
Qualifications and training
See flowchart on p.14
Applicants are required to attend a national assessment centre (lasting five hours and assessing interpersonal and professional skills). During the assessment centre, applicants complete a presentation, a group exercise, a video exercise, a drafting exercise and a structured interview. Successful candidates are then invited to a further interview at which they will be required to demonstrate knowledge of current issues in the Probation and Prison Service and the role of the psychologist in criminal justice, together with the following competencies:

- Planning and reviewing;
- Motivation and commitment;
- Communication (verbal);
- Communication (written);
- Problem solving;
- Systematic approach;
- Care and concern for the individual;
- Team skills;
- Rehabilitation;
- Analysis;
- Non-discriminatory approach.

Pay, prospects and conditions
Forensic psychology in the UK is currently booming with a significant growth in the job market. Up-to-date terms and conditions of employment may be obtained directly from employers. Pay rates start around £15,500 if you are newly qualified, up to £60,000+ for senior psychologists. Further information on the training, work, pay and recruitment of forensic psychologists in the Prison and Probation Service can be found at www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk or by e-mailing psychologygroup@atlas.co.uk
Qualifications in Psychology

MUST DO
Degree accredited for Graduate Basis for Registration (Single Honours or Joint Honours or Combined Honours)
Check accreditation status with each course organiser and/or list of accredited courses on our website: www.bps.org.uk/careers/search.cfm and/or UCAS directory of degrees

ACCREDITED POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

either
Accredited or equivalent to
MSc/Diploma/Doctorate in Counselling Psychology
of Part I and II
Society Diploma
3 years full-time or equivalent part-time
or
Society's Diploma in Counselling Psychology
3 years full-time

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Work experience as an Assistant Psychologist/Research Assistant
plus
PG accredited training course (3 years full-time)
= Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

either
Teacher Training (e.g. PGCE)
plus
2 years teaching
plus
PG accredited training course (1 year full-time) = MSc
In Scotland does not need to be a teacher or teach
but MSc course is
2 years full-time
plus
Supervised practice as an Educational Psychologist (1 year)
or
Society's Diploma in Educational Psychology (3 years full-time)

OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

either
Accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology (1 year full-time)
plus
2 years supervised work experience
or
at least
3 years full-time supervised work experience
including
Society's Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Psychology

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

either
Accredited MSc in Forensic Psychology (1 year full-time)
in Forensic Psychology
plus
completion of Stage 2 of Society's Diploma in Forensic Psychology
or
Successful completion of Stages 1 & 2 of Society's Diploma in Forensic Psychology
Note: Special routes apply if you began your training prior to November 1998 or between November 1998 and April 2001. Look at www.bps.org.uk/sub-syst/dfp/training.cfm

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

either
Accredited Postgraduate course = MSc in Health Psychology (1 year full-time)
plus
completion of Stage 2 qualification in Health Psychology
or
successful completion of Stages 1 & 2 in Health Psychology
Note: Different requirements apply to those who began training before 1 September 2001.

TEACHING & RESEARCH

either
PhD in Psychology or for teachers
At least 3 years full-time experience as teacher of psychology
including
Society's Diploma in the Applied Psychology of Teaching

NON-ACCREDITED AREAS OF PSYCHOLOGY

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY – Contact The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) in Leeds. Tel: 0113 289 1020

PSYCHOTHERAPY – Although some psychologists are psychotherapists, we do not have a register of psychotherapists. Contact the UK Council for Psychotherapy. Tel: 020 7436 3002

The British Psychological Society, St Andrews House, 48 Process Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR. Tel: 0116 254 9568 E-mail: student@bps.org.uk October 2002
Health psychology

‘Health and well-being are so important to most people it makes being a Chartered Health Psychologist very exciting. The media seem particularly keen on focusing on all the latest biomedical research, but I see my work as equally important because it contributes to the prevention of serious conditions such as coronary heart disease, AIDS and cancer. One of the interventions I was involved in designing could prevent 10,000 deaths a year if applied in the United States.’
Dr Chris Armitage, University of Sheffield.

