

# **CAREERS FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Psychology has become one of the most popular majors for college students. Nationally, it ranks second to Business in number of majors. Our surveys of psychology majors at CSUF show that most students major in psychology as preparation for a career in psychology. But, many students have a fairly narrow view of what a career in psychology means. They plan on getting an advanced degree (master's or doctorate) and working as a psychologist.

In reality, only a small proportion of our graduates go on to get master's degrees, and even fewer get doctorates. However, even without advanced training, there is a wide variety of jobs available to CSUF psychology majors, not just in areas directly related to psychology, but in many different fields. It is the purpose of this handbook to acquaint our students with some of the career opportunities that the psychology major prepares them for. We also provide lists of resources, including books and Internet sites, that can help students make their career plans.

# II. CAREER PLANNING

Two of the biggest problems that psychology students create for their career planning are: (a) waiting until they are close to graduation before thinking about what they want to do when they finish school, and (b) defining the scope of their opportunities too narrowly. As mentioned above, many psychology majors go on to successful careers in fields that have only a partial connection to psychology: these include business, criminal justice, research, sales, and teaching, among others. There is a lot you can do with a B.A. in psychology besides becoming a counselor.

It is important to begin planning early and to keep an open mind about career options. But, even if you are a little behind, you should remember that there will be plenty of opportunity to change jobs, or even careers, if you decide the one you've started out in isn't right for you. It is very rare these days for people to spend their entire working lives employed in the same job, and it is becoming rarer for people to retire from the same field that they began in. Still, you do have to start somewhere.

## ***A. Career Planning and Placement Office***

Most important in planning a career is to be informed. This handbook will alert you to some possibilities, but it is only the beginning. You increase your chances of successful entry into a career you desire by learning as much as possible about your options. An excellent resource for our students is the CSUF Career Development Center located in LH-208 (278-3121). And check out their web site at:

<http://www.fullerton.edu/career>

You can schedule appointments for individual counseling to explore your career options, and to learn more about the resources of the Career Development Center. Valuable resources include their *The Job Search Guide* booklet, assistance with job searches, sponsorship of career days and job fairs, and a resource library. All CSUF students are eligible to use Titan Trak, an Internet-based recruiting system that allows you to view internship and job postings (including, full- and part-time, summer, and on-campus employment).

Don't wait until you are graduating to take advantage of this opportunity. The better prepared you are, the more likely you will be to land the job you want. So, don't delay. Take advantage of these services that are free to all CSUF students.

Another useful job web site is hosted by the Social Psychology Network at Wesleyan University:

<http://www.socialpsychology.org/career.htm>

## **III. THE PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR**

There are two advantages to being a psychology major. The first advantage is that you will take a wide array of specific classes studying people's thinking and behavior. These will provide you with an understanding of why people act the way they do, and will help you to predict and motivate people's future behavior. The second advantage is that you will develop several skills that employers value, skills which may be independent of the actual psychology content of your coursework. These skills include oral and written communication, interpersonal skills, the ability to work in teams, analytical thinking, and the

ability to work with technology, such as computers. These skills will serve you well in your career, regardless of which field you decide to go into.

The American Psychological Association lists several skills that psychology majors can obtain during college. Many of these derive from psychology's emphasis on the scientific method. These skills include: the ability to gather information and to prepare written and oral reports; the ability to read critically and synthesize information from a variety of sources; the ability to plan projects and define problems so as to facilitate solving them; the ability to make inferences from data; and a knowledge of people, including their capabilities and limitations.

The most important keys to success are to have a set of skills and interests, and to be able to market yourself. Your ability to integrate and use what you have learned, and your enthusiasm for what you have to offer a potential employer will enhance the appeal of your application. Many students unfortunately regard college courses as hurdles they must overcome to get their degree and enter the work force. We believe that you will get much more out of your classes if you focus not only on the grade you wish to receive, but also on what you want to learn. Developing specific learning goals for each class will make your studies more enjoyable and give you concrete criteria against which to gauge your learning.

