

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2024/2025

Boston University
Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences
64 Cummington Mall
Boston, MA 02215
<http://www.bu.edu/psych/>

This guide is intended to aid you in finding your way around the Department. The official statement of requirements and regulations can be found in the Boston University Undergraduate Programs Bulletin.

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DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY

Email addresses for all faculty & staff
can be found on the BU website at
<http://www.bu.edu/directory/>

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DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY (cont.)

Program Affiliation:

B = Brain, Behavior & Cognition

C = Clinical

DS = Developmental Science

LEC = Full-Time Lecturer

LOA = Leave of Absence

SAB = On Sabbatical

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CLINICAL & RESEARCH
FACULTY

<u>FACULTY</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>ROOM</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
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II. THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE CURRICULUM

Psychology is the science of human behavior and mental processes. Psychology uses scientific methods to describe, predict, understand and explain human behavior. Combined with appropriate related courses, the major provides students with an undergraduate background for entrance into graduate programs in psychology, medicine, law and other professions. In addition, it provides a broad, basic liberal arts background for a wide range of other pursuits.

III. ADVISING

Advisors answer questions about requirements, procedures for registration and completion of the major. In addition, advisors discuss other issues with advisees including choice of courses, the structure and design of individuals' majors, sources of help for various kinds of difficulties in the college community, long term career and educational plans, and relevant research opportunities. The advising relationship is intended to enrich and personalize the experience of both faculty and students.

GENERAL ADVISING

- All psychology majors are assigned an advisor when they declare the psychology major and will be sent an email with the name and contact information of their advisors.
- Students can view their advisor assignments on MyBU under Academics by clicking on "Advisor Information".
- If a student's advisor takes a leave or sabbatical and is not available for advising during a particular semester, the student will be sent an email informing him or her of the new advisor's name and contact information.
- During the school year, students must contact their advisors via email to schedule appointments. For information about how to make an appointment with an advisor during the registration period, please see the "Registration" section below.

ADVISING FOR REGISTRATION

- Dr. Joanne Hebden Palfai, Director of Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Studies, will send an email to all majors well before the registration period, each semester, outlining the registration/advising process.
- Before scheduling an advising appointment, all new psychology majors (e.g., freshmen, transfer students, students who have changed majors) are required to attend a departmental orientation session conducted by Dr. Palfai. All new majors will be sent an email before the registration period with specific information on these sessions.
- During each registration period, in the fall and spring, students will need to email their advisors their course selections, and also attach a copy of their Degree Progress Report as a PDF (available from MyBU).

Students who would like to change advisors need to send an email to psych@bu.edu requesting the change. The availability of time in the advisors' schedules is an important consideration in these assignments.

IV. THE PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

Requirements: All students must obtain a grade of C or higher in all principal and required related courses.

1. Prerequisite: PS 101, or a score of 4 or 5 on the AP Psychology Exam.
2. Design and Statistical Requirement:
 - PS 211 (Experimental Design in Psychology)
 - PS/NE 212 (Introduction to MATLAB Programming for Research)
 - MA115 (Statistics I – prerequisite for MA116) and MA116 (Statistics II) or MA213 (Basic Statistics & Probability – prerequisite for MA214) and MA214 (Applied Statistics)

3. Principal Course Requirements:

- PS 231 Physiological Psychology

Please note that only in the following cases may NE101 be substituted for PS231:

- If a student took NE 101 (Introduction to Neuroscience) prior to declaring the psychology major.
- If a student was formerly a neuroscience major who switched to psychology and previously took NE 101.
- If a student is currently a neuroscience and psychology double major.

Students **will not** be awarded credit for both courses. Students may receive credit for PS 231 or NE 101, but not both.

