

The Ultimate Guide to Studying Psychology





WHAT'S INSIDE

A career in psychology can be incredibly rewarding, offering the opportunity to impact the inner workings of the society in which we live. Covering countless aspects of our everyday life, from why we feel emotions to how we learn language, it's no wonder that psychology consistently ranks as the second most popular subject to study at university in the UK.

Over the past decade, we've been running [residential Psychology summer schools in Oxford](#), as well as [online courses](#) and [internships](#).

There isn't a magic formula to secure a place on a top psychology degree, but we can help you to understand each step of the application process and give you some tips to maximise your chances of success.

Although it can feel like a long journey, getting into university is a fairly uniform process, with most of the top universities in the UK expecting applicants to follow the same steps. In this guide, you'll find:

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Let's take a look at each of these steps in detail so you can feel a little more confident about getting into the university of your choice.





About the Authors

Oxford Scholastica collaborates closely with university students and recent graduates to offer first-hand insights into what it's really like to study your subject at degree level.

We've worked with a current psychology student at the University of Oxford and a psychology graduate from the University of Gloucester to bring you the tips they wish they'd known before they applied.

Allow us to introduce you to...

Kylie

Second-year psychology student at the University of Oxford

Kylie is a second-year student reading for a BA in Experimental Psychology at Queen's College, University of Oxford. She's currently most interested in developmental and cognitive psychology, and how these can be applied to the education system. Beyond her degree, she's also fascinated by computing and enjoys playing the piano.



Jonathan

Psychology graduate of the University of Gloucester

Jonathan studied criminology and psychology at the University of Gloucester. His particular interests include the psychology of loneliness, social media usage among Gen Z, and the relationship between psychopathy and white collar crime.





Choosing Your Degree

If you're applying to study psychology at a UK university, you will have to follow the UCAS application process.

With UCAS, you only have five slots to fill so you'll need to narrow down the type of psychology degree you'd like to study and the institution you'd like to study at.

In this section, you'll find a comprehensive overview of all the key information you need to know when considering which degree and university is right for you.



Course Structure

The Course

There's a definite tendency to discuss psychology as a single unified subject with a limited range of course options. It's easy to assume that the degree is a one-way path to your dream career, but there's actually a wide variety of options on offer when you choose to pursue psychology at university.

Whilst it is true that some universities offer only 'pure' undergraduate psychology courses, there are plenty of institutions offering a range of psychology degree options. As you spend more time exploring the options on offer, you'll find that psychology is a subject that lends itself incredibly well to an interdisciplinary approach and a varied course structure.

In the UK, many universities offer joint honours courses which allow you to study multiple subjects that interest you. You'll also be able to choose between a taught, research or applied approach depending on the university.



Single or Joint Honours?

Single honours degrees see you study pure psychology for three or four years, with the option to specialise within the subject as you progress. On the other hand, joint honours courses offer you the chance to combine two or more subjects throughout your degree.

A major/minor honours course in the UK, also known as a 'with' degree, is very similar to the system used by US colleges. You pick one subject to study extensively and then take occasional modules from a second (and sometimes a third) subject. Oftentimes, the additional subject(s) will be closely related to psychology but it's not a requirement. This is a great option if you want to pursue a career in a specific psychological field or you'd like to gain experience in another subject. For example, a BA Psychology with Finance degree would be a brilliant foundation for a career in occupational psychology.

Dual honours courses, or 'and' degrees, combine core and optional modules from both of your chosen subjects, resulting in a relatively even split between the two. This is perfect if you're looking to specialise in one field in particular or if you want a balance between two complementary subjects. A common example of this is a BSc degree in Psychology and Neuroscience.



Course Structure

Taught, Research or Applied?

At undergraduate level, taught courses are the standard for a psychology degree. They are a typical combination of lectures on core topics and seminars exploring more practical or niche areas. Depending on if you're studying a single or joint honours course, you may also have lab sessions on your timetable. All taught courses will differ depending on the university, so be sure to research the content, structure and assessment methods of each.

Research and applied psychology courses are less common at undergraduate level. These approaches involve a lot more time in lab or field settings, respectively. You'll still have lectures, but they'll complement your practical learning rather than being the main event of your week. You'll likely be expected to produce a piece of research or a portfolio as your main assessment each semester.

