

**Department of Psychology
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Hartford**

Informational Interview Questions for the Psychology Major:

1. What large questions does your discipline attempt to answer?

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. Fundamental to the study of psychology is the understanding of how biological, psychological, and social influences impact behavior and the way we think. Psychologists study the relationship between behavior and thinking from a variety of perspectives that may include neuroscience, evolution, sociocultural factors, and cognition. Some of the questions psychologists are currently examining include:

To what extent are intelligence and personality impacted by genes and the environment?

What do infants actually perceive and think?

How often and why do we dream?

How does culture impact how we behave in groups?

How does brain function differ from adolescence to adulthood?

How are memories constructed?

What is the relationship between psychopathology and gender?

2. What are the department's entry requirements to become a psychology major?

The entry requirements for the Psychology Department do not differ from those specified by the College of Arts & Sciences. If a student decides to major in Psychology after their first semester, a 2.0 GPA is required for transfer entry. Requirements to successfully complete the Psychology Major are as follows:

36 Credits, which must include the following courses:

PSY 101:	Introductory Psychology: Concepts
PSY 102:	Introductory Psychology: Applications
PSY 270W:	Research Methods and Statistical Analysis I
PSY 372:	Research Methods and Statistical Analysis II
PSY 470W:	Research Methods and Statistical Analysis III
PSY 405:	History and Systems in Psychology

Additionally, students must take:

- 2 psychology courses from Biological and Learning Perspectives
- 2 psychology courses from Social and Applied Perspectives
- 2 additional psychology electives

In order to graduate, a psychology major must earn a C average (GPA of 2.0) or better in psychology courses constituting the major. Not all courses must be a C or above, but the average must be 2.0 or above. Additionally, PSY 270W and

PSY 372 must be passed with a C- or better to move on to the next course in the research sequence.

3. Does the coursework involve mostly lecture, lab work, field experience, team projects, research and or writing or some combination of these?

The Psychology major offers a variety of learning experiences. Classes typically include lecture, discussion, research, and writing components. Additionally, there are opportunities to complete internships with Hartford area agencies, as well as research with faculty members related to human development, industrial-organizational psychology, eating disorders, social psychology, clinical psychology as well as many other areas of psychology. Introductory psychology students have the opportunity to serve as participants in ongoing research conducted by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students.

4. What types of programs, minors, and/or electives have students combined with this major?

Psychology is a field of study that fits well with many majors and minors. Students frequently combine Psychology with majors or minors in Communication, Criminal Justice, Education, Business, Modern Languages, Gender Studies, Political Science, Physical Therapy, and Sociology.

5. What kinds of skills, abilities, personal qualities, and interests should a student considering the field have?

The Psychology major is appropriate for students interested in engaging in critical thinking and the scientific study of both the physiological and social aspects of behavior. Students who are naturally curious and enjoy reading and technical writing are well suited for the major. Psychology has a number of subfields including Behavioral Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Organizational Psychology, Personality Psychology, and Social Psychology. As a result, a variety of students can find a niche that suits their individual skills and interests.

6. Are there any courses or previous experiences that would help a student to determine whether to major in this field? What course or experiences would you recommend for a student interested in further assessing this as a possible option?

In order to help students determine whether the Psychology major is appropriate for them, it is recommended that they take at least one Introductory Psychology course and possibly one upper-level course. Introductory Psychology is divided into two semesters with the first course focusing heavily on the biological aspects of behavior and mental processes and the second course focusing more heavily on the social and clinical aspects of behavior and mental processes. Students can take either Introductory Psychology course; the Introductory Psychology courses do not have to be taken in sequence. After taking one Introductory Psychology course, students have the opportunity to take some of the upper-level courses,

enabling them to explore the area of psychology that appears most interesting to them prior to committing to the major.

7. What opportunities exist, if any, for students to gain experience in your field of study—i.e. internships?

Students who major in Psychology have opportunities to complete internships with agencies in the Hartford area. Students have completed internships with local businesses, outpatient and inpatient mental health clinics, elementary schools, and organizations on campus focused on promoting student mental health. Students also have opportunities to complete independent research studies with faculty. Students have completed independent studies on eating disorders, industrial-organizational psychology, cognitive psychology, clinical psychology, and social psychology.

As juniors and seniors, Psychology students have opportunities to participate in the Psychology Honors program, if they have a GPA of 3.0 and have completed at least 15 credits in psychology (including PSY 270W and PSY 372). The Honors program affords students opportunities to explore topics in depth under the supervision of a faculty member. Students in the Honors program complete an Internship or Independent Study, the Honors Seminar, and an Honors Thesis.

Psychology students may also be inducted into the Psi Chi National Honor Society. Its purpose is to promote an academic and social interest in psychology on campus. Students must complete 5 psychology courses and have a 3.25 GPA in psychology and a 3.00 GPA overall to be eligible for membership.

8. What do you see as possible career options should I major in your field of study?

Psychology students are well prepared for entry-level jobs in a variety of areas including public relations, college admissions, early childhood care, human resources, veterans affairs, and as support staff in mental health settings.

Psychology students are also well-prepared for graduate study in psychology, education, communication, law, and social work. In order to become a therapist, social worker, or psychologist, graduate school at the master's and/or doctoral level is required.

9. What have recent graduates in your major gone on to do?

Psychology students frequently pursue graduate study in education, social work, psychology, or law. Psychology students have also worked as research assistants, residential youth counselors, financial advisors, veterans' claims specialists, and as college admissions staff.

10. What advice would you give a first-year (undecided) student considering this field as a possible major?

Psychology is a wonderful major for individuals who enjoy critical thinking and analysis. Psychology is a major that enables students to be creative while

applying scientific principles. The major assists students in understanding how to conduct research and apply it to a range of societal issues. Psychology is great preparation for individuals who wish to work with people and understand how behavior is impacted by biological, psychological, and social factors.