Psychology & Neuroscience

Degree options in the Faculty of Science or Faculty of Arts

MA or BSc (Single Honours Degree)
Psychology

BSc (Single Honours Degree)
Neuroscience (with School of Biology)

Joint Honours Degrees
Psychology and one of:
- Art History (MA)
- Biology (BSc)
- Computer Science (BSc or MA)
- Economics (BSc or MA)
- English (MA)
- Film Studies (MA)
- French (MA)
- Geography (MA)
- German (MA)
- International Relations (MA)

Joint Honours Degrees
Psychology and one of:
- Italian (MA)
- Mathematics (BSc or MA)
- Mediaeval History (MA)
- Modern History (MA)
- Philosophy (MA)
- Social Anthropology (MA)
- Statistics (BSc or MA)
- Theological Studies (MA)

“With” Degrees
Honours in which the majority of the course deals with the first-named subject:
- Psychology with Biology (BSc)
- Psychology with Geography (MA)

Entrance Requirements

Obtaining the following grades will not guarantee you a place as we consider all aspects of every application, including the Personal Statement.

Psychology and Neuroscience
SQA Highers: AAAB** #
GCE A-Levels: AAB** #
International Baccalaureate Points: 35#

** For BSc Psychology degrees – at least two Highers or one A-Level must include Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Computing Science or equivalent, Geography, Geology, Physics, Psychology.

# For the BSc Neuroscience degree – qualifications must include at least two of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics.

For full Faculty Entrance Requirements, see page 53.

For degrees combining more than one subject, the subject with the higher Entrance Requirements determines the grades you need. You will also need to meet any further subject-specific Entrance Requirements as outlined on their pages.

For further country-specific qualifications and pre-degree foundation programmes see:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/international

Do I need previous knowledge of this subject? – No

Features

* An opportunity to conduct your own research project in well-equipped laboratories under the supervision of leading authorities in the field.
* The opportunity to specialise in areas of interest in the final year and to be taught in small specialist seminars.
* Psychology achieved a strong research performance in the UK Research Excellence Framework 2014.

BSc or MA?
Psychology can be taken by those who have specialised at school in arts or science subjects. As such, the degree is offered as both an MA in the Faculty of Arts, and a BSc in the Faculty of Science. The Psychology components of your degree are the same regardless of whether you take an MA or BSc in Psychology. The difference is in the other subjects you study in your first and second year. If your background is scientific choose the BSc (see page 5) otherwise, choose the MA.

What will I study?

Psychology
We introduce you to the latest ideas in the field of psychology. In the first three years the course is very broadly based. You are introduced to the full range of areas that are studied by psychologists. This provides a firm foundation in the subject and allows you to make choices in the final year amongst the advanced modules that are on offer.

However the course is not just about listening to other people’s ideas. It is also about learning to do research yourself. There is a strong emphasis on practical classes and on learning research techniques right from the start. In the final year you have the opportunity to carry out your own research project on a topic of your choice under the individual supervision of a staff member – all of whom are active researchers, many at the forefront of their field. Their research has made significant contributions to the development of psychology as an academic discipline, and has delivered tangible benefits to society.

The 1000-level modules give a general introduction to psychology. A pass can lead on to the 2000-level modules in which topics from the 1000 level are built on and expanded in greater depth, combined with an introduction to new areas of psychology. By the end of the second year everyone will have the grounding for the more advanced Honours Psychology programmes, regardless of entry route. Honours entry is dependent on performance in the second year.
“Getting to know different areas of psychology before choosing your favourites to immerse yourself in is great. Lecturers who are extremely passionate about their research make this experience even better, so that I had difficulty deciding which modules to choose. Their enthusiasm also offers early opportunities to get involved in scientific research. As School President, I was impressed by the School’s commitment to teaching excellence and its willingness to shape the learning experience together with its students.”