We highly recommend seeking out 'day-in-the-life' style content online to gain a clearer understanding of life as a psychology student at different universities.



BPS Accreditation

'BPS accreditation' is a term you'll become very familiar with if you choose to study psychology in the UK. In short, it means that the British Psychological Society has ensured 'that quality standards in education and training are met' by the degree.

A BPS-accredited undergraduate degree opens the door to nearly every psychology postgraduate degree. It also determines which careers you can and cannot pursue once you graduate. This might sound stressful, but most psychology courses at top UK universities are BPS accredited and there are plenty of ways to convert your course at any point during or after your degree. Still, it's definitely worth understanding as a prospective psychology student, especially if you're planning to study a joint honours course.

Whether BPS accreditation is essential for you is largely dependent on the career path you plan to pursue. If you're unsure about your future career after graduation, it's a good idea to find a BPS-accredited course to keep your options open. However, you can always convert later if necessary.



University Options



Once you've got a better idea of the type of psychology degree you'd like to study, it's time to decide which universities you want to apply to. While this will be determined to some extent by which universities offer your specific type of course, you'll have plenty of options to choose from to craft your perfect university experience.

Choosing Your Perfect University

There are 165 higher education institutions in the UK and 144 of them offer some kind of psychology degree. The sheer volume of options makes sifting through stacks of prospectuses and course pages quite a feat.

Many people start the process by browsing lists of university rankings. While this can be a good place to begin, focusing heavily on league tables might cause you to overlook a university that isn't in the top twenty, but is perfect for you in many ways.

Perhaps a better place to start is to cross out any universities that you definitely don't want to study at. You'll be surprised at how many universities this tactic can rule out, so consider the following:

Location

Perhaps you hate the cold and can't imagine yourself living in Scotland. Maybe you want to live near the sea to help ease homesickness. Whatever it is that's important to you, make sure you choose a university location that can feel like home.

City vs Campus

This one can be difficult to gauge without visiting a few universities in person. City universities tend to have buildings scattered around the city, whereas campus universities are self-contained and may be slightly further from the city centre.

Employment Rate

Many league tables rank universities on this metric, and while a high employment rate won't guarantee you'll walk into your dream job after graduation, it's definitely worth considering. Bear in mind that the rating includes all types of employment or further study; it's by no means the number of people working as psychologists.

Staff to Student Ratio

Another metric on university league tables, the staff to student ratio can really shape your academic experience. This number for your subject will give you a broad idea of what to expect from your class sizes and how easy it'll be to connect with tutors during office hours.

Student Satisfaction

The student satisfaction rating can tell you a lot about what student life is really like at a university, rather than what the press team want you to think it's like. Poor scores might suggest a lack of a community within the university, a need for more accessible academic support or a poor attitude towards student welfare. It's subjective of course, but it's an important consideration nonetheless.

Activity Options

Maybe you can't wait to get to university for the nightlife, or you love hiking and want access to some picturesque scenery on the weekends, or you enjoy the theatre and need more than one local playhouse to keep you happy. These are all important things to consider when choosing your university. You can find out which activities are on offer by exploring the local area online or in person.



University Options



Make the Most of Open Days

Now that you've narrowed down your choice of universities, it's time for you to decide which five to include on your UCAS application.

Open days are a really useful opportunity to see what life studying psychology at any given university might be like. Visiting a university in person allows you to really understand what makes it unique and how its degree offerings differ from others. Open days are also an excellent chance to find out any final bits of information you might need in order to make a confident decision.

As you're planning for open days, make sure you know what your schedule for each day will look like, and which parts of university life you want to explore or learn more about in each place.

Explore Beyond the Schedule

The activities organised by the psychology department at each university will likely take up the bulk of your time during an open day. They're sure to give you lots of valuable insights on what the day-to-day academics of the degree will look like, but it's important to remember that you won't spend all your time studying during your degree.

When attending an open day, it's wise to explore beyond the academics. From discovering local cafés and parks to testing out a local gym, the options are endless so make the most of any free time you have.

Socialise, Socialise, Socialise!