Health psychologists work in a relatively new field of applied psychology. Psychological principles are used to promote changes in people’s attitudes, behaviour and thinking about health and illness. The breadth of the discipline is far-reaching, including:

◆ the use of psychological theories and interventions to prevent damaging behaviours (such as smoking, drug abuse, poor diet), and to change health-related behaviour in community and workplace settings;

◆ promoting and protecting health by encouraging behaviours such as exercise, healthy dietary choice, teeth brushing, health checks/self examination;

◆ health-related cognitions; investigating the processes which can explain, predict and change health and illness behaviours;

◆ processes influencing health care delivery; the nature and effects of communication between health care practitioners and patients, including interventions to improve communication, facilitate adherence, prepare for stressful medical procedures and so on;

◆ psychological aspects of illness; looking at the psychological impact of acute and chronic illness on individuals, families and carers. Psychological interventions may be used to help promote self-management, facilitate coping with pain or illness, to improve quality of life, and to reduce disability and handicap.

Where?
Health psychologists are represented in a number of settings, such as hospitals, academic health research units, health authorities and university departments. They may deal with problems identified by health care agencies, including NHS Trusts and Health Authorities, health professionals such as GPs, nurses and rehabilitation therapists, and organisations and employers outside the health care system.

Psychology graduates can also use their skills in clinical audit in health services (also called quality improvement). The work is with health clinicians and health service managers, in putting research evidence into practice. Staff are supported in measuring their activities and implementing appropriate improvements.
How?

Qualifications and training

See flowchart on p.14

Those who began their training after September 2001 will be required to undertake either an accredited MSc or Stage 1 of the Society’s qualifications in Health Psychology, followed by Stage 2. Some accredited courses for Stage 2 should soon be available.

Pay, prospects and conditions

Over the past 10 years there has been a significant increase in the number of lectureships in health psychology in universities and medical and nurse training schools. This is also reflected in the considerable growth in research into social and behavioural factors in health.

Posts are not necessarily advertised as being for ‘health psychologists’. Employers may request applications from psychologists with the relevant skills to work in the health area, such as clinical or counselling psychologists, or from health professionals in general.

Posts may be advertised in the Society’s Appointments Memorandum as well as in national newspapers such as The Guardian and The Independent. Pay and employment conditions vary with the employer and nature of the contract. Health psychologists may not necessarily stay with the same type of employer; an individual may move from a university to a health authority, and vice versa. There may also be joint appointments between universities and health service units or trusts.

Research contracts are frequently paid on University Academic and Related Staff Scales, with Grade 1B scales (currently £17,000) for graduate researchers and Grade 1A scales (currently up to £25,000) for post doctoral researchers. Higher scales (Grades 2 and 3) are available for career-level professional researchers, with salaries of up to £31,000 for Grade 2, and up to £37,000 for Grade 3.
‘The best thing about neuropsychology is that it allows us to combine theory and practice to improve the quality of life for people with brain damage caused by neurological disorder.’
Barbara Wilson OBE, Addenbrooke’s Hospital.

Neuropsychology

The clinical side of neuropsychology overlaps with academic neuropsychology, which provides a scientific understanding of the relationship between brain and neuropsychological function. This in turn helps form the basis for assessment and rehabilitation of people with brain injury or other neurological disease. Neuropsychologists work with people of all ages with neurological problems, which might include traumatic brain injury, stroke, toxic and metabolic disorders, tumours and neurodegenerative diseases.

The membership of the Society’s Division of Neuropsychology incorporates practitioners, researchers and those who work in both fields. Academic neuropsychologists may be employed as lecturers or researchers in university departments, but can be jointly appointed with clinical posts depending on their qualifications and experience.

Neuropsychologists require not only general clinical skills and knowledge of the broad range of mental health problems, but also a substantial degree of specialist knowledge in the neurosciences. Specialist skills are required in the assessment of neurological patients, and rehabilitation encompasses a broad range of specialist behavioural and cognitive interventions not only for the client, but also for the client’s family and carers. Neuropsychologists are also to be commonly found in the management of rehabilitation facilities, and in individual case management. Leadership of multidisciplinary rehabilitation teams is frequently part of their clinical role.

Where?

Neuropsychologists most commonly work in:

- **Acute settings**: working alongside neurosurgeons and neurologists and the allied disciplines, usually in a regional neurosciences centre. They are concerned with the early effects of trauma, neurosurgery and neurological disease.

- **Rehabilitation centres**: providing post-acute assessment, training and support for people who have sustained brain injury, or who have other neurological problems. The neuropsychologist will play a central role in the multidisciplinary team which aims to maximise recovery, minimise disability, and prepare the client for return to the community or to a residential placement.

- **Community services**: performing a similar role as above but support those who have returned to community living.

