

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - PSYCHOLOGY CONCENTRATION - FOR STUDENTS MATRICULATED AFTER DEC. 1, 2013 BUT BEFORE JAN. 1, 2020

The discipline of psychology encompasses the scientific study of mind and behavior. Psychology employs specific methodologies for understanding humans, ranging from simple observation to rigorous experimentation. Its subjects include, but are not limited to, how people develop and learn; how behaviors, relationships and beliefs are motivated; how the brain, behavior and environment interact; how people interact with the world around them, including how they perceive it, how they respond to it intellectually and emotionally and how these processes change throughout life; and how all of these processes are integrated into the personality under interpersonal, social and cultural influences.

While many psychology students ultimately will engage in further training and education to work within the field, many will pursue work outside the field of psychology in areas that rely upon an understanding of human thought and behavior, including law, the health care professions, business careers, education, nonprofit agencies and many others.

To prepare for a career in psychology (such as becoming a psychologist, social worker, counselor, researcher, or teacher), students typically earn a graduate degree. The psychology concentration prepares students well for the expectations of such graduate programs. Graduate programs are selective and take into consideration a student's academic record, letters of recommendation, field and research experience and, in most cases, Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores. It is strongly recommended that students who are considering going on for graduate training consult with websites or other sources of information about graduate programs while designing their degree. Another excellent source of information is the American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major.

Students who concentrate in psychology should meet all of the guidelines for a degree in human development. However, for many of the content areas outlined in the human development guidelines, there are additional discipline-specific ways (outlined below) to meet the guidelines. Specifically, students concentrating in psychology should both refer to the human development guidelines and address the additional guidelines below related to biological bases of development, research issues in human development and ethical issues in human development. In addition, there is content in the area of professional development that should be addressed by students concentrating in psychology.

Biological Bases of Development

In order to understand the biological influences on emotional, cognitive and behavioral development, students concentrating in psychology should specifically understand the interaction between the brain, behavior and the environment. They should demonstrate this knowledge by:

1. Explaining basic neurological brain mechanisms that relate to emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of the person.
2. Identifying how the brain's normal and abnormal functioning influences areas of human experience and behavior (e.g., language, thought, learning).

Research Issues in Human Development

In order to develop scientific reasoning and problem-solving skills (especially effective research skills) for interpreting and drawing evidence-based conclusions about human development and behavior, students concentrating in psychology should specifically understand multiple research methodologies (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, testing and measurement) employed within the field of psychology to understand human thought, feeling and behavior. Additionally, they should demonstrate a basic understanding of the statistical tools and techniques used in quantitative research design. The standard method for meeting this guideline for those interested in graduate work is to take studies in research methods and statistics. Students should demonstrate this knowledge by:

1. Applying (practically or theoretically) or critiquing methodologies of social and behavioral science research.
2. Interpreting and communicating knowledge gained through basic statistical techniques.

Ethical Issues in Human Development

In order to develop ethically and socially responsible attitudes and behaviors specific to the field of psychology, students concentrating in psychology should understand the formal regulations that govern professional ethics in psychology and the values that contribute to positive outcomes in work settings and society. They should demonstrate this knowledge by:

1. Explaining the current ethical guidelines as outlined by the American Psychological Association.
2. Applying (practically or theoretically) professional codes of conduct to guide decision making and behavior within the multiple domains of professional work, including clinical, research and teaching activities.

Professional Development

Students concentrating in psychology should understand how to apply psychology-specific content, skills and self-reflection. Additionally, students should develop knowledge about potential job and career trajectories and professional possibilities. They should demonstrate this knowledge by:

1. Applying psychological content and skills (practically or theoretically) to assess, understand, assist, or promote change in specific individuals, populations, behaviors, or other situations or problems
2. Exploring ways of using psychological knowledge and skills strategically in future educational, occupational or personal endeavors.