- An additional eight principal courses:
 - Principal courses in psychology are courses listed in the BU Undergraduate Programs Bulletin and numbered at the 200-level or higher (excluding CAS PS 211 and PS/NE 212).
 - Four of these courses must be selected from among courses at the 300-level or higher
 - One of these must be an experimental course selected from CAS PS 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, and 329.
Please note that students will not receive credit for more than one of the following experimental psychology courses: PS 324, PS 325, PS 326.
 - The choice of principal courses must include at least two courses from Group A and at least two courses from Group B, selected from the following lists:
 - Group A: PS 222 Perception and Behavior
PS 234 Psychology of Learning
PS 333 Drugs and Behavior
PS 336 Introduction to Cognitive Psychology
PS 337 Systems of the Brain
PS 338 Neuropsychology
PS 339 Cognitive Neuroscience

- Group B: PS 241 Developmental Psychology
PS 251 Psychology of Personality
PS 261 Social Psychology
PS 370 Psychology of the Family
PS 371 Psychopathology (Formerly Abnormal Psychology)

Transferring Courses:

- It is possible to transfer, from outside of CAS, a maximum of three courses toward the nine principal courses required for the psychology major.
- Psychology courses taken outside of Boston University are considered transfer courses.
- Please note that psychology courses taken through Boston University's Summer Term Program that are designated with the same numbers and titles of those offered in CAS, are not considered transfer courses.
- Prior departmental approval of all transfer courses in psychology is required (Please see the Advising FAQ on page 11 for transfer course evaluation procedures).

V. THE MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY

Requirements: Students must obtain a grade of C or higher in all principal and required related courses.

1. Prerequisite: PS 101, or a score of 4 or 5 on the AP Psychology Exam.
2. Design and Statistical Requirement:
 - PS 211 (Experimental Design in Psychology)
 - PS/NE 212 (Introduction to MATLAB Programming for Research)
 - MA115 (Statistics I), or higher level statistics course (e.g. MA 116, MA 213, or MA 214)

Please note:

- PS 211 and PS/NE 212, do not count toward principal psychology courses.

3. Principal Courses:

- Students must complete five principal courses.
 - Principal courses in psychology are those courses listed in the BU Undergraduate Programs Bulletin and numbered at the 200-level or higher (excluding CAS PS 211 and PS/NE 212).
 - Three of these courses must be selected from among courses at the 300-level or above
 - In addition, the choice of principal courses must include at least one course from Group A and one course from Group B, selected from the following lists:
 - Group A: PS 222 Perception and Behavior
PS 231 Physiological Psychology*
PS 234 Psychology of Learning
PS 333 Drugs and Behavior
PS 336 Introduction to Cognitive Psychology
PS 337 Systems of the Brain
PS 338 Neuropsychology

- Group B: PS 241 Developmental Psychology
PS 251 Psychology of Personality
PS 261 Social Psychology
PS 370 Psychology of the Family
PS 371 Psychopathology (Formerly Abnormal Psychology)

Please note:

- PS 231 will count as a Group A course **only** for students who are pursuing a minor in psychology.
- Psychology minors are **no longer required** to take an experimental psychology course to fulfill the requirements for the minor. **Experimental psychology courses are now reserved for psychology majors only.**

How to declare a Major or Minor in Psychology:

College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) students may declare or change a major/minor via the CAS Advising web site at <http://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/undergraduate/casadvising/forms/> (Select Major Declaration or Minor Declaration). Non-CAS students should check with their school's main office about declaring or changing a major/minor.

VI. RATIONALE FOR NUMBERING OF COURSES WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

The course numbering system may be seen as generally representing a logical progression from the general to the specific in terms of the focus of coverage of any given course. Thus, 100 and 200 level courses generally explore a wider range of topics than 300 and 400 level courses. The numbering system also generally reflects increasing dependence on prior knowledge, smaller classes, more interactive teaching styles, and greater reliance on primary sources. The five course levels relevant to the undergraduate curriculum can be defined as follows:

100-level courses: Include general coverage of a very large area and do not assume prior knowledge of psychology or statistics. Classes are generally large and taught in lecture and discussion groups.