You should also do your best to socialise with other applicants on the day, as well as the current students and staff who are on hand to answer your questions. We know it can be hard and you might not always feel up to it, but it really is an excellent opportunity. Not only will it give you an advantage when you start your degree, as you'll already recognise some people, but it will also help you make the most of the open day. Everyone will have different experiences, questions and knowledge to share, and will be more than happy to answer any clarifying or follow-up questions you might have.

Choosing a university is a difficult decision and the transition from school pupil to undergraduate student can sometimes be a difficult one. University open days are a wonderful opportunity to make new friends, engage with activities planned by the university and explore a new city. It's an exciting step into student and adult life, so try to relax and enjoy the experience!





Gaining Work Experience

Gaining relevant work experience is an excellent way to demonstrate your interest in psychology and enhance your university application. It can also help you gain a clearer understanding of the subject and what a career in the field entails.

Given the confidential nature of the profession, it can be difficult to gain experience in psychology prior to university. However, universities recognise this difficulty and will be appreciative of any relevant experience you've obtained.



Types of Experience



Shadowing

This involves observing a professional in order to gain a better understanding of their role. This is a more passive form of work experience, but it can be a great first step to gaining some psychology-specific experience and giving you an insight into what a particular career is really like.

This type of experience is rarely advertised, but being proactive and approaching individuals or organisations you're interested in can help you secure a hidden opportunity. For advice on how to do this, check out [this Prospects article](#).



Internships

An internship is a period of work experience that lasts for a fixed term. You can gain psychology experience by interning with an organisation involved in psychological research.

For in-person opportunities, [In2scienceUK](#) and the [Nuffield Foundation](#) run excellent internships and programmes for young people.

If you would prefer online work experience, our [Psychology & Neuroscience internships](#) offer the exciting opportunity to co-author an academic research paper for publication.



Extracurricular Activities

You may be able to get some relevant experience via extracurricular activities too. Acting as a mentor to younger students or becoming an anti-bullying ambassador in your school are both great examples of how to apply your psychology knowledge and skills to have a positive impact within your existing community.



Voluntary Work

Volunteering can be a great way to gain some extra experience over a longer period of time. It's important to consider the time commitments for volunteering opportunities, as some may be difficult to juggle alongside your academic studies.

You could consider volunteering for a mental health charity, such as Mind, Rethink or the Samaritans. These opportunities may be age-restricted due to the confidential nature of the work, so you could also try volunteering in these charities' shops or fundraising for them directly. Some NHS Foundation Trusts also run relevant volunteering programmes.



Types of Experience



Independent Qualifications

Another way to gain psychology experience and increase your subject knowledge is to take part in a super-curricular course. For example, our [Psychology & Neuroscience summer course](#) allows you to put theory into practice by designing your own research study. Students also receive a Certificate of Achievement and personalised Letter of Recommendation upon completion to include in their university applications.

If you're looking for a course that contributes to a formal qualification, you can also browse part-time psychology and counselling courses run by local colleges or online accreditors, such as the [Online Learning College](#).



Part-time Paid Work

This is probably one of the more difficult ways of getting psychology-specific experience before university. Due to the nature of the work, the majority of roles in the field are protected, however any kind of part-time work is useful for developing transferable skills and gaining insight into the professional world, which is always beneficial.

Suffice to say, whichever route you take to gain psychology experience, you'll need to practise your time-management skills and maintain a healthy work-life balance alongside your academic responsibilities – all of which will ultimately help you to stand out when applying to university.



Things to Remember



Gaining work experience to boost your university application is less about getting as many placements as you can, and more about proving you've taken steps to familiarise yourself with the realities of a career in the psychological field. The field can be a challenging one and admissions teams want to make sure you're certain it's the right path for you.

Work experience is also instrumental in helping you consider which field you would like to specialise in. If you attend one work experience placement that you really don't enjoy, that doesn't necessarily mean psychology isn't for you. It could just be that that particular role isn't your ideal profession.

A long list of placements tells the admissions team you have the connections or resources to gain access to lots of opportunities. Explaining what you learnt from the most impactful placements, as well as what you didn't enjoy about them, is far more valuable and informative.

