

AUT

A FUTURE IN PSYCHOLOGY





WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY ABOUT?

Psychology is the study of human and animal behaviour. Psychologists try to describe, explain and, if necessary, modify behaviour. Psychologists ask questions such as 'Why is it that some children thrive under challenging and difficult conditions, while others struggle to cope under conditions that we would see as ideal?' and 'Why is it that groups of people behave in ways that are completely inconsistent with how each individual would behave on their own?'.

Psychology is a hugely diverse discipline that ranges from studying everyday ways of thinking and behaviour, to understanding and developing interventions for psychological difficulties that are outside 'normal' experience. The focus of research and practice is very broad – from the biological influences on behaviour through to environmental and social influences.

As a science, psychology relies on evidence-based practice, focusing on research, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. It has strong links to biology and neuroscience, politics, sociology and economics, linguistics, artificial intelligence, medicine and health.

Numerical skills – an important component of psychology – are used to measure constructs that are inherently difficult to measure (eg personality, intelligence, mental health). Psychology students spend a lot of time honing research and analytical skills, which are applicable to a wide range of occupations.

Career outcomes are broad for psychology graduates who can study psychology through a major in health sciences, or science.

Are you interested in human behaviour and understanding how and why the brain does what it does? Do you like helping people? Are you interested in using research to examine and develop theories that explain 'the mind'? Do you consider the ethical outcomes of your actions? Do you think about how the environment influences behaviour? Do you ask questions and have an inquiring mind? If so, psychology could open up a diverse range of career options for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Integration into healthcare – Awareness of psychology is becoming increasingly important across many roles and within multi-disciplinary teams in healthcare. This is due to a growing recognition of the importance of evidence-based interventions in mental health and chronic disease and the need for skilled professionals who can encourage and support positive changes in behaviour.

Online human behaviour – There is a growing need to understand the impact of internet use on peoples' health and wellbeing. Researchers are trying to understand the impact of social media on wellbeing, online relationships, online marketing, human-computer interactions and problematic online behaviour. There is also research into the potential for the Internet as a self-help or service delivery mechanism.

Psychology in business – Business is about relationships, so understanding how other people's minds work is an extremely useful skill in business, whether you're relating to clients, colleagues or managers. Therefore graduates become very employable in business if they have a conjoint degree in business and psychology, or have included business courses within their degree, such as management, analytics and human resources.

Need for diversity in the workplace – There is a shortage of professional role models in the workplace, including psychology-related roles, for a number of the different populations in New Zealand including Māori, Pacific and recent immigrants.

Long term shortage of registered psychologists – There is a shortage of registered psychologists in New Zealand, as indicated by advertised vacancies.

WORK SETTINGS

PSYCHOLOGY RELATED

The breadth of work opportunities for psychology graduates is extensive – practising psychology is just one option.

Graduates enter psychology-related roles in the public service as policy analysts, or work for private and public organisations in marketing and research, recruitment and human resources roles.

Many gain employment in social service organisations, such as mental health organisations, non governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Ministry of Social Development.

PSYCHOLOGIST SPECIFIC

Psychologists are highly trained health professionals who work in a variety of contexts in the private and public sector, including clinical, health, legal, organisational, business, social services, defence, educational and research settings. Clinical settings include district health boards, rehabilitation clinics and community health centres, disability services, mental health services.

It takes six years of study and training to become a registered psychologist (three years undergraduate plus three years postgraduate, including internships). Once qualified, psychologists may work in educational, clinical, behavioural, counselling, health or rehabilitation settings.

AUT currently offers postgraduate programmes leading to registration as a counselling psychologist. Postgraduate programmes in rehabilitative psychology are also available. AUT does not offer clinical or educational psychology.

There are also academic and research options for psychologists with advanced postgraduate qualifications in psychology.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Counselling psychologist – Specialist in psychological assessment and therapy for individuals, couples, families and groups trying to cope with everyday stresses and the resulting emotional and social problems. Provides a range of psychological services for psychological problems and mental health issues, including assessment, therapeutic intervention, consultation and psychoeducation. Must have postgraduate qualifications and meet registration requirements.

Generic psychologist roles, eg behavioural or rehabilitation – Diagnoses, treats and helps prevent a wide range of psychological and general health problems affecting adults, children, families/whānau. Supports ways to manage and change behaviour. Can work in private practice as well as in public health settings. Must have postgraduate qualifications and meet registration requirements.



Human resource management – Responsible for recruitment, selection, performance management, payroll, remuneration and policy and strategy development within an organisation. Graduates normally start in an advisor role, and progress to a HR manager role (3–4 years). Useful to have a business major or minor in HR or a conjoint business and psychology qualification. Industrial and organisation psychologists also often work in human resource management, helping people to function effectively in their work environment.

Market researcher – Use skills in research design, data collection and analysis by gathering and analysing data on consumers and competitors through surveys and research. Uses skills in understanding human behaviour and knowledge of statistics to provide insights into what products people want and what groups of people will buy certain products.

Policy analyst – Researches and analyses information to help advise, plan, develop, and create policy. Includes interpreting and reviewing current policy, evaluating options, making recommendations, writing reports.