200-level courses: Include coverage of an entire area often summarized in a single section or chapter of an introductory text. Therefore, they are more focused in coverage, but still quite broad, reviewing an entire sub-discipline (e.g., developmental, personality, learning, perception psychology). Knowledge of statistics is not required, but general exposure to psychological concepts is assumed. Classes are generally large and taught in lecture and discussion groups.

300-level courses: Generally include a further narrowing of the focus of coverage; course content typically treated would be one or two topics in a 200-level course. These courses often examine a rather large "problem area" within one of the sub disciplines. In addition, some knowledge of statistics and experimental methodology, and/or previous exposure to the sub discipline as a whole, may be presumed. The experimental lab courses, that introduce students to the experimental methodology employed within each of the sub disciplines, retain their

logical position at the lower end of the 300 spectrum, between the 200-level "survey" courses and other 300-level courses that presume more methodological sophistication.

400-level courses: Include courses focusing on special topics within each of the sub-disciplines within psychology. Sections are small and are generally taught in an interactive mode. Knowledge of statistics and of the relevant sub-discipline is assumed. There is a strong reliance on primary sources, and an assumption that students can adopt a critical stance toward complex material. In addition, this level includes Honors in Psychology and Directed Study (See pages 12-13 in this guide and the Undergraduate Programs Bulletin for further information).

500-level courses: Include courses whose content area is a specific topic within one of the sub disciplines, much like those offered at the 300-level (and in fact, the same topic may be offered at both levels). However, if the topic is taught at the 500-level, it is assumed that students possess more knowledge of statistics and the field, sections will be small and interactive, material will be reviewed more critically, primary sources will be strongly relied upon, and graduate students from the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences and/or other departments and schools within the University will be among the class members.

VII. ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED ADVISING QUESTIONS

General Psychology Requirement:

Is it possible to exempt PS 101?

You can take the Advanced Placement Exam (AP) and if you receive a four or five, not only will you be exempt from the PS 101 requirement but you will also receive academic credit.

Statistics Requirement:

What courses other than PS 211, PS/NE 212, or MA 115 and MA 116 will fulfill the statistics requirement?

MA 213 (Basic Statistics and Probability) and MA 214 (Applied Statistics) are offered for students who have a strong math background.

Transfer of Credit:

If students plan to take psychology courses at another school or if they took psychology courses before coming to BU, can they transfer those courses to meet requirements for the psychology major?

To have psychology courses evaluated for transfer credit:

- Check the TES Equivalency Database available via the Transfer Equivalency Office website <https://www.bu.edu/reg/students/transfer-equivalency/> (the first link listed under Transfer Resource Links) to see if the course has been previously approved for BU credit. If the course is listed on the database, please submit a CAS Transfer Course Pre-Screen Request, available at www.bu.edu/casadvising (under Forms & Procedures).

- If the course has not been previously approved, you will need to submit a CAS Transfer Course Equivalency Form, available at www.bu.edu/casadvising (under Forms & Procedures), along with a complete syllabus for the course to psych@bu.edu for review by Dr. Joanne Hebden Palfai, Director of Undergraduate Studies. The syllabus must include the methods of assessment (e.g., 20% written work, 40% exams, etc.) as well as a list of the specific topics covered in the course. Please note that sample syllabi, learning outcomes, and/or course descriptions are not sufficient. If the course is approved, the Transfer Course Equivalency Form needs to be submitted to the CAS Advising Office (casadv@bu.edu).

Upon completion of the course, an official transcript must be sent to cetscrpt@bu.edu.

Grades:

What is the lowest acceptable grade in psychology courses which will count toward the major?

A grade of C.

Directed Study:

How many semesters of Directed Study (see page 12) in Psychology may be taken?

Two semesters (or up to 8 credits) of Directed Study in Psychology may be taken for credit towards the major.

Letters of Recommendation:

What is the Department procedure for getting a letter of recommendation for graduate school from a faculty member?

First, contact the faculty member from whom you would like a letter and ask if they would be willing to write one for you. If the graduate school provides you with reference letter forms, submit those to the faculty member. If the school requires letters of recommendation to be submitted online, inform the faculty recommenders and send a list of these schools and their deadlines to them.