Experienced neuropsychologists also commonly act as expert witnesses for the Courts, and research is an important aspect of neuropsychological practice.
**How?**

**Qualifications and training**

Specialised training in neuropsychology is based on prior training in one of the other areas of applied psychology. Until the end of 2003, qualification requires eligibility for full membership of one of the Society’s other Divisions and at least two years’ full-time or equivalent practice in neuropsychology acceptable to the Division of Neuropsychology. After 31 December 2003, qualification is via the Division of Neuropsychology Practitioner full membership qualification.

A pre-requisite for registration will be eligibility for Full Membership of the Division of Clinical Psychology (or for those seeking to qualify in paediatric neuropsychology either the Division of Clinical Psychology or the Division of Educational and Child Psychology). Graduates interested in entering neuropsychology are advised first to seek a professional qualification in clinical psychology (or educational psychology).

Candidates who register for the Membership Qualification will be required to complete a minimum of two years of formal supervised practice (normally while engaged in full-time employment) and submit case studies, research reports and case reports, research and supervision logs for formal assessment. In addition they will have to sit a number of professional examinations, although it is anticipated that many candidates will gain exemption by successfully completing an approved part-time postgraduate course granting exemption from the examinations. Full details are available from the Society’s office.

**Pay, prospects and conditions**

Neuropsychologists may be employed within the NHS, and also in the independent sector within both private and not-for-profit charitable organisations. There is a serious national shortage of neuropsychologists, most acutely in paediatric neuropsychology, and prospects for professional advancement are very good.

Pay is on the same scales as for clinical psychologists (see page 7). However, many senior neuropsychologists substantially supplement their income by undertaking private medicolegal consultancy as expert witnesses in personal injury cases.
Occupational psychology

‘The great thing about occupational psychology is that you are dealing with real people in important settings. There is a huge knowledge base, and occupational psychologists can often make a valuable contribution to the way we work.’

Occupational psychology is concerned with the performance of people at work and in training, how organisations function and how individuals and small groups behave at work. The aim is to increase the effectiveness of the organisation, and to improve the job satisfaction of the individual.

This speciality is broader in scope and less formalised than most other areas of psychology, and it touches on diverse fields including ergonomics, personnel management and time management. Work can be in advisory, teaching and research roles and, to a lesser extent, technical and administrative roles. Activities might include:

◆ helping a company to develop a new culture or image and then project it to the outside world;
◆ teaching the skills necessary for leadership, teamwork, negotiation, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and communication;
◆ assessing how individuals cope with unemployment, redundancy, retirement or job seeking, and helping them to deal with such changes;
◆ assisting with industrial relations between management and employees;
◆ monitoring and validating recruitment procedures;
◆ developing and conducting training programmes, and evaluating their effectiveness;
◆ evaluating job performance to give a person a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and special interests;
◆ exploring the interactions of people with their working environment to ensure it is a safe, healthy and effective one;
◆ increasing awareness of ethnic minorities, women and people with special needs.

Where?

Occupational psychologists often work for large companies (in both the private and public sectors), in government and public services, in management training centres and for private consultancies. They usually work alongside other professionals such as managers, trade union representatives, training officers and specialist staff from the firm or industry concerned.

The Civil Service is one of the largest single employers of occupational psychologists; the Prison Service, the Home Office, the Employment Department Group (including the Employment Service), the Ministry of Defence, and the Civil Service Commission all employ occupational psychologists.
How?

Qualifications and training

*See flowchart on p.14*

There are several ways to become an occupational psychologist. Some people go straight from a degree in psychology into work in organisations. Their work may not be called psychology, but it could include training, selection and job design. To ensure that the supervised practice undertaken will fulfil the requirements for registering as an occupational psychologist, trainees should apply for Affiliate Membership of the Society's Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP). Application forms are available from the Society. The Affiliates Group of the DOP has developed a website (www.bps.org.uk/sub-syst/dop/index.cfm) to assist trainees through this process (list of assessors, workshops, etc.).

Mature entrants are encouraged because of their experience, and graduates can go straight into employment and join an accredited training course at a later date, possibly on a part-time basis. Employment opportunities are advertised in the *Appointments Memorandum* and magazines such as People Management (published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) and in the press.

Funding is scarce for postgraduate training, but institutions may be able to provide information on possible means of financial support.

