

# What can I do with a B.A. or B.S. in Psychology?

## B.A. (Bachelor of Arts)

- Ψ More focused on the practice of psychology
- Ψ Sometimes considered “softer” than a B.S.
- Ψ Usually includes more background in liberal arts
- Ψ Examples: social psych, developmental psych, counseling psych

## B.S. (Bachelor of Science)

- Ψ More researched focused
- Ψ Usually includes some neuroscience and lab courses
- Ψ Examples: neuropsych, experimental psych, clinical psych

Some schools only offer one kind of bachelor’s degree. Except in special circumstances, your choice of undergraduate degree probably won’t make much difference, especially if you go on to graduate school

If you have the choice of B.A. or B.S., try to decide which will work best for you in the long run. Don’t worry if you’re not sure. The biggest consequence will be boredom during some required classes. Overall, your opportunities with both degree are pretty similar.

If you want to go on to graduate school, you should participate in research projects as a research assistant as much as possible. These positions are usually advertised in upper division psychology classes. RA duties include: data coding, entering data into the computer, etc. Research experience is relevant regardless of what type of degree you get, even if you don’t ever want to research again. Plus, if you’re lucky, your name will be included on a publication, which looks *really* good on your resume!

## Available jobs with a B.A./B.S. in psych:

- Ψ Case worker at state/county facilities (e.g., Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services)
- Ψ Entry level clinician at state organizations
- Ψ Group homes
- Ψ Juvenile facilities
- Ψ Paid Research assistant in funded research
- Ψ Intake specialist (at clinics, emergency rooms, hospitals, etc.)
- Ψ Work with autistic children
- Ψ Become substitute teacher (requires teaching credential)

# What can I do with an M.A./M.S./M.S.W./M.F.T. in Psychology?

**M.A. = Master of Arts**

**M.S. = Master of Sciences**

**M.S.W. = Master of Social Work**

**L.C.S.W. = Licensed Clinical Social Worker**

**M.F.T. = Master's in Family Therapy**

**M.F.C.C. = Master's in Family and Child Counseling**

## M.A./M.S.

- Ψ **Similar to B.A./B.S. split**
- Ψ **M.S. programs typically engage in more rigorous research programs than M.A. programs**
- Ψ **Some require a thesis, which is like a short dissertation**
- Ψ **Some doctorate programs give M.A./M.S. degrees after about 2 years in their program (this is called a “terminal master’s degree”)**
- Ψ **Once you have an M.A. or M.S., you can take a few more classes, get 3,000 supervised clinical hours, and become an M.S.W./L.C.S.W. or M.F.T.**

## Jobs with each degree:

### M.A./M.S.

- Ψ **Similar to B.A./B.S. jobs, just one level higher with slightly better pay**
- Ψ **Note: these degrees are *unlicensed*, which significantly decreases your career options**

### M.S.W./L.C.S.W.

- Ψ **Also known as a “social worker”**
- Ψ **Trained in helping disadvantaged populations**
- Ψ **Usually work in state and county organizations**
- Ψ **Can make *really* good money working in prisons!**

### M.F.T.

- Ψ **Formerly known as M.F.C.C.**
- Ψ **Trained in individual, couples, and group therapy**
- Ψ **Can do any kind of therapy but *not* psychological testing**
- Ψ **Are *not* psychologists, but are the clinicians most commonly confused with psychologists**
- Ψ **Work *everywhere*, including schools, hospitals, private organizations, clinics, prisons**
- Ψ **Are the clinicians of choice with insurance companies, who would rather pay an M.F.T. to do therapy than a psychologist, because they are significantly cheaper per hour**
- Ψ **This is the best degree to get if you want to do therapy, because it takes a lot less time and money than a doctorate degree. Plus, your chances of finding steady employment are better than a psychologist trying to do psychotherapy! Some successful M.F.T.s in private practice make over \$100,000 per year!**

# What can I do with a Ph.D./Psy.D. degree in Psychology?

**ANYTHING!!!** Clinical work, research, teaching, consulting, writing, etc.

## What is the difference between a Ph.D. and Psy.D.?

### **Ph.D.**

- Ψ Older, more traditional doctorate degree
- Ψ Education is usually fully funded (translation: it's FREE)
- Ψ Class size = 1-5 students per class
- Ψ Totally research focused
- Ψ Time to complete degree = 4 years and up. There usually isn't a max to how long you can stay. It all depends on how long it takes to finish your dissertation, which can be a long time!
- Ψ Dissertation = must contribute new information to the field. Must be experimental
- Ψ Work on a research project throughout your education, in addition to your dissertation research. (Some programs only have a few actual classes.)
- Ψ Choose a professor to do research with. (Admission to many programs depends on your fit with a certain professor in addition to past research experience.)
- Ψ Little to no clinical experience during academic portion of the degree. This makes it harder to go to internship and get licensed
- Ψ It best prepares you for a research career and tenured faculty position as a university
- Ψ Accreditation by APA is less of an issue, unless you decide to get licensed

### **Psy.D.**

- Ψ Newer degree, designed specifically for advanced clinical training
- Ψ Education is usually *not* funded (translation: student loans required!). Most programs average \$20,000 to \$30,000 *per year*
- Ψ Class size = usually 25 students or less per class
- Ψ Programs range from only a clinical focus but some have a small research focus
- Ψ Time to complete degree = 4 to 5 years. Most programs max out at 7 years
- Ψ Most require a dissertation, but dissertations can be theoretical, program evaluations, or traditional experiments. This gives you a lot of options that traditional Ph.D. programs don't have. Note: Beware of schools that don't require a dissertation, because chances are they aren't as good of programs.
- Ψ Get a ton of clinical experience. Most programs require practicum placements in many different types of settings.
- Ψ Clinical experience gives you a *huge* advantage over Ph.D. candidates when competing for internships, because you have 200 to 1,200 supervised hours before even getting to internship!
- Ψ APA accreditation is *key* to getting a good education, especially since there are a lot of quack Psy.D. schools out there
- Ψ Some online, distance, and evening programs, which gives students more options to get a degree while living the rest of their life!

**Tip:** don't let the expense of this degree scare you! Student loans are provided by the federal government and paid back over 30 years. Interest rates vary with the economy, but never get higher than 8.25%. Right now they're at less than 3.00% Plus, would you rather have student loans to pay back or spend the rest of your life miserable in the wrong career?