Advice from the experts for finding a job with your B.A. in psychology

- **Plan early**: As early as your freshman year, meet with your academic advisor to discuss your career interests and options. Continue to hone your career choice by the end of your sophomore year so that you have identified the unique constellation of knowledge, skills, and characteristics you need to enter the career of your choice. By starting this process early you will have time to take the courses you need and engage in the activities that will build your resume by the time you graduate.

- **Assess yourself**: Figure out who you are and what you want from a job. To help you do that, answer these questions: What are the 10 traits that describe you best? What working conditions must you have? How much money do you need to make? What are your long-term goals? What skills do you have and which do you enjoy using the most? What are your weaknesses and how could a job help you overcome those weaknesses? Your answers will provide a foundation for your job search and enable you to pinpoint the opportunities best suited to you. Answering these questions will even help to prepare you for job interviews one day!

- **Capitalize on your connections**: You’ve heard it before and it is still true…networking is critical. Think about the people you have met who can give you job leads: Perhaps you completed an internship, participated in a service learning event or volunteered someplace. Through any of these experiences and others, you may have met members of the fields you are interested in. Reach out to these people and any other mentors to see if they have any ideas on employment. While someone may not be able to offer you a job, he/she might have good ideas for you to pursue. Additionally, be sure to stay in touch with your professors since local agencies may contact them looking for “good” graduates to fill a job. Do not forget that even after you graduate you will need references or letter of recommendation so staying connected with faculty is a smart choice.

- **Look beyond internet job postings**: Abundant with websites such as careerbuiler.com and monster.com the internet is a wonderful tool for finding jobs. However, these websites are limited because many corporations do not list their jobs there. To find other opportunities, beyond what is shown online, read the newspaper, inquire at companies that interest you and remember to network. Do not forget to monitor newspapers and look for opportunities in regions you would be willing to move to.

- **Take advantage of campus services even after you graduate**: Your campus career center and alumni office are both interested in your long-term success. These offices may host training, job fairs, other events for graduates, and will help you in writing your resume. Do not forget that as graduates you can still access all of these resources. Your alumni office may have job suggestions as well.
Some of your job prospects with a B.A. in psychology

• Nationwide, 9 out of 10 people who graduate with a B.A. in psychology do not go to graduate school in psychology. If you want a career as a psychologist or if you want to work clinically with people (i.e. provide therapy or behavioral change in private practice or in a hospital) you must go to graduate school. However, psychology B.A. graduates, like some other liberal arts graduates, may find employment in many types of jobs after graduation from the undergraduate level.

• If you are hoping to get a psychology related job with a B.A. the odds are not in your favor. A 2003 survey by the National Science Foundation (http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvygrads/) found that of the 122,800 people who graduated with a B.S. degree in psychology less than 5% got jobs in the psychology field.

• According to Charles Brewer, a psychology professor at Furman University, looking at psychology undergraduate degrees as simply a step towards an advanced degree is often a mistake. “A lot of people think that in order to do anything with a degree in psychology you must get a Ph.D. and become a psychologist” he explained in an article by CNN (http://money.cnn.com/2000/12/08/career/q_degreepsychology/). “Most parents, even if they are professionals in their own right, don’t understand what opportunities are open to psych majors.” He also suggests that the biggest advantage of a bachelor’s degree in psychology is its adaptability.

• Employers of all stripes want and need your communication and interpersonal skills; your ability to collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data; and your strong understanding of human behavior.

• A 2010 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers reported that the average salary of a psychology graduate was $32,358 per year (http://www.naceweb.org/Press/Releases/Average_Starti ng_Salary_to_New_College_Gr ads_Slips_1_3_Percent.aspx).
Some of the top occupations that employ those with a bachelor’s psychology degree are:

- Administrative and Management positions
- Advertising Copywriter
- Affirmative Action Officer
- Career Counselor
- Caregiver/Home Health Aid
- Case management
- Child Care Worker
- Community Relations Officer
- Customs Inspector
- Daycare Center Supervisor
- Director of Volunteer Service
- Health Educator
- Human Resources Assistant
- Laboratory or Research Assistant
- Labor Relations (Personnel and Training)
- Marketing
- Media Buyer
- Newspaper Reporter
- Opinion Survey Researcher
- Personnel Administrator
- Probation and Parole Officer
- Psychiatric Assistant
- Public Statistician
- Recreation Worker
- Rehabilitation Specialist
- Sales Representative
- Scientific Instrument Sales Person
- Teacher’s Assistant
• Technical Writer
• Urban Planning Officer

Other career resources:

• The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2010-2011 Edition:
  o [http://www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco)
  o For hundreds of different types of jobs, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* tells you:
    ▪ The training and education needed
    ▪ Earnings
    ▪ Expected job prospects
    ▪ What workers do on the job
    ▪ Working conditions

• Careers in Psychology from the American Psychological Association:
  o This website page gives you information about job prospects for people with a B.A. in psychology and provides additional information on what the job prospects after graduate school in psychology are, should you decide that graduate school is right for you. Remember, most people with a B.A. in psychology do not go onto graduate school but a website such as this can help people considering graduate school to see some of their general options.

All of the above information has been adapted from various sources (cited throughout the document) by the University at Albany, State University of New York, Psychology Advisement Office, April 2011. Psychology students at the University at Albany may direct any questions to the office.