Other possible roles – In addition, students with a major in psychology develop a range of transferable skills that they find helpful within other roles particularly when working with people in areas such as social work, probation, community support worker, mental health etc.

Sources: Careers NZ, NZ Psychology Society.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

The skills and knowledge base of psychology graduates are also sought after by employers looking for staff with inquiring minds, who can critically analyse and have a strong understanding of people's behaviours and motivations. Psychology graduates have:

- Knowledge of developmental, personality, clinical and social approaches, including abnormal psychology, experimental and applied behavioural analysis, psychological assessment, social psychology etc
- Excellent communication skills, written and verbal
- Strengths in research and analysis
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Well-developed active listening skills
- Good understanding of relationships and wellbeing

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Self-aware, empathetic, patient, adaptable and observant
- Strong interpersonal skills, able to relate to a range of people
- Non judgemental
- Analytical and organised
- Adheres to confidentiality and ethical requirements

SALARY GUIDE

	Salary (per year)
Psychologist graduate	\$56,000–\$61,000
Senior psychologist	\$95,000–\$120,000
Psychologist in private practice	\$160–\$260 per hour
Graduate market researcher	\$42,000–\$55,000
Senior market researcher	\$70,000–\$125,000
Policy analyst graduate	\$49,890–\$60,000
Senior policy analyst	\$105,000–\$150,000+

Sources: 'Psychologists' MECA 2021, NZ Psychological Society, payscale.com, Jobtet, Careers NZ

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (Oct 2021) and should only be used as a guideline.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

To gain registration with the NZ Psychologists Board, graduates must have completed undergraduate and postgraduate tertiary qualifications. They are also required to have a practising certificate that is renewed annually for their specific area of psychology practice.

THE AUT APPROACH

AUT offers Psychology as a major through three degrees: the Bachelor of Health Science, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. The Psychology courses studied are the same across all three majors.

All three degrees have double major options. Students are also encouraged to take a minor alongside Psychology. Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Health Science students can also do a conjoint degree with the Bachelor of Business.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Psychology graduates from all three degrees can enter any psychology postgraduate study offered, assuming they meet entry requirements.

AUT's offers the only postgraduate counselling psychology qualifications in New Zealand. The qualification can lead to registration as a counselling psychologist. Rehabilitation psychology and positive psychology are both offered at master's level.

Research areas include adjustment to illness and injury, use of cognitive behaviour therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and mindfulness, quality of life, gambling/addictions, brain and behaviour, social psychology, use of technology, developmental psychology and others.



safe
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JANE GABITES

Safe Network Clinician

BHSc(Hons) in Psychology, MHSc(Hons) in Psychology,
Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling Psychology

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Clinicians at Safe are expected to provide a high level of clinical services to clients, including assessments and interventions for a range of client groups. The ability to work with a range of complex presentations and across cultures is a necessity.

Jane's AUT qualification has prepared her well for the challenges of this work as does her ability to think critically and ethically in difficult situations. She displays compassion, integrity and respect in her work, which has contributed to positive outcomes for clients and their families.

The counselling psychology programme appears to align well with Safe's approach to working with clients, which includes taking a holistic and systemic perspective. Work experience through placements and internships are invaluable in preparing a student for the psychology workforce."

Shreena Hira

Registered Psychologist/Clinical Manager
Safe Network, Auckland

"I have been at Safe Network for three-and-a-half years now. I work in the Early Intervention Service, the Youth Service and the Adult Service at Safe, but my work is predominantly with adults. I started working here full time after a year-long internship I did for my postgraduate study.

Each week I would usually do one assessment of an adult who has been referred to us by the Community Probation Service because the adult has been convicted of a sexual offence against someone who is under 16 years old. This typically takes two sessions of two hours. I also provide treatment for other individual clients and also run two groups – one for special needs offenders and one for adult male offenders.

One of the biggest things I enjoy about the role is the change we see in our clients. I find it really energising when I see a person who has come into us feeling broken, confused and in denial about their offending, change into someone who not only owns what they've done and is sorry for it, but also puts strategies in place to be able to live a good, safe and healthy life.

Some of the biggest challenges are clients with really complex problems that run alongside their harmful sexual behaviour. I believe my training at AUT has been invaluable with these clients. I have been taught to use evidence-based assessment and treatment protocols and to view the client within the context of their lives, including their culture and their family system. As a result, I work in a structured and safe way to help these clients move forward positively.

I was attracted to psychology because I am super-fascinated in how the human mind works and why people think and act in the way they do. I also like the idea of helping people make positive changes in their lives."

USEFUL WEBSITES

NZ Psychology Society

<https://www.psychology.org.nz/study-careers>

Immigration NZ Skill Shortage List

<https://skillshortages.immigration.govt.nz>

Psychology, Yesterday and Today

www.psychologytoday.com/blog/psychology-yesterday

Careers NZ

www.careers.govt.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the study of psychology and the Bachelor of Health Science or Bachelor of Arts, visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/psychology-health

www.aut.ac.nz/psychology-socsci

www.aut.ac.nz/psychology-science


For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets

EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through


<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>

 @AUTEmployabilityandCareers

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

 @AUTFutureStudents

CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, October 2021.

