

What do social scientists do?

Psychology

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind, brain and behaviour. Psychology deals with all aspects of behaviour and the thoughts, feelings and motivations that underlie such behaviour.

Psychologists work in many different areas of society and are concerned with practical problems (such as gambling and criminal behaviour, discrimination and aggression), tackling health-related issues (such as addiction and treatment) and reducing educational problems (such as learning disabilities). Professional psychologists apply scientific methods to understand human behaviour by observing, measuring, testing, and statistically analysing the results to determine whether their findings can be used as reliable evidence. The scientific knowledge gained by this research is then used by practising psychologists (those dealing with clients) in a wide range of settings (clinical, counselling, forensic, occupational, sports and exercise, child and educational, and so on).

There is increasing recognition that mental health and wellbeing has an impact on physical health and that psychological insights can help us in our personal and professional relationships and activities.

Psychology covers, amongst others, the following main topic areas:

- Biological
- Cognitive
- Developmental
- Personality
- Social
- Research methodology

Career Possibilities

Psychology provides a significant set of highly transferrable skills, including verbal, visual and written communication, problem solving, numeracy and statistical skills, critical and creative thinking, decision making, organisational skills, team-working and IT skills. Just under a fifth of psychology graduates work as professional psychologists, and many go into the following sectors:

- Public Service
 - Health service
 - Education
 - The civil service
 - The armed forces
- Commerce
 - Market research

- Personnel management
- Food and drink industry
- Pharmaceutical industry

Learned Societies and a selection of ESRC research

- [The British Psychological Society](#)
- [The Experimental Psychology Society](#)

- [National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles \(NATSAL\)](#)
- [Workplace employment relations survey \(WERS\)](#)
- [Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre \(DCAL\)](#)
- [Language-Based Area Studies \(LBAS\) Centre](#)
- [Emotion Regulation of Others and Self: A Collaborative Research Network](#)
- [Gender Equality Network](#)

Please see [this pdf for a full list of ESRC investments](#)