BA in Psychology
http://webpub.allegheny.edu/dept/psych/Careers/BAinPsych.html

To be successful in a job search with a BA in psychology, you need to reframe your view of yourself as "psychology major" to a more saleable view of "I am a person with this set of skills." Imbedded in this approach is the need to 1) understand the skills that employers are looking for; and 2) understand how psychology as a liberal arts degree and a science is uniquely qualified as a skill building program.

To help you develop the skills you will need to succeed (and recognize the skills you already have), check out the material listed below:

Realities for BA-level Employment

- There is a lot of competition (65,000 graduates last year with 75% of them in the job market)
- They are highly employable (95%+)
- They are slightly less likely to "use" their degrees in their jobs (as compared to more applied degrees)
- They make less money than other majors (but similar to other liberal arts degrees--also highly variable)
- That early planning is clearly beneficial for both the job market and graduate school
- That "professional" experiences are the best single best employment-related strategy during college.
- That their skills are valued in today's market-and that psychology majors have skills that tend to be a unique combination of facets.

From Majoring in Psych?: Career options for psychology.

Skills for Careers in Psychology: A Case Study

National Computer Systems (a company that develops and markets psychologically based materials, including test and motivational products and courses to business concerns) has employed approximately 100 BA-level psychology majors in the past 15 years. As part of a review of their personnel policies they first noted where BA-level psychologists were employed:

- Research associates
- Client services consultants
- Business development consultants
- Psychology product sales and marketing associates
- Technical writers

Then they examined the key skills exhibited by successful employees who came to the company with a BA in psychology.

- Interpersonal skills (s)
- Dependability (s/f)
- Drive and ambition (t)
- Energy level (t)
- Enthusiasm (s/t)
- Overachiever (s/t)
- Organizational skills (t)
- Technical Writing (t)
- Research methodology (t)
- Statistics (t)
- Computer experience (s/t)

Note: "s" refers to service employees and "t" refers to those in technical positions

From Undergraduate Training and Skills for Career in Psychology, presentation made at the American Psychological Association meeting, August, 2000, by John W. Jones and Lia L. Meyer.
Basic Business Skills

In order to compete successfully with business majors in such areas as management, personnel, marketing, and sales, psychology majors must possess and be able to demonstrate to business firms that they have the personal attributes necessary to step into entry-level business positions. In general, business firms consider the following four basic attributes to be vital for individuals to be successful in entry-level positions:

- An understanding of the nature of goal-directed behavior, including the concept that sometimes goals are established by external forces beyond an individual's control.
- An understanding of the nature and process of solving problems. This includes how to recognize problems, situation analysis, the development of alternatives, and the ability to make decisions.
- The ability to communicate with others, including the ability to write & speak clearly, and to listen effectively.
- An understanding of human behavior, including the ability to become a leader and motivate others.

The variety of skills associated with these four basic attributes can be summarized into three categories: technical skills, concept skills, and human skills.

Technical skills are those necessary to perform the task at hand. If a student wants to become an accountant or marketing analyst, obviously, the individual needs to possess certain skills related to fundamental accounting or basic marketing practices. Such skills can be acquired in economics courses. On the other hand, if the student wants to be a personnel manager, the technical skills needed would range from interviewing techniques to testing methodology. These skills can be acquired in psychology courses (clinical, tests & measurement, etc.).

Conceptual skills have to do with an understanding of "the big picture." The individual must have an understanding of where his or her function fits within and relates to other functions in the organization. Without this understanding, the individual operates in a vacuum and can become easily disenchanted with his/her career objective. Such conceptual skills can be developed in a variety of advanced courses in psychology involving the integration of many different theoretical viewpoints.

Human skills involve an understanding of human behavior and communication processes. These skills can be acquired in many psychology courses as well as in speech and writing courses.