Pay, prospects and conditions

With the many changes in society, economy and technology, the services of occupational psychologists are increasingly in demand. Opportunities exist both in the public and private sectors although most occupational psychologists are employed in the private sector.

Salaries can vary enormously. The approximate range for those in government service are:

- Psychologist (graduate trainee) £17,000 – £22,500
- Higher Psychologist £19,000 – £26,000
- Senior Psychologist £24,000 – £34,000+

Salaries in the private sector or industry can vary from £15,000 to £100,000+. Higher salaries can be found in consultancy work and depend on expertise and length of contract.
Teaching and Research in psychology

‘Teaching and research spin off each other. Teaching encourages you to communicate clearly, and also to think through the full implications and contexts of your research. Research sharpens your awareness and encourages your curiosity, as well as making sure you stay up to date.’

Dr Nicky Hayes, University of Bradford.

Teaching and research in psychology usually go hand in hand. Some teaching staff will have qualified in one of the applied psychological professions already mentioned. They may return to teaching to develop professional practice and conduct research, or simply to share their knowledge. All university lecturers are expected to help extend their subject by gathering psychological evidence on key research questions, and then tell others what they have found by publishing articles.

Administration is an essential part of a lecturer’s life, and can take up a great deal of time. It includes student selection, devising new teaching programmes, sitting on committees which allocate resources, and co-ordinating aspects of the life of the department.

Many schools and sixth-form colleges of further education now offer psychology as a subject at GCSE, A level, A/S level and as part of a general studies programme. Teachers prepare students for published syllabuses set by the examination bodies, so their work is not as flexible as that of teachers of undergraduates. Nevertheless, there is considerable choice in what to offer within the syllabus and an enormous range of possible studies in practical and laboratory courses.

Where?
Lecturers and researchers work in universities, colleges and schools. ‘Research scientists’ may also work in research units (such as the MRC Applied Psychology Unit). However, few people are able to develop careers consisting solely of research.

How?
Qualifications and training
To teach psychology in a state school, it is necessary to have a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Formal qualifications in psychology are not always required by employers. In fact, psychology graduates sometimes find it difficult to find places on PGCE courses because psychology is not a National Curriculum subject. Care is needed in selecting subsidiary courses at undergraduate level as these choices can help or hinder graduates with their studies later; those who are unable to get on a PGCE course can undertake a conversion course from another degree to psychology if necessary to help them qualify for a place. This course usually
lasts for two years. For more information contact the Graduate Teacher Training Registry or The Teacher Training Agency (see address on p.24).

No teacher training colleges offer psychology as a main subject at secondary level, and psychology graduates therefore have to train to teach one of the subjects included in the National Curriculum in addition to psychology.

There are no formal qualifications which prepare you to teach undergraduate students, although most universities make provision for newly appointed staff to take a postgraduate certificate in Higher Education – this is likely to become the norm. A degree in psychology is rarely, if ever, a sufficient qualification for appointment to a lecturer post. Most applicants already have a PhD or have held a research post in the UK or abroad, or have trained as an applied psychologist and worked as a practitioner. A graduate NVQ in Applied Psychological Research is now available for those whose research cannot be published because of confidentiality.

Appointing committees for lectureships and senior research posts ideally require someone who is likely to bring credit to their department in the form of an international reputation, publications, and a track record in gaining research funds. Since teaching is central to a lectureship post, the committee will look for ability to speak in public and relate to others. Lecturers are rarely appointed under the age of 25 because a PhD takes a minimum of three years.

Full Membership of the Division of Teachers and Researchers in Psychology on the basis of teaching will be granted on the fulfilment of various criteria, including evidence of professional contributions such as:

◆ experience as an external examiner;
◆ experience as a trainer or supervisor of teachers;
◆ published teaching material;
◆ teaching experience.

Many psychologists become a Chartered Psychologist by virtue of holding a postgraduate research degree in psychology. Registration is usually only open to those who hold a Society-accredited first degree in addition to a doctoral level degree in psychology. Very occasionally psychologists will be registered by virtue of publications in refereed journals, but only when their work is judged equivalent to a PhD in Psychology.

Alternatively, Registration as a Chartered Psychologist and Full Membership of the Division may be obtained on successful completion of the Society’s Diploma in the Applied Psychology of Teaching. This is a two-year full-time (or equivalent) qualification for teachers and lecturers in psychology, who already have some teaching experience. It includes the study of psychological perspectives on education, as well as applied teaching assessments and a dissertation. The regulations and syllabus are available on request.

