

Psychology Education Systems in Europe

1: United Kingdom

This section of the journal called "Psychology Education in Europe" will give you a brief glance on the education systems within a particular country. You will see a different country in each issue. The language of the questions and answers are informal and does cover basic information and give you links for further information. Thanks to Rebecca Coenning (Secretary General of EFPSA, UK) for providing information on our questions.

Undergraduate education

The structure of the undergraduate system of psychology education in your country

1- *How many years does it take to complete the undergraduate course?*

3 years full time
4 years part time

2- *How many credits/courses/modules etc.?*

It may differ from university to university but normally you have 5 modules and a project in your first and second year, and 6 modules and an end of year project in your final year.

3- *What basic courses do you need to take?*

Your first and second years are cognitive psychology, biopsychology, social, developmental and psychopathology. In the third year you choose your own courses, so you still have the choice of similar subjects as in the first and second year but they go into more depth. There are also courses such as Psychology and Law, Anomalistic Psychology, Psychopharmacology, Addictions and Occupational Psychology. In all 3 years there is also usually a project that is worth 1 whole course unit that has to be passed for the student to pass the year.

4- *Is there a mandatory internship?*

No. Not at my university and not according to any other information that I have found.

5- *Are there any special requirements when applying to psychology departments?*

It differs from university to university; the better a university is the higher your grades would have to be for you to be accepted onto the course. You would also have to prove that your English is good enough to study at an English university by taking an English test.

6 - *How many places are there for students in psychology (what is the gender distribution (more girls?))?*

This also depends on the size of the university. Most universities do have Psychology as a choice of study unless it is a university that specialises in certain subjects. Statistically 80% are girls, and 20% are boys.

7 - *What are the requirements for an undergraduate degree (For example; passing all courses, doing an internship etc...)?*

In your final year you have to pass the final project to be awarded your degree. It is however possible to fail one exam out of six and still get the degree.

8 - *What language are the lectures, exams and books in?*

English

9 - *Can you take any of the psychology courses in high school, or only at university?*

Yes. For your A levels you can choose Psychology as a subject in your last year.

10 - *Do you pay for your education and if so how much?*

Yes. For Home/EU students it's £3225/year. For International students it is £12630/year.

Postgraduate education

The structure of the postgraduate system of psychology education in your country.

1 - *How many years does it take to complete the undergraduate course?*

For a Masters in Psychology you study 1-year full time. For a PhD it is normally 3 years.

2 - *What are the general application requirements?*

You would need a first or an upper second in your undergraduate degree to apply. On a percentage scale this corresponds to a score of 60% or above.

3 - *What are the requirements for completing a postgraduate degree?*

For a Masters: Written examinations, coursework, oral presentation, and a research dissertation.
For a PhD: Thesis and viva voce.

4 - *Do students need to do work placements (practice) after/during the postgraduate study, and if so how many years?*

Work placements are not needed for completing a Masters course but for a PhD in, for example, clinical psychology you would have to work in a hospital (in the relevant department to your degree) at the same time as studying.

5 - *Is specialisation included in the education?*

Yes, all masters specialise in a certain area of Psychology and all PhDs specialise even further into the chosen subject.

6 - *What are the areas in which one can specialise?*

You can basically specialise in anything you like. There are Masters and PhD programs for clinical psychology, developmental cognitive neuroscience, influence of music on mind and brain, research methods, occupational psychology, and the list goes on. For a more detailed list go to <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/> and do a course search for psychology.

7 - *Programs' reputation, popularity etc.*

Clinical psychology is the most popular and the most competitive field of psychology.

8 - *Do you pay for your education and how much?*

We pay approximately £4000/year for UK/EU students for a Masters degree and around £12000 for overseas students.

A PhD costs around £3000/year for UK/EU students and £12000/year for overseas students.

Field work

1 - *How do you get your title?*

All psychology courses are reviewed and accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) so if your program of study is recognised by the BPS you will get your title when you graduate.