Successful Intelligence

"To be successfully intelligent is to think well in three different ways: analytically, creatively, and practically." (Sternberg, 1996. p. 127)*

Successfully intelligent people use analytical intelligence. They

- recognize problems early; define them correctly; solve them selectively
- formulate long-range strategies and avoid hasty solutions
- monitor and evaluate decisions and correct errors immediately
- think heuristically; incubate problems; use creative strategies solving them
- recognize limits of rationality; are aware of traps

Successfully intelligent people use creative intelligence. They

- question assumptions and encourage others to do the same
- take sensible risks and permit themselves and others to make mistakes
- allow themselves time to think creatively; seek tasks that allow creativity
- tolerate ambiguity; recognize the importance of person-environment fit
- actively seek out and later become role models
Successfully intelligent people use practical intelligence. They

- use tacit knowledge (informally acquired heuristics) to deal with problems
- are aware that new situations may require different heuristics

Characteristics of successfully intelligent people
Successfully intelligent people:

- are initiators who motivate themselves
- learn to control their impulses; delay gratification
- know when to persevere; seek to surmount personal difficulties
- know how to make the most of their abilities
- translate thought into action; do not procrastinate
- complete tasks and follow through
- are not afraid to risk failure; accept fair blame; reject self-pity
- are independent and focus on goals
- balance analytical, creative and analytical thinking
- possess self-confidence and self-efficacy


The Covert Curriculum

"...those numerous, routine skill-related activities, behaviors, and attitudes that are transacted inside and outside of classrooms. Collectively, they reflect a student's overall work orientation and habits" (p. 52)*

Examples:

- taking organized and legible notes
- listening attentively in class
- increasing your reading speed and comprehension
- maintaining an appointment book/diary
- periodically examining your goals and values
- learning how to cope with stress
- accepting responsibility for your behavior
- working effectively in a group
- learning to learn: the foundation skill on which all others are based
- reading, writing, and computation: technical skills that employers consider basic for entry and advancement
- oral communication and listening: skills that enable people to communicate in their jobs
- problem solving and creative thinking: skills that enable employees to think and act flexibly
- self-esteem, motivation/goal setting, and employability/career development: developmental skills that help people maintain their job and advance
- interpersonal skills, teamwork, and negotiation: skills that enable people to work together in groups
- organizational effectiveness and leadership: the "influencing" skills that help individuals navigate through the organization


Entry Level Positions Obtained by Psychology Majors


Information about the jobs listed below (and hundreds of others, as well) can be found in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco)

Business Area

(A minor in business would be helpful)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>advertising trainee</th>
<th>insurance agent</th>
<th>personnel worker/administrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>administrative assistant</td>
<td>job analyst</td>
<td>public information officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advertising agent</td>
<td>loan officer</td>
<td>public relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>airline reservations clerk</td>
<td>management trainee</td>
<td>sales representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claims specialist</td>
<td>marketing representative</td>
<td>small business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer relations</td>
<td>marketing researcher</td>
<td>store manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employee counselor</td>
<td>media buyer</td>
<td>staff training and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment counselor</td>
<td>occupational analyst</td>
<td>warehouse manager</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Mental Health/Social Services Area**

(A minor in education, criminal justice, a health related field, or sociology would be helpful)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>behavior analyst</th>
<th>director of volunteer services</th>
<th>probation/parole officer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>case worker</td>
<td>drug/substance abuse counselor</td>
<td>program manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child protection worker</td>
<td>employment counselor</td>
<td>rehabilitation advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrections officer</td>
<td>family service worker</td>
<td>residential youth counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counselor aide</td>
<td>group home coordinator</td>
<td>social service director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day care center supervisor</td>
<td>mental retardation unit manager</td>
<td>veterans' advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Positions**

(Various other minors may be helpful when combined with psychology in these fields)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>affirmative action officer</th>
<th>community relations officer</th>
<th>hospital patient service representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>child care worker</td>
<td>college admissions counselor</td>
<td>newspaper reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>congressional aide</td>
<td>director of alumni relations (college)</td>
<td>park and recreation director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical writer</td>
<td>director of fund raising (college)</td>
<td>community recreation worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statistical assistant</td>
<td>fast food restaurant manager</td>
<td>college admissions recruiter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What Can You Do With a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology?