## ***A. Psychology Coursework***

While many of the psychology classes you will take are required of all majors, there also are elective units which allow you to specialize in a particular area of psychology. You should consult with one of the Psychology Department academic advisors (H-830J; 278-3102) to plan which courses will best prepare you for your chosen career. If you are not certain of what career you want to pursue, elective units give you the opportunity to explore your likes and dislikes within the department. Knowing which classes you enjoy and which classes you do not enjoy will give you important information about what future careers might be satisfying for you.

Also remember: the number of units required to satisfy the major (currently 41) is a *minimum* requirement. That means you are always welcome to take more than the minimum number of psychology courses to increase your learning opportunities.

## **B. Other Coursework**

Most students are familiar with two graduation requirements: (a) the coursework needed to fulfill the psychology major (41 units), and (b) the university's General Education (GE) breadth requirements (51 total units, a minimum of 9 units of which must be upper division [300/400 level] taken at CSUF). However, once you have completed both GE and major requirements, you will still have 28 units of university electives left to finish before you have the 120 total units you need to graduate. These elective units offer you the chance to broaden your learning at CSUF. There are several options:

1. You can take extra psychology classes, as described above, to deepen your knowledge of psychology.
2. You can take courses outside the major that will give you specific knowledge or skills that employers in your chosen field are looking for in new employees.
3. You can declare a minor or a second major.

Taking courses outside the major can be a valuable experience. We will discuss later specific courses you may want to take, depending on the career route you choose.

**1. Minor/Second major.** There are pros and cons to declaring a minor or a second major. The pros are that you will have documentation that, in addition to your psychology coursework, you completed a well-rounded plan of study in another field (e.g., Business Administration, Criminology, Human Services). The disadvantage, however, is that by declaring a minor or second major you are locking yourself into needing to complete a set number of units to graduate. If you have difficulty enrolling in certain classes, your graduation may be delayed. In addition, if you are interested in some classes in a field but not in all of them, by declaring a minor or second major you have committed yourself to taking all required courses, even if you might find some of them outside your interests.

If you are considering a minor or a second major, we recommend that you first take a couple of classes that you are certain will fulfill requirements for that minor/major. (See an advisor in that department to make sure of this ahead of time.) There is no need to declare a minor/major before you begin taking classes in another department. If you end up choosing to take some classes but not to complete all the requirements for the major/minor, you will not have committed yourself to taking more

classes than you want to. Nonetheless, the courses you have already completed will still appear on your transcript, and you can put in your resume that you took a Psychology major at CSUF "with supporting coursework in" Communications, Counseling, etc. If, on the other hand, you decide that you would like to complete all requirements for the minor or second major, then you will be on your way, having already completed some of the requisite classes.

### **C. Specific Classes**

We recommend taking any class that will build your communication skills. These include writing classes and public speaking classes.

**1. Writing.** The ability to write clearly (and often quickly) will be important in almost any job. Many employers complain that today's college graduates cannot write. Therefore, strong writing will set you apart from the rest of the field. Strong writing includes spelling, grammar and the ability to express yourself in a clear, succinct manner. Being conscientious about your writing will improve your chances of getting a desirable job and advancing your career.

In the Psychology Department, our Psyc 202 and the experimental lecture/lab combinations (e.g., Psyc 302 & 302L, 305 & 305L) provide a foundation for writing in psychology. Possible other writing courses include: Business Administration's Buad 201 (Business Writing), Communication's Comm 101 (Writing for the Mass Media), and the English Department's Engl 101 (Beginning College Writing), Engl 201 (Intermediate College Writing), Engl 301 (Advanced College Writing), and Engl 360 (Scientific and Technical Writing).

**2. Speaking.** One of the most common fears that people have is of speaking in front of groups. However, excellent public speaking skills are one of the best ways to set yourself apart as a potential employee. Therefore, we recommend taking advantage of opportunities to speak up in your classes, to meet with professors during their office hours, and to deliver formal oral reports. Strive to overcome any fears you may have and become confident speaking in front of others. Public speaking is a learned skill; the more you speak in front of others, the easier it gets.

