

Psychologist

You test, diagnose and treat what is happening in someone's mind. A doctorate, an internship and a national exam stand between you and the title.

TYPICAL PAY

\$100,580

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$55k to \$181k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

9 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Private practice, hospitals,
community clinics, universities, v...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Strong grades, plus statistics if your school offers it. Psychology is a science degree before it is anything else.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Psychology or a close field. Get into a research lab early. Doctoral programs care about that more than your major.
- 3 Doctoral program** 5 to 7 years
A research doctorate or a practice doctorate. Coursework, assessment training, supervised clinical placements and, in a research program, a dissertation.
- 4 Predoctoral internship** 1 year
A full-time paid year at a hospital, clinic or counseling center, assigned through a national match. It is required for the degree.
- 5 Supervised hours and the exam** 1 to 2 years
Most states want a postdoctoral supervised year, then you pass the national licensing exam and any state law exam before you may call yourself a psychologist.

Pros and cons

- + Deep, skilled work that actually helps people
- + Funded doctoral programs mean you can finish with little debt
- + Real control over your schedule once licensed
- Nine to twelve years before you are fully licensed
- Master's level therapists do similar work in far less time
- Insurance pays less than the cash rate and pays it slowly

Good to know

The internship is decided by a computer

The required internship year is assigned through a national match. You rank sites, sites rank you, and an algorithm sends you wherever it lands. People move across the country for it.

A funded doctorate can cost nothing

Research-based programs commonly waive tuition and pay a stipend for teaching or research. Practice-focused programs usually do not. Two people with the same license can finish with zero debt or six figu...

Optional boosts

Neuropsychology. Forensic psychology. Health psychology. Child and adolescent work.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Clinical and Counseling Psychologists (19-3033.00)

American Psychological Association

Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards: the licensing exam

Federal Student Aid: Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/psychologist>



Scan for the full clicker