IX. HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Honors in Psychology is an opportunity for senior psychology majors to undertake a yearlong research project for psychology course credit (PS401/402). Student must have a minimum GPA of 3.0, have no more than one incomplete, and have completed their experimental research course requirement to apply. All students who wish to participate in the Honors in Psychology program must find a psychology faculty member to serve as the primary advisor and must conduct research in the faculty mentor's lab within the department in an area that is relevant to the faculty member's research. Students must then fill out the Honors in Psychology application, which is available on the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences' website at <http://www.bu.edu/psych/undergraduate/research-opportunities/honors/>.

A list of faculty who are interested in supervising Honors in Psychology projects is posted on the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences web site at <http://www.bu.edu/psych/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-research-opportunities/honors/>. All students who receive approval to undertake an honors project must ultimately have a committee of three faculty members, including the primary advisor, to evaluate their final project and presentation. The two additional faculty members are, typically, selected with the assistance of the primary advisor during the second semester. The topic of the research project is chosen in consultation with the primary faculty supervisor. Honors students are required to: 1) design an empirical study based on an extensive review of the literature, 2) gather, analyze, and assess original data or conduct secondary analyses, 3) present their findings to their committee, and 4) submit a written report/thesis. Students are, typically, expected to work two hours per week for each credit that they receive (e.g., 4 credits/8 hours per week). Students are also required to meet regularly during the semester with the faculty supervisor and are also often required to attend the faculty supervisor's lab group meetings. Acceptance into the Honors in Psychology program does not guarantee that students will graduate with Honors. The committee will consider both the thesis and the oral examination when determining the student's grade. A grade of B+ or higher on both the thesis and the oral examination is required each semester to graduate with honors in psychology. If students are not awarded honors, they will be given credit for the courses (PS 401/402), but will not graduate with honors.

Students who wish to apply for Honors in Psychology must complete their portion of the application and attach a bibliography that includes primary references such as articles in scholarly journals or scholarly books. The faculty advisor must complete the student evaluation form and both the student and faculty advisor need to sign. All components of the application must then be submitted in one document to psych@bu.edu for review by Dr. Joanne Hebden Palfai, Director of Academic Affairs/Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will be notified via email once the review process has been completed. If the application is approved, the course will be added to the student's schedule.

The deadline to submit applications for Honors in Psychology is May 31st. Students may request an extension, if needed, by contacting Dr. Joanne Hebden Palfai, Director of Academic Affairs/Director of Undergraduate Studies, before the deadline.

X. DIRECTED STUDY

Directed study provides juniors and seniors the opportunity to undertake research in a selected topic. All students who wish to pursue a Directed Study must find a psychology faculty member to serve as the primary advisor, and research must be conducted in their lab. Directed Study counts for psychology course credit (PS491/492) toward the nine principal courses required for the major in psychology. Students may not do more than two directed studies. Students who are interested in undertaking a directed study need to:

- 1) see the list of faculty who supervise Directed Study projects on the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences web site at <http://www.bu.edu/psych/undergraduate/research-opportunities/ds/>.
- 2) speak with the professor with whom they would like to work.
- 3) obtain a directed study application which is available on the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences' website at

<http://www.bu.edu/psych/undergraduate/research-opportunities/ds/>. Fill out the directed study application and make sure to attach a bibliography. Submit the form via email to the directed study supervisor for their signature, then email the form to psych@bu.edu to obtain approval from Dr. Joanne Hebden Palfai, Director of Academic Affairs/Director of Undergraduate Studies.

- 4) once the directed study application has been approved, please send the signed directed study application to CAS Advising (casadv@bu.edu). The course will then be added to the student's schedule by the CAS Directed Study Coordinator.

