

Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology (<https://www.apu.edu/bas/psychology/>) at Azusa Pacific University assists students in developing the skills necessary for the observation, understanding, and analysis of human behavior. In their study of psychology, students are trained to employ systematic methods of inquiry to explain normal and abnormal behavior, examining a number of factors including neural, cognitive, developmental, cultural, interpersonal, and individual differences. Students also engage in the development of their strengths and skills in personal, intellectual, and spiritual areas.

Each faculty member is a committed Christian with an interest in the individual student. As a department, the faculty are committed to preparing students for a wide range of postbaccalaureate work in psychology or related disciplines, and helping students reflect upon the relationship of psychology to the Christian faith. Programs and activities associated with psychology are planned by the faculty, the Psychology Club, and the Psi Chi honor society to create a spirit of community. These activities include graduate school forums in which students interact with Christian psychology professionals, as well as informal gatherings where psychology majors receive information to help them successfully navigate their program requirements, meet other students, and understand career opportunities.

The design of the undergraduate curriculum reflects the extensive breadth of psychology and provides internship experience in applied field or research settings. There are two undergraduate degrees offered: the Bachelor of Arts (BA) (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/psychology-ba/>) and the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Psychology (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs/>). While the degrees overlap in their core courses, the focuses in terms of elective courses are different—the BA program focuses on the applied areas of understanding the human condition, and the BS program focuses on the scientific methods used to study behavior, emphasizing research skills.

The department also offers undergraduates a psychology minor (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/psychology-minor/>) and an alcohol and drug counseling minor (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/alcohol-drug-counseling-minor/>).

At the graduate and professional level, the department comprises an energetic community of scholars equipping students to understand the field of psychology through academically rigorous coursework, hands-on laboratory research, internships with community agencies, and individual research projects. The department offers a Master of Science in Research Psychology and Data Analysis (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/research-psychology-data-analysis-ms/>), a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology with Specialization in Children and Adolescents (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/counseling-psychology-ms/>), a Play Therapy Certificate (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/play-therapy-certificate/>), a bachelor's completion program in psychology (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/ba-psychology/>) for transfer students who have at least 30 units of college credit, and professional minors in psychology (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/psychology-minor-professional/>) and alcohol and drug counseling. (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-education-behavioral-sciences/school-behavioral-sciences/psychology/minor-alcohol-drug-counseling/>)

Mission Statement

The Department of Psychology at APU is a community of Christian scholars who, with their diverse backgrounds and expertise in understanding human behavior in society, are committed to enhancing the development of our students through intellectual challenge, experiential learning, personal growth, and spiritual discovery so that each student develops his or her potential and is prepared for where God is leading them to serve.

Career Opportunities

Study in psychology provides a foundational background for a broad variety of careers in which the understanding of human behavior and social processes is useful. Graduates with a bachelor's degree in psychology have a foundational background for entry-level jobs in mental health or community service agencies, business, and human resources. For advanced positions requiring testing, counseling, or consulting, a master's degree is generally the minimum requirement, while psychologists with doctoral degrees qualify for more advanced counseling, research, and teaching positions. Psychology majors with advanced degrees may pursue careers in developmental, family, health, educational, sports, industrial/organizational, ministry, and experimental psychology, as well as neuropsychology. They may also pursue licensure as clinical, counseling, or school psychologists, or marriage and family therapists. Other areas in which students seek careers include social work, marketing, law, physical therapy, and medicine. In a recent alumni survey, 85% completed postgraduate study, with two-thirds of those in a discipline-related position, and half of the alumni surveyed achieved national licensure or certification in the field. All students planning to major in psychology are urged to make an appointment at the department office (Wynn 109 (<https://www.apu.edu/map/114695/>)) and to continue visiting the department for help with progressing in the major and beyond.