Courses designed to enhance your public speaking can be very valuable. For example, Speech Communication's Spch 102 (Public Speaking) will give you a variety of public speaking skills. These

skills will not only help you to deliver information in a public setting, but will also help you to present yourself in a poised and convincing manner when you interview for jobs. The more practice you have speaking in public, the more comfortable you will be and the better you will be able to communicate the message you want to deliver.

**3. Other areas.** Other areas that may help you find employment depend on your chosen career path. These may include: biology, business administration/marketing, child development/human services, computer science, criminal justice, gerontology and sociology, to name a few. See the University Catalog for listings of courses, and consult with one of the undergraduate advisors as you narrow down your choices. (Some courses will be suggested in the upcoming section, Career Paths in Psychology.)

Finally, fluency in a language besides English will frequently give you an advantage over applicants who are monolingual.

## **IV. HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE**

In addition to your coursework in and out of the Psychology Department, many employers are favorably impressed when students have hands-on experience during school. Some paying jobs will give you career-related skills. Also, many students find that they can broaden their learning through doing volunteer work. Perhaps the best way to get experience and test the professional waters is through participating in an internship, an assistantship or peer mentoring through the Psychology Department.

### **A. Internships**

All psychology majors are required to complete 3 units of Psyc 495, Field Placement in Psychology. Internships have the triple advantage of counting for course credit, giving you a grade, and providing you with real-life experience in a company or community agency. If you choose to take more than one semester of Psyc 495, your second semester will count toward your university electives requirement.

Internships are available in a range of areas: education, development, research, informal counseling, hospitals that service psychological clients, social services, clinics, business

(industrial/organizational psychology) and community outreach programs. You can sign up for any section of Psyc 495, regardless of the type of site you are interning at. The internship coordinator for the Psychology Department is Dr. Joanne Hoven Stohs (278-3105; H-810D).

For more information, go to the department's internship web page:

<http://psych.fullerton.edu/internship/applications.html>

## ***B. Research Assistantships***

If you are considering a career that involves research, statistics or computers, it will be valuable to get experience working as a research assistant for one of the CSUF Psychology faculty. This will give you the rare chance to work one-on-one with one or more of your professors. Different faculty have differing approaches and requirements for choosing prospective assistants, so it is best to contact individual professors directly and discuss research opportunities with them.

You are able to use up to 3 units of Psyc 498 (Supervised Lab Research) toward the Psychology electives needed for graduation. Subsequent units count toward the university elective requirement. To learn about professors' research, consult the binder in the Main Psychology Department Office (H-830M) that has descriptions of faculty research interests. Then visit professors' office hours to discuss their opportunities and expectations further. Also, the Psychology Department web page has links to individual faculty members' web pages, many of which contain descriptions of their research activities.

## ***C. Teaching Assistantships/Mentoring***

The Psychology Department offers a variety of opportunities for students who want to get experience in teaching and advising.

**1. Computer Assistant.** Computer assistants work in the Psychology Department's computer lab in H-621. They help solve computer-related problems for students enrolled in psychology classes. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance your computer skills, as well as develop your "people skills" for communicating your knowledge to others. If you are interested in this position, you should consult with the Psychology Department Chair about the availability of positions.

**2. Teaching Assistant.** Several professors in the Psychology Department hire undergraduates to serve as teaching assistants for their classes. The duties of these assistants will vary depending on the faculty member. They may include: setting up a laboratory before class, reading exams and papers, meeting with students during office hours to answer questions, and possibly giving a lecture or teaching part of a class. If you have an interest in a teaching career, a teaching assistantship would give you valuable insight into behind-the-scenes academia. It will also help you to develop your communication skills. If you are interested, consult professors directly about whether they hire teaching assistants.

**3. Peer Mentoring.** Psyc 496 is the Peer Mentoring course in which students conduct student-to-student tutorials with high school students and undergraduates majoring in psychology. The goal of this class is to foster learning through teaching. As a peer mentor, you will assist students by means of personal, academic and career counseling, including giving information on career selection, graduate school, study skills, and financial aid. (Note: you may not use Psyc 496 units as psychology elective units, although they will count toward the 28 units of university electives you need to graduate.)

