



Psychology Introductory Information

Introduction

Welcome to Psychology!

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes, and includes individual and social, human and animal, normal and abnormal aspects. Most people find psychology intrinsically interesting. Even some knowledge of Psychology is useful in most career paths. Students might consider studying for a Psychology degree if interested in becoming a professional Psychologist in applied areas such as Clinical Psychology, health services, education or organisational settings; lecturing in Psychology in a third-level college; carrying out psychological research in a university or other research centre; or improving their general education by studying an interesting and useful discipline with careers of a more general type in mind, for example, the media, information technology or management.

At first-year level, all students taking Psychology as a subject, regardless of course, will be exposed to the same course content. There are modules in core areas of psychology, such as Developmental Psychology (social, emotional, and physical development across the lifespan); Cognitive Psychology (examining processes such as memory, attention, and perception); Personality Psychology (looking at different theories about why we think and behave the way we do, and whether this is influenced by genes or environment); Social Psychology (the study of how we behave in groups and social settings); and Biological Psychology (focusing on the biology behind our emotions, thoughts, and behaviour). Students will also take a module on Research Methods and Practical Skills in Psychology, which will provide them with essential knowledge on the design, planning, and implementation of psychological research, and making sense of psychological data through specific analyses. Importantly, this module will also give students the practical tools and training to distinguish between good quality and poor quality research, and how findings from psychological research can so easily be misinterpreted and misrepresented.

Psychology options after first year

Although there is no limit on the number of students taking first-year Psychology (typically, approximately 450 students take first-year psychology every year), **the number of students admitted to psychology in Second Year Arts is limited.**

There are two possible routes for taking psychology as a subject from second year onwards (to degree level), which are:

Route 1: BA Psychology

Students admitted to the BA Psychology (CAO Code GY104) will take the subject Psychology in First Arts together with two other subjects. Having passed First Arts successfully, students will study Psychology as a stand-alone subject in Second and Final Arts. Students in this programme study Psychology *only* in their second and third years. There are a further fifteen (15) places on the Denominated programme available to students of the BA Omnibus, who complete Psychology at First Arts and are eligible to transfer to the BA Psychology in Second Arts. Places will be decided on academic merit.

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Route 2: Joint Honours BA with Psychological Studies

Students of the BA Omnibus (CAO Code GY101) who successfully complete *Psychology* at First Arts and achieve psychology results that are ranked in the top 100 in their class, will be offered a place in Second Arts with the subject *Psychological Studies* and **one** other of their subjects that have been passed in First Arts. This means that they will complete a BA Joint Honours degree in, Psychological Studies and History, for example.

In the case of the denominated BA CONNECT programmes (CAO Code GY110, GY111, GY114, GY115, GY119) students may proceed to second arts with the subject *Psychological Studies* (again, providing they meet the criteria to be offered a place) and two other subjects, which have been passed at first arts, in addition to their specialism.

The *Psychological Studies* programme is not a full Psychology degree – since it is a joint honours subject, taken with another Arts subject to degree level, it contains about half the content of a full BA Psychology degree.

Please note: We must limit numbers into all of our second and final year programmes, as our undergraduate programmes are fully accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (Ireland's professional body for Psychology) and this requires that we meet strict criteria, including maintaining specific staff-student ratios.

Why Psychology? What career options will this subject give me?

Globally, Psychology is one of the popular College degree subjects – people are always interested in learning about the causes and consequences of human behaviour. Psychology is always relevant, no matter what is happening in society at any given point in time. Right now, for example, many psychologists are looking at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on levels of anxiety and depression in the general population, and how we can better frame important health messages so that people understand and adhere to public health initiatives (from mask-wearing to reducing numbers of social contacts).