Key Points:

- Take notes at the end of each session you take part in. Write down the tasks you completed, the things you learnt and how you felt about each aspect of the experience. These notes will be a valuable resource when you come to write your personal statement and prepare for interviews.
- It's okay not to enjoy something. Finding one aspect of the field tough, tedious or unpleasant doesn't mean you're not right for the field. Be honest with yourself and try to find experience in another area.
- It's also okay to change your mind. If you try a range of different placements across different areas and you don't enjoy any of them, it's okay to decide it isn't the field for you. Look into research roles – or other careers entirely.
- Be sure to factor in rest. If you spend your whole summer break gaining work experience, you'll be too tired to concentrate when you start classes again. Remember to take breaks, do things you enjoy and look after yourself while on your quest for work experience.





UCAS Application Process

UCAS is the centralised application system for all UK universities. This means that you only need to fill in one application on the UCAS website and they'll send it off to each of your selected universities.

The first thing to check is the deadline for your UCAS application. As a psychology applicant, the deadline is usually late January unless you're applying to the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, in which case it's usually mid-October.

Regardless of your deadline, it's a good idea to complete your application in good time so you can focus on your studies as exam season draws closer.

In this section, you'll find a step-by-step guide of the UCAS application process so you'll know what to expect at each stage.



Starting the Process

1

Register with UCAS & Input Your Details

To start a UCAS application, you need to register on the UCAS website. This is simply setting up an online account by entering your full name, email address and creating a password, as well as answering some security questions.

Once you've registered with UCAS, you can start completing your application. The first section is a form which asks for details such as your residency status, parental education and how you plan to fund your studies.

2

Add Your Education & Employment History

The next section of the UCAS application involves adding all your qualifications from secondary school onwards. Make sure to include all your qualifications and check that these tally with any specific requirements listed on university websites. For example, although most universities do not require prospective psychology students to have studied the subject before, some may require you to have studied a science at secondary school. If you've completed any relevant extracurricular qualifications, include these too.

As for your employment history, this is just for paid positions you might have held. You're not expected to have paid experience at this point and any unpaid work experience can be included in your personal statement.

3

Select Your Course Choices

This is where you enter your university course choices. As a psychology applicant, this will likely just be up to five psychology courses at different universities, potentially with some different course structures (single/joint honours; taught/research approach etc). You can search for psychology courses on the [UCAS website](#), as well as by browsing individual university websites. If you've read this far, you may already have a good idea of the type of course you're looking to study.



Your Personal Statement

The Basics

The next step of the UCAS application process is submitting your personal statement (no more than 4,000 characters). Your statement will need to be structured as answers to the following questions:

- 1 Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- 2 How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?
- 3 What else have you done to prepare outside of education and why are these experiences helpful?

The key is to demonstrate why you want to study psychology. Universities want to see that you have a real interest in the field, that you've explored the content, completed your own independent learning and reached your own conclusions.

Quality over Quantity

When it comes to planning a personal statement, most students find it difficult knowing where to start. You'll naturally be inclined to include every relevant project and article you've engaged with, however quality is more important than quantity.

It can be useful to start by noting down all of your relevant academic projects, work experience and further reading. Once you have all your thoughts on the page, it's a lot easier to organise them. Next, you can choose what to include and expand upon, what to scrap or only reference in passing, and decide how to order your points in an overall structure.

Remember, you can edit your UCAS personal statement as many times as you need, so getting something down on the page is the most important thing to start with.



Your Personal Statement



Avoid Overused Stereotypes

A key element of any personal statement is that it must be personal to you as an individual. It should reflect your interests, your experiences and your motivations. Yet there are some stylistic things to bear in mind.

Try to avoid using clichés or stereotypes and opt instead for statements backed up by specific evidence. For example, rather than saying you're an empathetic person, describe an experience that demonstrates your empathy and then link that quality to your potential to study psychology. Similarly with any work experience or extracurricular activity, go into detail about the knowledge you've learnt and the skills you've gained.

It's Not Just About Psychology

You're applying for a psychology degree so it's only natural for your UCAS personal statement to primarily refer to psychology. However, that's not to say every aspect needs to link to psychology-specific knowledge or experience.