## **V. CLUBS AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES**

The Psychology Department sponsors three clubs and student organizations affiliated with professional societies. Becoming involved in these organizations can give you valuable experience planning and coordinating events such as Psychology Day, as well as important experience working with people.

If you are interested in a business-related career, you should also check into campus student organizations in the areas of management, marketing and personnel.

### ***A. Psychology Department Student Organizations***

**1. Psi Chi.** Psi Chi is the national honor society in psychology. At CSUF, Psi Chi sponsors guest speakers and social events. To enter Psi Chi, you must have completed at least nine units of psychology coursework, with at least a 3.50 psychology GPA. Your overall GPA must be at least a 3.20.

Thus, membership in Psi Chi is a mark of higher academic achievement in psychology. If interested, see the last page of the Psychology Department Student Handbook for an application form.

**2. Psychology Department Student Association (PDSA).** The PDSA is a service organization for psychology majors. It sponsors several events that raise money for student activities in the department, including arranging for speakers and hosting panel discussions about how to get into graduate school. PDSA also coordinates Psychology Day. All psychology majors are automatically members of PDSA. You should consider taking an active role by attending meetings or becoming an officer. PDSA is a good place to keep up on information, to make contact with other students who share your interests, and to express your opinions.

**3. Association for Psychological Science Student Caucus (APSSC).** The APSSC is made up of student affiliates of the national Association for Psychological Science (APS). Its goal is to promote psychological research. To do this, APSSC sponsors various symposia, speakers series and colloquia during the school year. It also sponsors a student research competition for psychology majors who wish to present their work at the annual APS convention.

## **VI. CAREER PATHS FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS**

You will have to weigh at least two very important considerations as you embark on your career: how much you wish to do certain types of work and how much money you wish to make. Other factors to consider include where you want to live (i.e., rural, suburban, big city), what hours you want to work, how much job security you would like to have, and so on. In general, psychology majors make less money than some other majors such as business. And, even among psychology majors, some will make more money than others. For example, those going into fields such as counseling will likely make less money than psychology majors going into business; and master's level counselors make less than those with doctorates. You need to consider what is most important to you as you explore your options.

The following paragraphs describe different areas of employment that CSUF psychology majors are qualified for once they have completed their B.A. degree. To help you decide what is right for you, see which classes, in and out of psychology, are most interesting to you. Also, talk with other students

about their interests, speak with counselors in the Career Development Center, visit your professors' office hours, and see if you can get in touch with CSUF alumni who are working in fields you are considering. The more information you have, the more confident you will be that your decision is the right one.

## ***A. Community and Social Services***

These positions involve providing services directly to the community, to families or to individuals. Titles such as counselor, mental health worker, psychiatric aide, and coordinator of care delivery programs fall under this heading. These jobs can be found in a great many settings: community mental health centers, group homes, half-way houses, hospitals, nursing homes, public welfare agencies such as child protective services, and private agencies providing mental health services, to name a few.

Psychology majors interested in following this career path should focus on a clinical/community concentration within the major. Abnormal (Psyc 341) and a clinical Field Placement (Psyc 495) should be considered essential classes. For your laboratory course requirement, you should take Biopsych (Psyc 306 & 306L). Other worthwhile courses include Community (Psyc 472), Survey of Clinical (Psyc 481), Personality (Psyc 331) and Theories of Personality (Psyc 431), Developmental (Psyc 361), Human Sexuality (Psyc 312), Aging (Psyc 362) Psychopharmacology (Psyc 475) and Health (Psyc 474).

Students should also consider taking courses in other departments relating to social problems and their treatment. These include Sociology classes, like Techniques of Social Welfare (Soci 305) and Social Interaction (Soci 341); Human Services classes, particularly those related to service delivery, such as Theories and Techniques (Husr 380) and Ethical and Profession Issues (Husr 400); and Speech Communications classes that deal with group dynamics and communication, including Interpersonal Communication Theory (Spch 313) and Process of Social Influence (Spch 332).