We are often asked about career options in Psychology. With a degree in Psychology, you may choose to specialize in a specific area of Psychology, such as Clinical, Counselling, or Educational Psychology, Sports Psychology, Health Psychology, or Occupational/Organisational Psychology. There is a very wide range of possibilities here. Some graduates choose to work in entirely different domains, such as journalism, business, app development, general research, and many of our graduates have opted for careers with large companies such as Google, Apple, and Amazon. Since Psychology is the science of human behavior, it really is very applicable to so many occupations, and the skills developed while studying psychology are very desirable to employers.

What subject(s) should I take with first-year psychology?

There really is not an 'ideal' companion subject (or subjects) to complement first-year Psychology – we always advise students to pursue what interests them. One person may take Psychology and IT or Mathematics; another may take Psychology and Philosophy, Psychology and English, and so on. There is no 'magic' formula! Pairing certain subjects strategically isn't always the key to success; you are more likely to do well if you are interested in a subject.

Structure of the Programme

The BA Psychology programme offers the following subjects across three years (* = modules taken by students taking Psychological Studies as part of a joint honours degree):

Year 1

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- Cognitive Psychology
- Personality Psychology
- Research Methods and Practical Skills in Psychology
- Social Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Psychology of Learning
- Biological Psychology

(Plus two other subjects are selected from the extensive arts menu).

Year 2

- Developmental Psychology*
- Experimental Psychology
- Qualitative Research Methods
- Biological Psychology*
- Psychology of Learning
- Social Psychology*
- Theories of Personality*
- Perception, Attention and Performance
- Research Methods in Psychology*
- Memory and Cognition*
- Professional Skills in Psychology

Year 3

- Applied Behavioural Analysis*
- Historical and Conceptual Issues in Psychology*
- Psychological Measurement: Theory and Practice
- Advanced Research Methods in Psychology
- Issues in Cognitive Neuroscience
- Health Psychology*
- Forensic, Abnormal and Clinical Psychology*
- Research Project (designed and implemented by the student, under the supervision of a member of staff)

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- *Elective options* in areas of staff speciality, such as: Behavioural Medicine; Paediatric Clinical Behavioural Interventions; Applied Developmental Psychology; Neuropsychology; Positive Psychology; Human Sexuality and Relational Frame Theory (these elective offerings may change year-to-year)*

Online Learning and Teaching

For 2020-2021, the majority of First-Year Psychology lectures and tutorials will take place online, with one set of lectures (delivered by Psychology Lecturers) being delivered on campus. We will provide weekly check-ins and 'office hours' for students who want to speak with us via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We will also ask students to engage with online discussion boards and other interactive aspects of the course. Student wellbeing is a top priority, and we are keen to keep as linked in with our students as possible.

It is advisable that students engage completely with Psychology lectures, tutorials, and other activities, as timetabled for each week. Keeping an eye on competing assignment deadlines for different subjects is also important. We will post critical guides and resources on Blackboard, and provide you with important skills (e.g., scientific writing in psychology, reading psychological literature) that will be crucial to your progress in first year.

Assessments

Psychology will be 100% continuously assessed for the 2020/2021 academic year. In each Semester, students must complete approximately three major assignments, ranging from 1200-2000 words in length. These assignments are normally in essay or report format, written using an objective, scientific style that is specific to Psychology. All first-year assignments are designed to assess all of the key learning outcomes of first-year psychology modules.

Live Introductory Question and Answer Session for First-Year Psychology

The first-year Psychology Team will be on board to answer any questions you may have about the course, focusing in particular on questions that aim to help you understand more about Psychology generally; the workload and expectations for first-year Psychology; subject choices in first Arts; and your future career options with a *Psychology BA* or joint *BA with Psychological Studies* degree.

The live Q&A sessions will take place on Wednesday 23rd September 9.00 – 10.00 am, and Friday 25th September, 3.00 – 4.00 pm.

Important Links

NUIG Psychology webpage: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/psychology/>

First-Year Psychology webpage (please check regularly for updates to timetables and additional information): <http://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/psychology/undergraduate-programmes/first-year/>

The Psychological Society of Ireland: <https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/>