2 - *How do you get your license/chartered status?*

Under current law, anyone in the UK can call themselves a psychologist however, you will find that most employers will require employees to be registered with the BPS as a Chartered Psychologist. The BPS accredits training routes that lead to gaining registration as a Chartered Psychologist. This will normally involve gaining Graduate Basis of Registration and then completing at least three years of postgraduate training in the area of psychology in which you want to work. The exact nature of this training is dependent on the area of psychology.

3 - *Is there a regulation/law that defines the role and practice of psychologists?*

The government is planning to introduce statutory regulation for psychologists from July 2009 onwards. For more information please see the Statutory Regulation pages on the BPS website <http://www.bps.org.uk/>.

4 - *For which fields of study is there a specialisation?*

See <http://www.psychwww.com/careers/specialt.htm>

Research

1 - *What are the most popular areas and topics of research?*

Research methods, psychiatric research and clinical research.

2 - *What journals are published in the country?*

The British Psychological Society publishes most journals in the UK. There is a whole library online that can be accessed for a small fee and where journals from every area of psychology can be read.

3 - *Who funds the research, and are the available funds enough to meet the demands of most of the researchers?*

Getting funding is quite a competitive task. A student will have to go through quite a few interviews before a committee will decide whether they will be eligible for funding. The main funding providers for psychology can be found through this website:

www.bps.org.uk/careers/postgrad/funding/funding_home.cfm

4 - *Are there any topics or institutions in your country that are particularly popular?*

Yes, Oxford and Cambridge are considered to be the best universities in the UK. Clinical psychology is the hottest topic. New topics that are gaining popularity are Positive Psychology and Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience.

Additional questions: Funky part

1 - *Is there any prestige in studying psychology among the students?*

I think, unfortunately, that in the UK students at undergraduate level choose psychology when they're not quite sure what else to do. A lot of the students I've talked to have said this, And a lot of people who do not study psychology think that everyone who studies it will become counsellors and learn how to read people's minds. It is quite hard to make people realise that psychology is a science. However, students who go on to postgraduate levels do so because they have an interest in the subject and that is also where they receive the appreciation and prestige. Psychology was however voted as the 8th most popular subject in the UK in the National Student Survey 2007.

2 - *How old are the psychology students in the universities on average?*

In the UK, students usually go to university straight after school, so the majority of students are 18 when they start. There are mature students as well and even people of middle age, but they are of the minority.

3 - *Do you have a more lecture-based or self-study type of education?*

Most universities have around 15 hours a week of classes and the rest of the time the students have to organise themselves.

4 - *Do you have the possibility of studying abroad and, if so, which countries can you go to?*

Yes there is an option to do four years instead of three, where you go to another country for one year and study in that language. Not all universities offer this choice but the ones that do usually give a choice of a year in Germany, France, Spain or Italy. Kent University can even send students to Finland and Poland.

5 - *Does mental health have a priority in your country?*

Yes, clinical psychology and mental health is the most popular field of psychology.

6 - *Tell us about the National Organisation (NO)* and its activities*

The NO meets four times a year to discuss different issues such as: how to promote psychology, how to make people more aware of the NO and what it does, and most importantly the Annual Congress. The NO invites speakers to the annual congress and students all over the country come to see them and to receive more information about options open to them in the various fields of psychology, and the latest research topics.

* An NO is an organisation of Psychology Students in a country. Sometimes they are sections of the Professional Psychological Organisation.

How can you study in England as a foreign student?

1. How do you apply? (List of universities and links of the web pages)

For undergraduate degrees you apply through UCAS: <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/> where you can find all courses available at all universities in the UK. For postgraduate study you apply to individual universities (see next question for information about how to find the best course).

2. How can you ensure you choose the best programme?

There are listings made every year that shows university rankings and which courses are the best at which universities. The best places to find these rankings are:

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>
www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide
www.extras.timesonline.co.uk/gug/gooduniversityguide.php

3. How can you find a scholarship or financial support?

<http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk/>

4. Practical information to live in the country

Information for students can be found at <http://www.studylondon.ac.uk/> and the best place to find rooms for rent is at <http://www.gumtree.com/>

5. Student experiences.

If you go to the rankings pages, find the universities you like, every university will have a piece about student experiences.

6. Visa information and official requirements.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>