## ***B. Criminal Justice/Forensic Psychology***

In criminal justice/forensic psychology, psychology majors may find employment as correctional and police officers, parole and probation officers, and interviewers for various criminal justice agencies

such as the public defenders office. Individuals may work in a locked setting or in the community. And, they may work with adult populations or with children.

Students interested in this type of work should focus on the clinical/community concentration within the major described above, with the addition of Legal Psychology (Psyc 317) fulfilling the applied psychology requirement. They should seek out a forensic site for their Psyc 495 placement. In addition, they should strongly consider taking supporting coursework in Sociology, such as Criminology (Soci 411), Juvenile Delinquency (Soci 413), and Corrections (Soci 415); in Criminal Justice, relating to your specific area of interest; and in Political Science, such as Public Law (Posc 375) and Adjudication and the Judicial Process (Posc 472).

### ***C. Education/Teaching/Special Education***

The psychology major is excellent preparation for a career in teaching. Psychology majors are eligible for the Multiple Subject (elementary school) or Single Subject (junior high and high school) waivers for the teaching credential. They may teach in a variety of settings.

Psychology majors interested in teaching should focus on the developmental concentration. Classes such as Cognitive psychology (Psyc 305 & 305L), Learning and Memory (Psyc 302 & 302L), Developmental (Psyc 361), Educational (Psyc 311), Aging (Psyc 362), Field Placement (Psyc 495) in an educational institution, Advanced Developmental (Psyc 464), Intelligence: A Life-Span Perspective (Psyc 364), and Experimental Child (Psyc 363) should be considered. Also of potential benefit are courses such as Abnormal (Psyc 341), Cognitive Processes (Psyc 415), Personality (Psyc 331) and Theories of Personality (Psyc 431).

Students should also select courses from other departments. These include Sociology, such as Juvenile Delinquency (Soci 413), Family (Soci 451), Education (Soci 452), and Child in American Society (Soci 453); courses in Elementary or Secondary Education focusing on methods of teaching and assessment; Speech Communications classes, like Speech and Language Development (Spch 307); Human Services classes, such as Child Abuse (Husr 430); American Studies courses, like Introduction to American Studies (Amst 201) and The American Character (Amst 301); and Anthropology courses, like Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Anth 102) and Contemporary American Culture (Anth 360).

You will want to check out the CSUF Center for Careers in Teaching (H-113, 278-7130), which provides support services to students seeking to be elementary, middle or high school teachers. All students interested in a career in teaching should visit the Center as early as possible, so the Center can help you select appropriate psychology major and university elective classes. You must attend an introductory seminar before you can receive individual advisement. A schedule for information seminars is on the CCT web site:

<http://www.fullerton.edu/cct/>

#### ***D. Human Resources and Personnel***

Individuals in this field do recruiting, employee development and employee training. This career path would cover anyone working in the field of personnel. Individuals may work in private companies of varying sizes, or for various public agencies.

Psychology majors interested in these jobs should follow the industrial/organizational (I/O) concentration. They should take elective classes with an industrial/organizational focus. These include Industrial/Organizational (Psyc 391), Personality (Psyc 331), Social Cognition (Psyc 454), and Fieldwork (Psyc 495) in a business setting.

Students should also consider courses in Sociology, like Social Interaction (Soci 341); Political Science classes, like Public Personnel Administration (Posc 422); Speech Communications classes, like Interviewing: Principles and Practices (Spch 325), Business and Industry (Spch 333), and Persuasive Speaking (Spch 334); and classes like Personnel Management (Mgmt 343), Group Dynamics (Mgmt 443), and Organizational Behavior (Mgmt 340) in the Management Department.

#### ***E. Management and Business***

Even though most students entering management training have business degrees, psychology majors with a solid background of business coursework also have an advantage in applying for these positions. CSUF psychology graduates following this path can work in any number of positions in the public and private sector, including banking and restaurant and hotel management. Many of these jobs are listed under the heading of Public Administration or Business Administration.