It's also important to write about the transferable skills you've developed from your academics and extracurriculars. This might include skills in essay writing, leadership, teamwork, communication, time management or goal setting.

Choosing the most relevant of these will give you a really strong foundation for an impressive personal statement.

Edit as Much as Possible

Once you've got a first draft, put it to one side for a day or two before starting the editing process. Sometimes things that seemed particularly relevant while you were writing it will seem less relevant upon review.

Next, send it to any friends, teachers, family members or mentors who are willing to help. Their feedback will almost always be helpful in your next few rounds of edits.

After editing, read through it with a critical eye. Which bits are your favourite and why? Are there any sentences that don't really add anything? Make any adjustments, proofread it one final time and you'll be ready to upload it to UCAS.

Personal Statement Key Facts

- ✓ No more than 4,000 characters, including spaces
- ✓ You can only write one statement, not different ones for each course or university
- ✓ Divided into three separate questions (minimum 350 characters per question)
- ✓ It's all about you, so let your personality shine through!



Completing the Process



Once you've uploaded your personal statement, there are three final steps to completing your UCAS application: reviewing your answers, securing your reference and paying the application fee.

✓ Review

When you've filled out all of the previous sections, you'll be presented with a review page. This will display your answers from each section of the application. Check each answer carefully, making sure your responses are accurate, and don't forget to have one final check of your personal statement for any typos, spelling errors or grammatical mistakes.

✓ Secure Your Reference

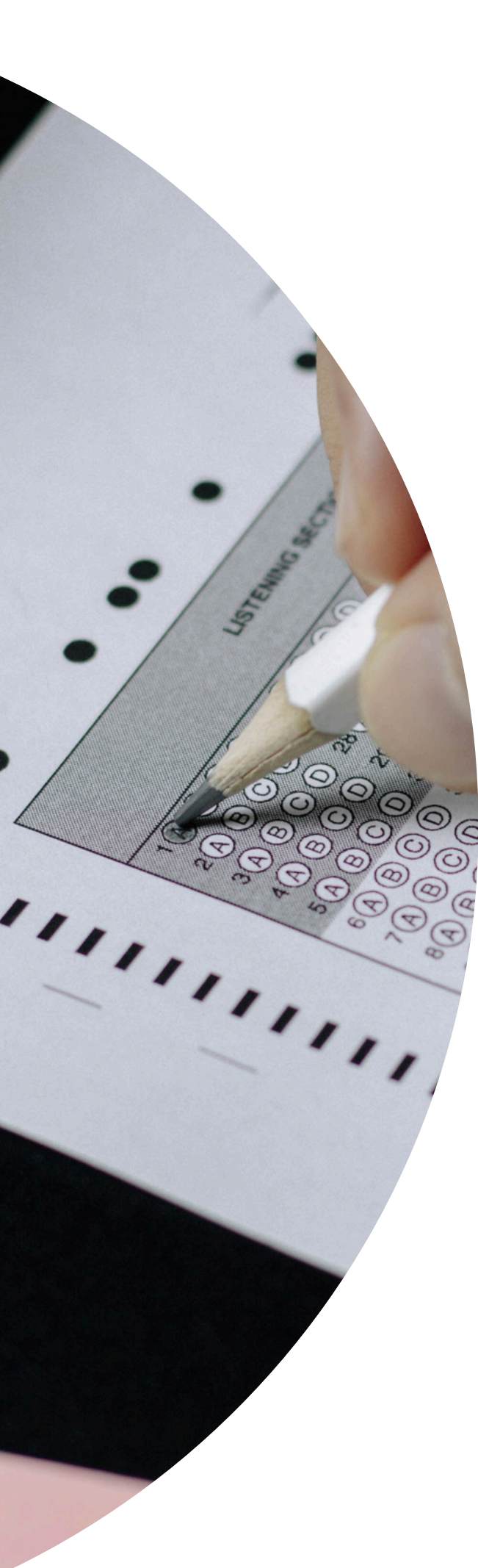
The final part of the UCAS application is the reference section. This is typically added to your application by your chosen teacher at school. Make sure the person providing your reference is aware of the deadline and submits it to UCAS on time.