The Society’s Diploma in the Applied Psychology of Teaching offers a qualification which enables teachers to become Chartered Psychologists.
Pay, prospects and conditions

Qualified graduate teachers’ salaries range from £15,500 to £39,000. Deputy head teachers’ salaries range from £27,000 to £61,000 and head teachers’ range from £33,000 to £78,000. Additional income may be possible through private tutoring, examining other institutions or examination boards, and through consultancy work.

Salaries for lecturers at FE and HE institutions range from:
- Lecturer: £17,000 – £25,500
- Senior Lecturer: £24,000 – £31,500
- Principal Lecturer: £30,000 – £37,000

University lecturers’ salaries range from:
- Lecturer A: £20,500 – £24,000
- Lecturer B: £25,500 – £32,500
- Senior Lecturer: £34,000 – £38,500
- Professor: from £37,500

Although the teaching year for both teachers and lecturers is determined by the academic and school year, and for teachers by the LEAs, there is additional work involved which will often extend beyond normal working hours. Most lecturers probably work a 50-hour week, with only half that time allocated to teaching. Research work is particularly time consuming, and thus may often be undertaken during the long summer vacation.

The Society is unable to assist in finding research places for psychology graduates wishing to pursue a doctoral degree. However, it does publish So you want to do a PhD? which is a guide to starting a research degree (see order form on page 29).

Funding for research may be provided by the various Research Councils (the ESRC, MRC, BBSRC, and EPSRC) which provide research studentships and research grants. Funding may also be obtained from industry and government departments. Some lecturers also act as consultants to industry, particularly in the fields of organisational psychology and human factors.

Publication of research findings in scientific journals or in books is important for university lecturers. It is a means of establishing their reputation and securing invitations to visit foreign research centres, or to present papers at conferences. Promotion is very much dependent upon your reputation as a scholar or researcher.

Further information

www.bps.org.uk/dtrp

The Teacher Training Agency
TTA Communications Centre,
PO Box 3210, Chelmsford,
Essex CM1 3WA

Tel: 0845 6000 991
Fax: 01245 261668
E-mail: teaching@ttaino.co.uk
Website: www.teach.org.uk

(Can suggest alternative route to teacher training than PGCE.)
Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy covers the psychological treatment of a wide range of mental and physical ills by a number of different methods, each developed in terms of its own theoretical framework. Such treatment is carried out with individual patients or clients, with groups of patients and with children as well as adults. Methods vary from a long series of intimate discussions over two or three years, to only one or two intense interviews. Group treatment may consist of acting out problems or the encouragement of expression of inhibited emotions within the therapeutic group.

The Society view is that psychotherapy, as well as the use of hypnosis with psychotherapy, is most appropriately regarded as a post-qualification specialisation for members of one of the primary professional groups such as medical practitioners, applied psychologists or social workers. Such people are more likely to interact in the development of psychological problems and to have a sufficient range of professional experience and skills to judge when a potential client might be more appropriately helped by other methods. The advice to psychology graduates wishing to train as psychotherapists is that they should first acquire a relevant basic professional training in another area of applied psychology or other relevant profession, and to follow this with a post-qualification training in psychotherapy.

However, some psychology graduates may wish to train in psychotherapy without a professional training in applied psychology. The Society cannot provide information about suitable courses and does not accredit training courses in psychotherapy for people who are not already Chartered Psychologists. Such graduates should contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the UK Council for Psychotherapy (see address above).

Applicants for private psychotherapy training should be aware that some bodies offer clearly inadequate training (for example, applicants should be able to recognise that training lasting only a few weeks is unlikely to be sufficient). The following questions may be useful to consider when looking at a course in psychotherapy:

- Is the course prospectus detailed enough to indicate the objects, methods and orientation?
- Is the course long enough, and the amount of supervised experience sufficient?
- What are the qualifications of the course organisers and supervisors?
- Is supervision of therapy provided to trainees individually (or at least in pairs) on a regular basis?
- Does the course have a formal and externally validated method of assessing trainees’ competence?
Currently there is no registration or licensing of psychotherapists in the UK, and so there are no specific qualifications required for private practice. Public employing authorities each have their own regulations. The NHS has posts for child psychotherapists and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (see p.25) is the appropriate body to advise on training; there are no NHS posts for adult psychotherapists other than those for psychiatric psychotherapists or clinical psychologists specialising in psychotherapy. The UK Council for Psychotherapy publishes The Directory of Members Organisations. This details training requirements and accreditation.