Individuals interested in a Management or Business path should follow the industrial/organizational concentration described above, and they should consider taking a minor or a second major in Business Administration or Economics. The more business courses and experience you have to supplement your psychology major, the greater your chances will be of landing a job that you desire in this area. Political Science courses geared toward business and business law can also be beneficial: Government and the Economy (Posc 421), Administrative Law (Posc 475) and International Law (Posc 476).

## ***F. Marketing/Advertising***

Psychology majors sometimes find jobs in marketing. These jobs often entail investigating consumer opinions and behavior, or other aspects of the impact of advertising on the buying public. These jobs can be found in many companies of varying sizes.

The social concentration within the psychology major may be most beneficial for individuals interested in this area. Courses to consider are: Social (Psyc 351), Personality (Psyc 331), Community (Psyc 472), Industrial/Organizational (Psyc 391), and Fieldwork (Psyc 495) in a business setting, preferably within the marketing department of a company. For your laboratory requirement, you should take either Sensation and Perception (Psyc 303 & 303L) or Cognitive Psychology (Psyc 305 & 305L). You may also be interested in classes that relate to attitude formation, such as Experimental Social (Psyc 451) and Social Cognition (Psyc 454).

Other coursework will depend on your particular area of interest (advertising, marketing, marketing research, retailing). Consult the University Catalog for courses in Business Administration, Economics and Finance that may apply. Also, consider Communications courses, beginning with Principles of Advertising (Comm 350) and Photography in Advertising and Public Relations (Comm 340), as well as Political Science courses like Politics and the Media (Posc 448).

## ***G. Public Relations***

People in public relations perform liaison work between companies and government agencies and the public. People following this career path should enjoy public contact and should expect to develop informational programs and deliver them to the community.

The social concentration, described above, is probably most applicable to this area of employment. Again, it would be important to get as much hands-on experience as possible before graduation. This would include an industrial/organizational internship (Psyc 495) in the public relations department of a firm or government agency.

Other coursework could include classes in Communications, including Public Relations Writing (Comm 362), Photography in Advertising and Public Relations (Comm 340) and editing classes. In Speech Communication, you should consider Interviewing: Principles and Practices (Spch 325), Business and Industry (Spch 333), and Persuasive Speaking (Spch 334), in addition to Public Speaking (Spch 102).

## ***H. Residential Care/Rehabilitation***

Residential care positions would be very similar in duties and preparation to the Community and Social Services path described above. Individuals providing residential care would work in hospitals, convalescent and retirement homes, rehabilitation centers, and possibly residential schools.

Those interested in this field should focus on the clinical/community track in the psychology major, and they should get experience in the type of setting they are interested in through Fieldwork (Psyc 495). In addition, students should consider psychology classes such as Health (Psyc 474) and Psychopharmacology (Psyc 475). Courses outside Psychology that may be beneficial include classes in Biological Science, and Kinesiology courses like Physical Activity and the Aging Process (Knes 454) and Motor Impairment (Knes 473).

## ***I. Sales***

Historically, many firms hire CSUF psychology majors for sales positions. Fields include information systems, publishing, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, computers and technical equipment, and advertising.

Psychology majors probably want to pursue the industrial/organizational concentration in the major, with an emphasis on gaining experience that pertains to the particular industry of choice. An I/O Fieldwork (Psyc 495) placement in a sales department of a company will be highly valuable. Other

courses to consider would be ones in Business Administration, Management and Marketing. Speech Communication classes you might take include Public Speaking (Spch 102) and Persuasive Speaking (Spch 334).

## ***J. Scientific Research***

Many positions involved in conducting scientific research will be open to CSUF psychology majors. These jobs may range from collecting public opinion survey data to working in a laboratory as a research assistant. A thorough knowledge of statistics would be essential for this position, as would experience working in a research setting while at CSUF.

Students should strongly consider taking advanced statistics classes, including Advanced Psychological Statistics (Psyc 465), Advanced Social Science Computer Applications (Psyc 466), and Multivariate Statistics (Psyc 467). Supervised Lab Research (Psyc 498) with a CSUF faculty member would also be valuable. Students should have at least one semester of research experience, but more experience will strengthen your candidacy.

