

Psychology

Nature of the Profession

Psychologists study human behavior and mental processes to understand, explain, and change people's behavior. Psychologists specialize in many different areas.

Clinical psychologists – who constitute the largest specialty – generally work in independent or group practice or in hospitals and clinics. They help emotionally disturbed patients adjust to life, and they are increasingly helping all kinds of medical and surgical patients to deal with their illnesses or injuries.

Counseling psychologists use several techniques, including interviewing and testing, to advise people on how to deal with problems of everyday living – personal, social, educational, or vocational.

Developmental psychologists study the patterns and causes of behavior change as people progress through life from infancy to adulthood.

Health psychologists promote good health through health maintenance counseling programs that are designed, for example, to help people stop smoking or lose weight.

Neuropsychologists study the relation between the brain and behavior. They often work in stroke and head injury programs. The emergence and growth of these specialties reflects the increasing participation of psychologists in providing direct services to special patient populations.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn complex math, sciences, and theories and methods of psychology
- Strong verbal abilities to use in reading, writing, research, and speaking
- Good math skills to do research and testing
- Ability to work with a wide variety of people
- Ability to make decisions based on data, experience, and observation
- Ability to persuade people and handle a variety of activities
- Patience and objectivity

EDUCATION

A doctoral degree is generally required for employment as a psychologist. Five to seven years of graduate work usually are required for a doctoral degree.

Persons with a master's degree in psychology can administer tests as psychological assistants. Under the supervision of doctoral level psychologists, they can conduct research in laboratories, conduct psychological evaluations, counsel patients, or perform administrative duties.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- University of Nebraska – Omaha (M, D)
- University of Nebraska – Lincoln (D)

LICENSURE / CERTIFICATION

An applicant for a license to practice as a psychologist must have a doctorate degree from an accredited program of graduate study in professional psychology, complete two years of supervised professional experience, and pass the national standardized examination.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Psychological Association

Web Address: www.apa.org

Nebraska Psychological Association

Web Address: www.nebpsych.org