**Sports psychology**

Along with many other areas where psychology has begun to be applied to practical problems, the Society does not at present recognise any particular training programmes or courses in sports psychology as providing an approved route to Chartered status. Applications for Registration from individual candidates with postgraduate training and expertise in sports psychology are considered on their merits in keeping with the general principles in the Society’s document *Criteria for Registration as a Chartered Psychologist*. The Register of Chartered Psychologists includes a number of psychologists who have the expertise to offer a service in sports psychology. Most of these will have been admitted to the Register on the basis of a postgraduate research degree, or a training in another area of applied psychology.

The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (see above) keeps a list of sports psychologists it has approved. Some of these will not be eligible to join the Society.

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**Further information**

The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Chelsea Close
Off Amberley Road, Armley, Leeds LS12 4HP
Tel: 0113 289 1020
Website: www.bases.org.uk
How The Society can help

For over 100 years, the British Psychological Society has promoted psychology through a high standard of professional education and knowledge. It is the only learned society and professional body which all psychologists in the UK can join. The Society has around 34,000 members. By joining you will ensure you keep up to date with scientific developments and career opportunities within the field.

The Society’s Leicester office employs more than 100 staff who can provide some advice and point to other sources of information (including the Society’s own website at www.bps.org.uk). However, enquiries about specific courses should be addressed directly to the universities or colleges concerned; the Society staff are not careers advisors.

The British Psychological Society has nine Divisions catering for professional specialisms in the following areas (members usually will have taken a relevant accredited course):

◆ Clinical Psychology
◆ Counselling Psychology
◆ Educational & Child Psychology
◆ Educational Psychology (Scotland)
◆ Forensic Psychology
◆ Health Psychology
◆ Neuropsychology
◆ Occupational Psychology
◆ Teachers and Researchers in Psychology

There is one Special Group, Psychologists and Social Services, representing members working in that area. There are also 13 Sections, which any interested member can join. They are:

◆ Cognitive
◆ Consciousness & Experiential
◆ Developmental
◆ Education
◆ History & Philosophy
◆ Lesbian & Gay
◆ Mathematical Statistical & Computing
◆ Psychobiology
◆ Psychology of Women
◆ Psychotherapy
◆ Sport & Exercise
◆ Social
◆ Transpersonal

You must be a member of the Society to join any of these Society subsystems; application forms are available from the Leicester office.
The British Psychological Society actively seeks to promote equality of opportunities for its staff, its members, and the users of services provided by its members/the wider community. To this effect, it has created the Standing Committee for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities. Although the Society has no control over the policies of other organisations, usually organisations educating and employing psychologists have developed their own Equal Opportunities Policies aimed at preventing unfair discrimination (for example on the grounds of gender, nationality, belief, disability, age, etc.). These serve to safeguard fairness in selection for training, employment, continuing professional development, etc., particularly as entry to postgraduate courses is very competitive in all areas of applied psychology.
Order form

The British Psychological Society has free information leaflets to help people considering a career in psychology. Most of these are available to download from our website, but if you would like a paper copy you can order them from the Leicester office, using the form below (enclose an SAE).

Free leaflets

___ About the Society: its purpose, and services to members.
___ Code of Conduct: the professional code which all members must abide by.
___ Conversion Course list: list of accredited courses for non-psychology graduates seeking Graduate Membership and the GBR.
___ Criteria for Membership: formal requirements for membership and Graduate Basis for Registration.
___ Guidelines for Psychology Graduates Intending to Apply for Initial Teacher Training Course (PGCE).
___ Registration as a Chartered Psychologist: including criteria for registration.
___ Lists of Accredited Professional Training Courses in Psychology: clinical, counselling, educational, forensic, health, neuropsychology, occupational, teaching and research.
___ Private Practice as a Psychologist: includes advice on advertising, legal and court reports, VAT.
___ Psychology in the United Kingdom – A guide to studying and working in the UK: for trained psychologists from overseas.
___ So you want to do a PhD?: information on starting a research degree.

Name:________________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________ Postcode:____________________________

Send to: The British Psychological Society, St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East
Leicester LE1 7DR, UK.
Tel: 0116 254 9568    Fax: 0116 247 0787    E-mail: student@bps.org.uk    Website: www.bps.org.uk