Outside of psychology, students should consider taking research methods and statistics courses in Marketing, Management or Sociology. Additionally, students may want to take classes in Computer Science and advanced Mathematics.

## ***K. Student Affairs/Services***

Student affairs/services allows you to stay in a college or university setting, while having a paying job. These jobs may be found in admissions offices, student unions, and counseling centers. Students may also work within the administration in the fields of residential life, student activities, and development of alumni relations and fund-raising.

Students will probably benefit most from following the clinical/community focus. Classes like Abnormal (Psyc 341) and Educational (Psyc 311) will also help, as might Survey of Clinical (Psyc 481). Additional courses outside psychology may include Political Science classes dealing with public administration and possibly Business classes as well. Lastly, seek out part-time work in one of these

offices on campus while you are still a student, or find a placement there through Fieldwork (Psyc 495). You might also consider doing Student-to-Student Tutorials (Psyc 496).

### ***L. Writing/Reporting/Editing***

Psychology majors can get a variety of jobs in the field of writing. These include being a technical writer, particularly for topics related to the behavioral sciences, both for business and industry and for newspapers and magazines; newspaper reporting; and copy-editing for a firm that publishes psychological books or journals.

To enhance your employability, you will want to get a broad background in social science, in general, in addition to your psychology coursework. Of course, writing classes are essential. You should consider the English Department's writing series (Engl 101, 202, 301 & 360), and you should investigate Communications courses related to writing, editing and media production. A Speech Communications class in Interviewing (Spch 325) would probably be very helpful.

## **VII. GRADUATE SCHOOL**

### ***A. In Psychology***

Even if the ultimate goal of your studies is to prepare yourself to attend graduate school, it may be to your advantage to delay your application. Particularly if you are a young student (early 20s) without much work experience, it might be beneficial for you to take a year or two off from school before you apply. This break from your studies can have two important benefits. First, it can serve as confirmation of your desire to pursue graduate study. Some students worry that, if they take time off, they will no longer be interested in graduate school. This worry may indicate they lack the commitment needed for years of graduate work.

Second, a break from classes gives you real-life experiences that graduate school selection panels will look at favorably when they are gauging their applicants' maturity. In particular, if you can find employment related to your chosen area of study, this will enhance your application.

**1. Application process.** Applying to graduate school is a process that must begin early in your tenure at CSUF. Like employers, graduate schools will look favorably on work experiences such as supervised fieldwork, internships and research. In fact, most psychology graduate programs require some type of research experience before they will admit students.

To be accepted to graduate school, you will be asked to supply: a transcript of your coursework at all the colleges and universities you have attended, scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), an application essay, and at least 2 to 3 letters of recommendation. On the GRE, many schools require you to take both the General test (math, English and analytical writing) and the Advanced Psychology subject test. Applying to graduate school can be expensive. You will have to pay for the GRE, for transcripts, and for postage for your applications. In addition, schools generally charge a non-refundable administrative fee to review your application. Therefore, you probably want to limit the number of schools you apply to. If you are planning on applying to doctoral level programs, you may want to apply to some master's level programs as well, as a fall-back. (For information about graduate programs, see *Graduate Study in Psychology* in the resources section below.) Here is a link to the Educational Testing Service, which conducts the GRE test:

<http://www.gre.org/ttindex.html>

You must plan ahead. For example, if you plan to go straight from college into graduate school, you will have to apply during your senior year at CSUF. Many graduate programs have deadlines in December and January to begin study the next fall; you must have all your material in by that date, or your application will not be considered. Therefore, you have to be sure to obtain your applications early and take the GRE early enough so that your scores will be available by the deadline; generally, this means by October at the latest. Contact the CSUF Testing Center to arrange to take the GRE and other entrance tests (UH-229, 278-3838).

You need to give plenty of notice to people whom you want to write letters of recommendation. You should provide recommenders with a list of programs you are applying to, including deadlines; all recommendation forms, *with your information completely filled out*; and *stamped*, addressed envelopes for each letter. It is also helpful to those writing you letters if you give them a copy of your application

essay (statement of purpose, self statement), a resume that lists your experience, and even copies of your transcripts.