XI. UNDERGRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT

The Undergraduate Psychology Association

In 1970, the Undergraduate Psychology Association (UPA) was formed by several psychology majors who attended the Undergraduate Committee meetings that were held at that time. A psychology major by the name of Henry Boroff, who had a work-study job in the department, is credited with drawing up the first constitution and serving as first president of the Undergraduate Psychology Association. He went on to become an attorney in Boston.

The Undergraduate Psychology Association (UPA) is an organization that includes psychology majors, minors, and other students who are interested in psychology. The association sponsors academic, career-oriented, and social events to help supplement students' academic programs. For additional information, please see the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences website at: www.bu.edu/psych/undergraduate/upa/.

Psi Chi

Psi Chi is the international honor society in psychology established in 1927. Interested students who have completed three courses in psychology, have a G.P.A. of 3.0 in psychology, and have a G.P.A. of 3.3 overall may apply. Those students who are eligible need to fill out and submit a national membership application, accompanied by the application fee. Applications and additional information are available on the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences' website at <http://www.bu.edu/psych/undergraduate/psi-chi/>. Psi Chi Membership Certificates will be presented at the Psi Chi induction ceremony held in the Spring of each year.

XII. EDUCATIONAL ROUTES (POST-BA) TOWARD BECOMING A PSYCHOLOGIST ELIGIBLE FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

There are a number of educational routes students can take to become clinical psychologists who may practice in applied settings. Listed below are the available degrees and their pros and cons, which we hope will answer some of students' frequently asked questions. Please also refer to the American Psychologist and American Psychological Association (APA.) Career Guide for additional information at <https://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers>.

Students should also find out whether the programs to which they would like to apply are APA approved. APA sets strict standards for educational quality, and APA accreditation is important in terms of licensure (which enables psychologists to get reimbursed from insurance companies

for their services), for obtaining clinical placements, for some loans and scholarships, and for some jobs. This is true for Ph.D., Psy.D. and Ed.D. programs in counseling (see below). Please see the APA-Accredited Programs Database for more information at <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/programs/>.

1) Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology: These programs train clinical scientists who learn how to apply scientific knowledge about human behavior to the practice of psychology. Research skills, theory, and clinical skills are, therefore, emphasized. These programs typically take 5 to 7 years to complete, which includes 3 years of coursework, some practicum experience in clinical agencies, and a 1 year full time supervised internship in a clinical setting. As in any other Ph.D. psychology program, a dissertation is required. Different programs may have different theoretical orientations (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, etc.). Graduates of Clinical Ph.D. programs are eligible to take a state licensure exam. Licensing enables psychologists to be eligible for reimbursement from insurance companies for their services. Clinical skills learned include assessment, testing, diagnostics, and therapy. These programs are highly competitive (e.g., BU receives approximately 800 applications for 8-10 places) and tend to seek students who have had some clinical and research experience. Undergraduate GPAs are usually over 3.5 and GREs are usually above 164 (old version: 675) on each section. The average age of students accepted is generally 23-30 years. This degree is the best route for those who are interested in clinical research. It is generally not the best degree for those who are only interested in clinical practice.

Potential job markets: University or college teaching, psychiatric hospitals, mental health clinics, school systems, prisons, court systems, research work, government, private practice.

2) MA in Clinical Psychology: The majority of Ph.D. programs in clinical psychology do not offer Master's degrees. However, there are some 1 to 2-year programs that do offer this degree. These programs are less competitive to enter than clinical Ph.D. programs and are more likely to take people with little clinical work experience. They emphasize assessment, testing, theory and therapy. There is less emphasis on research than Ph.D. programs and less clinical training. MA-level psychologists are eligible to take the licensing exam in some states. However, the job market tends to be limited to testing and clinical positions in clinics, prisons, schools, etc. which are lower paying and carry less responsibility than Ph.D.s in clinical psychology. This degree, however, can be used as a stepping stone for later admission to a clinical Ph.D. program.

Potential job markets: clinics, schools, hospitals, prisons, court systems.