✓ Pay the Application Fee

Finally, you'll be asked to pay the application fee. This will differ depending on the number of courses you're applying to, but is typically around £25. Once you've paid this fee, your referee will be able to add your reference to your UCAS account and your application will then be sent to your chosen universities.

Once you've submitted your UCAS application, you can keep track of any responses from your universities via UCAS Track. You'll get email notifications if there are any updates to your application, so once it's submitted you can turn your attention to exam preparation.





Entrance Exams

You'll be glad to learn that most UK universities do not require you to sit a psychology entrance exam as part of your application. However, some psychology departments may employ other informal assessment methods as part of their application process, so it's wise to double check the entry requirements.

The University of Oxford is an exception to this general rule and does ask psychology applicants to complete the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). The TSA is not a psychology-specific exam; it's required for other courses too so the test doesn't assess subject-specific knowledge. The aim of the TSA is to assess your ability to solve problems, think critically, and organise and communicate your ideas effectively.



ENTRANCE EXAMS

The TSA

All psychology applicants for the University of Oxford, regardless of their specific course or college, are required to sit the TSA before being shortlisted for an interview. This means that exam performance will influence shortlisting decisions, making the TSA a particularly intimidating part of the admissions process.

Our main piece of advice is to prepare properly, understand how the test works and try to relax. Remember that admissions officers will also have your personal statement, predicted grades and reference, so you still have plenty of opportunities to impress if the exam doesn't quite go to plan.

The TSA is usually sat at the start of November, and applicants need to register by mid-October. These dates vary each year, so make sure to check the exact dates.

Structure

The TSA has two main sections but psychology students will only be asked to sit Section 1. This section aims to assess your skills in problem solving and critical thinking by asking 50 multiple-choice questions.



Top Tips for the TSA

Entrance exams can be stressful, but with the correct mindset, knowing what to expect and lots of practice, you can feel confident and prepared on exam day.

✓ Create a study schedule

Applying to university can be a particularly hectic time, so creating a study schedule and allocating some time each week can help you to prioritise preparing for the TSA.

✓ Make use of past papers

Completing practice papers is arguably the best way of preparing for any exam and the TSA is no exception. Practising with past papers will help you get better accustomed with both the time constraints and the types of questions that appear in the TSA.

✓ Chat with other applicants

Whether you've got classmates at school also preparing for the TSA or you seek out other applicants on student forums, discussing practice questions and asking for advice from others is an excellent way to prepare – and to feel less alone in the process!

✓ Answer every question on exam day

On the day of the exam, try and answer every question on the test. The TSA doesn't use negative marking, meaning you gain points for right answers and you don't lose points for incorrect attempts, so make an educated guess. Similarly, don't waste time on a question you can't answer; take your best guess and move on to the next one.





Interviews

So, you've submitted your UCAS application, you're studying hard for your exams and you've just found out that at least one university would like to interview you.

Firstly, congratulations! Your application has caught their eye and they think you could be a great fit for their psychology course.

This section covers some of the key questions you might be asked so you can start preparing for your admissions interview. However, the number one thing to remember is to be honest and be yourself. The interview works both ways; the interviewer wants to make sure you're right for their psychology degree, but you also want to make sure their psychology degree is right for you.

So, with that in mind...



Initial Questions



‘Why Did You Choose to Study Psychology?’

This is the one question that nearly every psychology applicant will be asked at interview. It gives you the opportunity to expand on your personal statement and show off your personal motivations for applying to the course.

There really is no model answer for this question as it's so personal to you. Just try to expand upon what you wrote in your personal statement and keep your answer concise. You want to budget 20-30 minutes for the entire interview when practising your answers, and the majority of this time should be dedicated to the material and theoretical questions.

The Personal Question

Much like the first question, this is another standard interview question designed to ease you into the process and gauge how well you'll fit in at the university.

It's likely that you'll be asked about your hobbies, interests or wider psychology reading, but whatever question is asked, the most important thing you can do is be honest with your answer.

Offer your own personal insights into why you chose that particular hobby or resource. Make sure you also relate your answer back to your desire to study psychology in a concise and convincing way.

The ‘Dinner Table Debate’

Ultimately, practice is key. The best way to be concise in your answers is to have lots of experience talking about similar topics with concision.