Common Careers With a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

By Kendra Cherry [http://psychology.about.com/od/careersinpsychology/tp/bachelors-psychology-careers.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/careersinpsychology/tp/bachelors-psychology-careers.htm)

While earning a graduate degree is required for many psychology jobs, the fact is that approximately 75% of students who earn a bachelor's degree in psychology do not go to graduate school. According to one study, only about 25% of psychology undergraduates end up working in a field that is closely related to
their major. It is important to remember that a psychology degree can be used in many careers. By carefully planning your future and being aware of the different opportunities that are out there, you can find a career that is perfectly suited to your educational background, skills and personality.

1. **Sales Representatives** – Undergraduate psychology programs help students acquire a wide range of interpersonal skills, which can then be put to use in a number of different sales and marketing positions. Employers value skills such as the ability to speak well and communicate effectively. If you are interested in working in this field, take classes that will improve your understanding of people and human behavior. Courses in social psychology, personality and communications can be especially beneficial.

2. **Advertising Agents** – The art and science of persuasion is a major topic in psychology, which is why advertising is often an ideal career choice for people with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Careers in this field often involve researching the target audience for a product or message and developing advertising materials based on this research. If you are interested in a career in this field, look for ways that you can gain practical experience now. Internships are an excellent way to get experience, find professional mentors and build networking relationships in your chosen field.

3. **Psychiatric Technicians** – While some people with a bachelor's degree in psychology find work in other professions, some choose to work directly in the field of mental health and human services. A few potential job titles in this area include psychiatric technicians, mental health technicians and social work assistants. In most cases, these individuals work directly under the supervision and guidance of a licensed clinical psychologist or social worker. Job duties involve helping patients with basic daily needs, teaching life skills, conducting applied therapy sessions and performing related case management tasks.

4. **Career Counselors** – If you enjoy helping people discover their potential, then working as a career counselor can be a fulfilling choice. This job often involves helping people select a career, assisting those in the process of changing careers or providing vocational rehabilitation to individuals returning to the workforce. Some individuals choose to work with disabled adults who may need skills training, job search help, on-the-job training and regular workplace supervision.

5. **Probation and Parole Officer** – If you are interested in working in the field of criminal justice, you might want to consider a career as a probation or parole officer. Typically hired by local or state governments, probation and parole officers work directly with individuals who have been convicted of criminal offenses. These professionals supervise offenders at home, work and school settings to track behaviors, make recommendations to the courts and coordinate with drug treatment professionals or therapists.

6. **Writers** – Earning a bachelor's degree in psychology generally requires a great deal of writing. After graduation, put those communication skills to work in a writing-related career. Some potential job titles in this area include technical writers, advertising copy writers and newspaper reporters.

7. **Market Researchers** – People working in the field of market research perform a variety of tasks, including conducting interviews, performing opinion polls, collecting data and interpreting results. A bachelor's degree in psychology prepares
students for work in this field by training graduates in statistical and scientific methodologies.

8. Child Care Workers – Another way to utilize your bachelor's degree in psychology is to become a child care worker. One way to work directly in psychology is to become a partial care worker in a mental health setting. Other options include working in a daycare or after-school program, or even opening up your own child care office.

9. Laboratory Assistants – If you have an interest in research and experimental psychology, working as a psychology laboratory assistant could be a great way to put your bachelor's degree to work. Some settings that might employ psychology lab assistants include university psychology programs, government agencies and businesses that study human behavior. Get a leg up on the competition by gaining valuable research experience today. Sign up for a research assistant position at your university, or consider taking an internship in a psych lab.

10. Social Service Specialists – Individuals with a bachelor's degree in psychology can also find career opportunities working in the social services sector for government agencies or non-profits. Such a position might entail helping individuals locate psychological resources in your community, providing counseling services directly to clients and other types of case management.

11. Teachers – Students who also earn a teaching certificate along with their bachelor's degree in psychology can also become teachers. Some graduates may opt to apply their knowledge of psychology indirectly as an elementary or middle-school teacher, while others may choose to teach psychology at the high school level. If you already hold a bachelor's degree in psychology, you might be able to enroll at an accredited teacher education program in order to earn a teaching certificate in your state. Contact your state's board of education to learn more about the requirements and any alternative routes to becoming a credentialed teacher that might be available.