3) Psy.D. (Doctorate in Psychology): These 4-7 year programs train students in the applied aspects of psychology. The training is similar to Ph.D. programs (see #1) with less of an emphasis on research. Graduates of Psy.D. programs are eligible to take the licensing exam after completion of this degree. Admission is less competitive than the Ph.D. in Clinical, although it is still competitive. Previous clinical experience is recommended. Typically, financial aid in the form of teaching fellowships and research assistantships is not offered or is limited. Average age of candidates is somewhat older (25-30 years).

Potential job markets: more difficult to teach at university or college level than with a Ph.D.; otherwise all the same possibilities as Ph.D. in Clinical. (This degree is viewed less favorably than a Ph.D. in any setting in which research takes place, including psychiatric hospitals).

4) Ph.D. in field other than clinical (e.g. Developmental or Personality Psychology): These degree programs train students in theory and research and generally take 4-5 years. There is no formal clinical training. In order to be eligible for licensure, students must apply for a clinical practicum and internship experiences on their own. The amount of clinical supervision required for licensure varies from state to state. Although it is possible to become a clinician via this route, it is not the best alternative for a number of reasons: 1) there is no formal clinical training in these degree programs, 2) it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain a clinical internship from a non-clinical program. Admission to these programs is competitive, but less so than to clinical Ph.D. programs.

Potential job markets: Without clinical training – University and college teaching, research work, consultation. With clinical training – same as Ph.D. in clinical.

5) Masters in Psychology: These programs are typically 1 year and emphasize psychological theory and research. They are good for students who do not have a solid undergraduate psychology background.

6) Masters in Psychiatric Social Work (M.S.W.): These 2 year degree programs train students in diagnosis and therapy (not psychological testing). There also tends to be an emphasis on community and family work, systems theory, and social service administration. Graduates of M.S.W. programs are eligible to take the licensing exam, in Massachusetts, upon completion of the degree. Admission to these programs is not as academically competitive as Ph.D. programs, but the average age of students still tends to be older (23-30). This degree is ideal for the student who wishes to do clinical work and is not interested in research. However, the average salaries of MSW's are lower than those of Ph.D.'s. Students can go on to obtain their doctorates in either clinical psychology or social services at a later time.

Potential job markets: Psychiatric hospitals, mental health centers, school systems, private practice, social service administration.

7) Masters and Doctorates in Counseling (Ed.M.) and (Ed.D.): In theory, these 1-year programs (for masters) and 4-7-year programs (for doctorates) emphasize clinical work with people undergoing relatively stressful life issues who are not necessarily pathological (e.g. life changes and transitions, more normal developmental problems). In practice, graduates of these programs sometimes do work with pathological groups. These programs do not emphasize research as much as Ph.D.s in clinical psychology. The doctorate requires clinical practicum, internship, and a thesis. The Master's requires a clinical practicum. Some schools also require a Master's thesis; others do not. Ed.D.'s are eligible to take the licensing exam in Mass.

Potential job markets: Mental health clinics, counseling centers, prisons, hospitals. Those with an Ed.D. are also eligible for positions in academic and research settings, particularly in schools of education.

8) M.D.s with specialties in Psychiatry: This is a 4-year medical degree followed by at minimum, an internship and a 2-year residency in a psychiatric training program. Psychiatrists are trained primarily in the medical/biological aspects of mental illness and can, therefore, prescribe drugs to patients. There tends to be less emphasis on the psychological theories of human behavior and less on research than there is in clinical Ph.D. programs. There is no

training in psychological testing. Psychiatrists tend to have an emphasis on the pharmacological management of psychological disorders.

Potential job markets: Clinics, consultation, court systems, hospitals, private practice.

9) B.S. or M.S. in Nursing with a Specialty in Psychiatric Nursing: These nursing programs tend to emphasize a medical orientation to psychological programs and also train students in the daily care of hospitalized patients. Psychiatric nurses are primarily hired to work at in-patient psychiatric settings and tend to do less assessment, diagnostics and one on one direct therapy. They tend to do more group work with patients and will often supervise psychiatric units on a daily basis.

Potential job markets: Psychiatric hospitals.