At the heart of the psychology interview is the tradition of the ‘dinner table debate’. Debating with your friends and family in an environment where you're free to trip over yourself, and where you can take your time to respond to challenging definitions or rebuttals to your arguments, is a perfect starting point in preparing for your psychology interview.

We'd also recommend researching any areas of interest that arise from these debates. The more material you're familiar with, the more capable you'll feel when presented with a challenging interview question.



Core Questions

The Material Questions

For the material questions, you'll be given two series of data points: one you've had time to look at before the interview (the seen material) and one you haven't seen before (the unseen material).

You'll then be asked one or two questions on each. In both cases, the approach is the same but with the seen material, you'll be expected to spend more time linking the data to your wider reading and less time interpreting it.

How to Answer

Firstly, take a minute to thoroughly examine the data you've been given. The more comfortable you are with what the data shows, the more confident you'll be in your answer. This is especially helpful if the interviewer challenges you on your interpretations, which they almost certainly will.

Once you're sure you know what the data shows, spend a moment thinking through the key points you're going to highlight, what the reasons for these trends or anomalies could be, and how these reasons relate to your wider psychology knowledge.

Next up is to answer the interviewer's questions as best you can. Remember, if at any point you need to look at the data again, whether to reference it or double check something you think you might have missed, just let the interviewer know.

Similarly, if the unseen material is about something you aren't familiar with, inform the interviewer that it's a topic you'll need to research more before you feel comfortable with your answer. Then, offer the best interpretation you can. It's a mark of maturity, not of failure, to admit when you don't know enough about a topic to hold a firm opinion and it could result in a valuable discussion. If nothing else, it will show your willingness to learn more about psychology, which in itself is a necessary trait for a psychology degree.

The Theoretical Questions

From being asked what your opinion is on spontaneous human combustion to debating whether a thermostat can think, admissions tutors like to ask the most bizarre questions during psychology interviews. Despite their obscure nature, there's little difference between these questions and the others you've already answered.

How to Answer

So, how do you actually answer these questions? It's unlikely you'll have prepared answers to the exact questions the interviewer asks, so this is a prime opportunity to draw on all your relevant research.

Take each question in turn and think about what you already know about that topic. You aren't being assessed on your knowledge here, rather your ability to think on the spot, so keep things simple but connected.

It isn't unusual for the theoretical questions to be asked towards the end of the interview, so draw on all the material you've used throughout the previous questions to end strong.





Getting the Grades

So, you've submitted your UCAS application, maybe completed an interview or two, and you've received an offer – congratulations!

The final hurdle standing between you and university is getting the grades to meet your offer. Top UK universities tend to require high grades, so whether you're aiming for three As at A-level or a 39 in your IB, the hard work is far from over.

We've put together some of our top study tips to help you secure your offer and your dream place studying psychology.



Tips & Tricks

If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It!

If you already have a study method you enjoy that's currently getting you the grades you want, you don't need to change a thing!

It can be tempting to try out something new and sometimes that can lead to really positive results. However, if you're already approaching exam season, now is not the time to start experimenting with a new process. You might be able to add a couple of the following tips to your existing method, but don't feel like you have to change it up for the sake of it.



Notes & Revision

Lots of people write pages and pages of notes only to abandon them at the bottom of a bag, in a drawer or in a pile on a desk.

Copying up your notes a couple of weeks after the lesson can be a really effective way of consolidating the information you've learnt. When your notes are neatly formatted, it's easier to use them as a revision resource. You're also likely to absorb more information when you're reading something written in your own words and style.



