

Psychology

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What Is Psychology?

Psychology is an academic and applied field which studies the human mind, brain, and behaviour. It has many sub-areas which focus on particular topics, including cognitive psychology (or cognitive science), developmental psychology, educational psychology, personality psychology, social psychology, community psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, neuropsychology, health psychology, industrial and organizational (I/O) psychology, forensic psychology, school psychology, comparative psychology, quantitative psychology, and biological psychology (or biopsychology or psychobiology).

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What Do Psychologists do?

Psychologists apply knowledge to help people understand, explain, and change their behaviour. They can help with everyday problems (e.g., quitting smoking, better teamwork), or assess for and treat mental illnesses (e.g., bipolar disorder). Psychologists can also diagnose mental health problems. They can specialize in working with particular populations (e.g., adults, families, organizations) or particular topics (e.g., grief, pain management, employee selection). Psychologists also can conduct scientific research or teach courses in their areas of expertise.

Where do Psychologists work?

Psychologists can work in a variety of places, in research, consulting, teaching, and/or clinical practice roles. They can work in hospitals, schools, mental health centres, addiction service agencies, clinics, correctional facilities, colleges and universities, government, commercial industry, organizations and private practice.

Education & Preparation:

Qualifications for becoming a psychologist differ between jurisdictions in Canada. In many provinces, *psychologists* must obtain a doctoral degree from a recognized degree-granting institution with content that is primarily psychological in nature. In other provinces, an individual with a master's degree from a recognized degree-granting institution with content that is primarily psychological in nature can get the designation of psychologist. In some provinces, a master's level practitioner would be called a *psychological associate*. A psychologist with a doctoral degree can use the title "Dr." Generally, a master's degree takes two years to complete, beyond an undergraduate degree, and a doctoral degree can take anywhere from three to six years to complete. In addition to educational requirements (e.g., thesis/dissertation, coursework, comprehensive examinations), psychologists and psychological associates must complete a certain amount of practical experience hours prior to being eligible for registration. Oftentimes, some of these hours are included as part of a master's or doctoral program (e.g., practicum placements over the course of a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, 1-year internship in the final year of the Ph.D.).

Licensure:

In each jurisdiction of Canada, there is a separate licensing body which regulates the practice of psychology (e.g., College of Psychologists of Ontario, College of Alberta Psychologists, Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia). Each college has different licensing requirements, regulations, etc.

What is the role of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) Section for Students in Psychology?

The Section for Students' main objective is to help students obtain an active role within CPA's infrastructure. It provides a forum in which students may learn from each other and begin to prepare for their careers in psychology. Students automatically are members of this Section when they sign up for a Student Affiliate membership at CPA, and students may be in any area of psychology and at any level of training (e.g., undergraduate, graduate).