We list some resources below to help you make these decisions: (a) if graduate study is right for you, and (b) what area of psychology you should go into and what degree (M.A., M.S., Ph.D., Psy.D.) you should pursue. In addition, check out the fliers and pamphlets available in the Psychology Advising Office (H-830J). Lastly, talk with your professors and consult an undergraduate advisor. Different psychology faculty will have different opinions about graduate study and programs. Talking with many professors will give you a range of opinions on these matters.

## ***B. In Other Fields***

Not only do psychology majors go into graduate study in psychology, but they also pursue post-baccalaureate work in other fields, as well. These additional study areas might include: business, educational/school psychology, social work, and teaching. You should consult people in these areas to learn the requirements for the various schools, and which classes in addition to your psychology major courses you will need to take to satisfy prerequisites for admission. (Different grad. schools, even if they offer the same graduate degree, may have quite different admission requirements.)

For those interested in law school, there is a pre-law advisor on campus (UH-511, 278-3521)

If you are considering going to medical, dental or pharmacy school, you should consult as soon as possible with the CSUF Health Professions Committee (UH-223, 278-3980) for advice about preparing yourself to apply to these programs. The Health Professions Committee will help guide your course selection and will assist you through the application process.

# **VIII. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

## ***A. General Careers***

**1. Books.** The American Psychological Association (APA) publishes a couple of books focused on helping psychology students choose their career paths. These are:

- Woods, P. J. (Ed.) (1987). *Is psychology the major for you?* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (ISBN 0-921704-78-0; \$9.95)
- Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.) (2006). *Career paths in psychology: Where your degree can take you* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: APA. (ISBN 1-59147-732-8; \$29.95)

These books can be ordered directly from the APA via its 800 number: 800-374-2721.

You may also be interested in the following:

- Morgan, B. L., & Korschgen, A. J. (1998). *Majoring in psych? Career options for psychology undergraduates*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (ISBN 0-205-27525-7; \$9.00)

## **2. Internet Web Sites.** The APA has a large web site, with many career-related postings

available. The address is:

<http://www.apa.org>.

Also, our department web site has many grad. school related links:

<http://psych.fullerton.edu/wwwpsych.html>

You may also be interested in other web sites, which list many valuable resources:

<http://www.psychgrad.org/>

<http://www.socialpsychology.org/sitemap.htm> .

It will probably be worth your while to explore the Internet for other web sites dedicated to careers, job-hunting, etc. There also are sites such as bulletin boards where students in general, and psychology majors in particular, can exchange information about careers and graduate school.

## **B. Graduate School**

The following is an excellent resource for those considering graduate study in psychology:

- American Psychological Association. (2007). *Getting in: A step-by-step plan for gaining admission to graduate school in psychology*. Washington, DC: Author. (ISBN 978-1-59147-799-0; \$19.95)

Additionally, another APA publication is vital for those planning to apply to graduate school. This book is revised every two years:

- American Psychological Association. (2007). *Graduate study in psychology*. Washington, DC: Author (ISBN 1-59147-423-X; \$24.95)

*Graduate Study in Psychology* lists all programs in the U.S. and Canada that offer master's and doctorate degrees in psychology. Included in listings for the programs are course prerequisites for incoming students, application requirements, numbers of applicants and incoming students, and often average GRE scores and GPAs for recently admitted applicants. These figures will give you the opportunity to gauge your chances of admission by comparing your scores to those of successful past applicants.

Also, be sure to stop by the advising office and pick up our fliers and pamphlets related to graduate study and the application process.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

This booklet presents a brief overview of the important issues related to choosing a career as a psychology major. It also presents some possible career paths that psychology majors may decide to follow. And, it suggests additional resources which students should look up on their own. Once again, the most important activities in job hunting are being prepared and planning ahead. The more information you have, the better you will be able to do these activities. We in the Psychology Department Advising Office wish you good luck and satisfaction in your career search. We are committed to assisting you to find a career that is right for you. Please come visit us (H-830J, 278-3102).

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