Maria (Düsseldorf, Germany)

Indicative programme information for Psychology

First Year MA and BSc (2 x 20-credit modules required)
Four lectures and a two-hour practical per week. These cover an introduction to psychology including areas such as the Biological Bases of Behaviour, Cognition, Development, Social Behaviour and Individual Differences in Behaviour. They also provide a methodology programme which integrates the practical classes with instruction in research design and statistics.

Second Year MA and BSc (2 x 30-credit modules required)
Four lectures and a three-hour practical per week, plus small group tutorials. These provide a more developed treatment of the problems and methods of psychology, covering such topics as Social Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience and Perception. The methodology programme also continues through the second year.

Honours – Third and Fourth Years
(Single Honours – full time – 60 credits per semester)
Lecture hours vary, with an increasing emphasis on library and project research. At Junior Honours, modules provide an advanced grounding in the core areas of psychology, including Perception, Cognition, Social Psychology, and Evolutionary and Comparative Psychology and Developmental Psychology. There are also the modules Research Design and Analysis 1 & 2 and a supervised literature review on a topic of your choice. In the Senior Honours year, you choose from a wide range of specialist modules, on topics such as Psychology of Dementia, Psychology of Terrorism, Psychopathology, Psychology of Visual Art, Cognitive Psychology and the Emotional Disorders or the Psychology of Music. You also write a dissertation and undertake a research project in an area of your choice.

Neuroscience
This programme is taught jointly by the School of Psychology & Neuroscience and the School of Biology. It explores the interface between psychology and neurobiology paralleling the strength of our research activities in this exciting area. Honours topics cover molecular, cellular and physiological processes, cellular and applied neurobiology, pharmacology and neurochemistry. Honours modules also cover cognitive and behavioural neuroscience, clinical neuroscience and neural modelling. A final research project is available in either School.

Study abroad
You may apply to study abroad under the University’s St Andrews Abroad programme. See page 46.

Typical class sizes and teaching information
Class sizes vary from year to year but typical sizes based on the previous year are as follows:

- First Year: lectures 250 - 350, labs 40 - 60
- Second Year: lectures 140 - 220, labs 40 - 60, tutorials 6 - 8
- Junior Honours: lectures 70 - 120, labs 70, individual supervision for literature review
- Senior Honours: classes 10 - 50

Neuroscience module classes are 30 - 60 in Junior Honours and 5 - 20 in Senior Honours.

Students also carry out a research project where they receive individual supervision.

The degree programmes are taught using a wide variety of methods, including traditional lectures, seminars, practicals, tutorials and individual supervision. At Honours much of the teaching is in small groups and there is a considerable amount of one-on-one contact with staff. There is a general emphasis on active learning, with students having the opportunity to ask questions, participate in discussions and debate issues.

Typical methods of assessment
1000- and 2000-level modules are assessed by 25% coursework and 75% multiple choice questions or written examinations. At Honours level the nature of assessment depends on the individual module, some are assessed entirely by coursework, or by examinations or by a mixture of the two.

Professional exemptions and accreditation

The Single Honours degree and the “With” degrees are recognised by the British Psychological Society as conferring the basis for graduate registration. That is, they are a qualification for undertaking training in various areas of professional psychology including clinical psychology and educational psychology. It should be noted that both the BSc and the MA degree are acceptable qualifications for all postgraduate courses in psychology including clinical psychology. Postgraduate courses in psychology are usually very competitive and if you plan to become a professional psychologist the Single Honours degree is recommended. However, subject to taking the necessary Honours components, Joint Honours degrees may also gain BPS recognition.

Careers

There are a number of professions directly linked to a Psychology degree such as Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology, Industrial Psychology and Forensic Psychology. It is also associated with jobs in the welfare area and in personnel. More generally, a good Honours degree in Psychology can give direct entry into management training and civil service posts. Recent graduates have secured positions in the health service, speech therapy and banking. For more information: http://bit.ly/sta-psychology-careers

See also page 36 for details of the University’s Careers Centre.