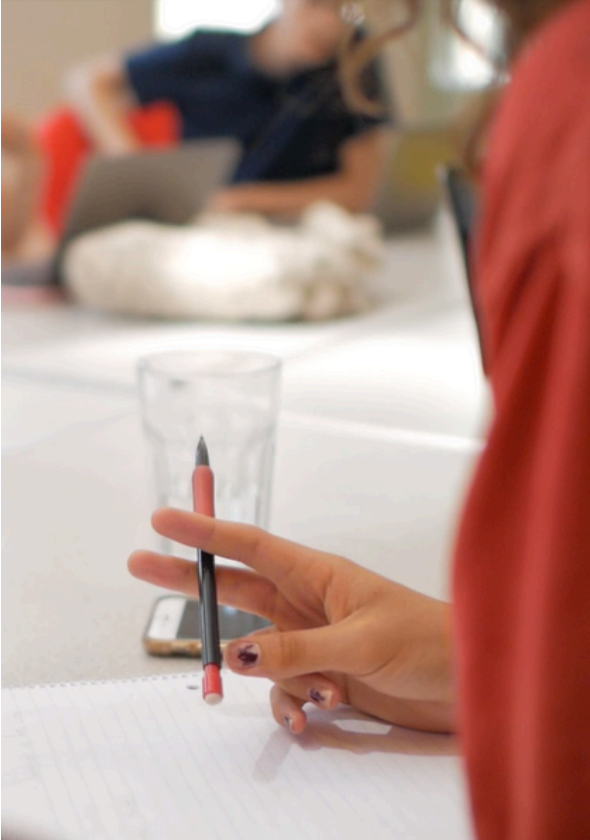
Flashcards

Research into the psychology of learning has found that testing is a much more effective revision method than simple review. Similarly, testing yourself regularly over a longer time period tends to yield better results than consecutive testing over a shorter time period.

Flashcards are particularly useful for testing yourself on key terms or psychological theories and can be easily used on the go. [Quizlet](#) is an especially helpful tool as it eliminates the need for physical cards. You can also search public decks to find the subjects you want to learn about, so you don't even need to make them yourself.



Tips & Tricks



Positivity over Negativity

By telling yourself you're able to achieve whatever you put your mind to, you're much more likely to believe it and stay motivated to put in the work. This is also helpful before an exam to keep your confidence high and your nerves at bay.

We also recommend rewarding yourself when you complete a revision task rather than punishing yourself when you don't get as much done as you'd hoped to. Your journey to university will be much more enjoyable if you're driven by the inspiration to succeed rather than the fear of failure!

Past Papers Are Your Friend

Cramming content alone likely won't be enough to help you feel calm and collected on exam day. You need to be able to apply everything you've learnt under exam conditions.

Completing past papers on a regular basis is an excellent way to practise applying your knowledge in a controlled setting. Begin by working through a past paper at your own pace, question by question, in your typical study environment. Then, as exam season draws closer, you can introduce exam conditions and start timing yourself. Eventually, you can work up to completing entire past papers in simulated exam conditions.

The more familiar you are with past papers, the more relaxed you'll feel when it comes to the real thing.



Unfortunately, we don't have a magic formula that will guarantee you meet your offer for your dream psychology course. However, if you perfect your study technique after submitting a successful application and passing the interview stage, you've put yourself in the best possible position. Put in the work and believe in your own capabilities, and we're confident you'll do wonderfully.



BEFORE YOU GO...

We hope you've found the Ultimate Guide to Studying Psychology both interesting and useful. You're now well prepared to take the next steps on your journey to becoming a psychologist.

We've put together a checklist to help you stay on track and submit a standout application to university. You can print or save this page and tick off the steps as you complete them.

Best of luck with your applications!

Jonathan, Kylie and the whole Oxford Scholastica team

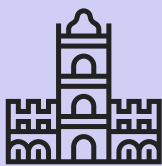
The Ultimate Checklist to Studying Psychology

- ☒ Read Oxford Scholastica's Ultimate Guide to Studying Psychology
- ☐ Take the [Oxford Scholastica Career Test](#)
- ☐ Complete the [Oxford Scholastica University Preparation Report](#)
- ☐ Browse the [UCAS website](#) to see which psychology courses pique your interest
- ☐ Secure [relevant work experience](#) and seek out volunteering opportunities
- ☐ Attend open days at universities you're interested in
- ☐ Write and perfect your UCAS personal statement
- ☐ Complete your UCAS application
- ☐ Prepare for your admissions interview and the TSA examination (if relevant)
- ☐ Accept (or decline) your university offers
- ☐ Study for and sit your A-level, IB or equivalent exams
- ☐ Accept your place and prepare for life as a psychology student. Congratulations!





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