

# Psychology and counselling

Psychology and counselling are growing fields – the former is a long-established profession and the latter is increasingly gaining formal recognition. In the United Kingdom (UK), there is an established framework for the teaching (and practice) of both.

## Checklist: Why study psychology and counselling the United Kingdom?

- UK qualifications and training are respected all over the world
- courses are intellectually rigorous
- you can study in a wide variety of ways, including part-time and distance learning, and in a huge number of colleges and universities
- the opportunity to improve your fluency in English will improve your job prospects in English-speaking countries.

## 1 What can I study?

Before you apply for places to study as a psychologist or a counsellor you should be sure that you appreciate the differences between them. Psychology is widely applied in all areas of commerce, industry and medicine, but it is common to confuse applied psychology to counselling.

### What are the main differences between psychology and counselling and how should I decide which one to study?

You are most likely thinking about training as a chartered psychologist if you:

- intend to treat and support people
- are prepared to undergo a long and structured training, beginning with a good honours degree in psychology, followed by three to five years of practical experience and then either a minimum of a one year Masters degree or a three year doctorate (see 'How can I register as a professional?').

It is important that you realise that you cannot qualify for many careers in psychology unless you have a recognised undergraduate degree as your first step. Study below this level will not count towards qualification (see 'How can I register as a professional?').

You are thinking of becoming a counsellor if you :

- want to encourage clients to explore their life, feelings and problems, in the hope that they will become easier to understand – but not to make judgements or give advice
- want to find a practical use for your warm, accepting and non-judgemental nature, and to build a trusting relationship with your clients without letting your own beliefs, feelings and attitudes get in the way
- are prepared to undergo counselling yourself (see 'How can I register as a professional?').



The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) has its own list of accredited courses that count towards formal registration as an independent practitioner. However, it is also possible to gain registration with the BACP through a small amount of formal training, if you can show several years' experience (see How can I register as a professional?).

The tables below summarise the courses available in psychology and counselling respectively. If you want to qualify for professional registration on completion of your training you should ensure that the course you take is one that is recognised by the appropriate UK professional body (for psychology this is the British Psychological Society; for counselling it is the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) or their equivalents in the country where you intend to work.

<b>Psychology</b>	
<b>Level of study</b>	<b>Examples of study options</b>
<b>A-level and Highers</b>	Psychology
<b>Undergraduate degrees</b>	Applied psychology Applied social psychology Behavioural science Business psychology Clinical psychology Cognitive science Community psychology Developmental psychology Educational psychology European social psychology Experimental psychology Forensic psychology Health psychology Human psychology Occupational psychology Psychology or communications Social psychology Sport psychology
<b>Postgraduate degrees and diplomas</b>	Applied psychology Clinical psychology Psychology research programme Social psychology
<b>Continuing professional development and short courses</b>	Details of short courses can be found on the Education UK website <a href="http://www.educationuk.org">www.educationuk.org</a> .  The British Psychological Society website <a href="http://www.bps.org.uk">www.bps.org.uk</a> has details of courses for continuing professional education.



<b>Counselling</b>	
<b>Level</b>	<b>Examples of study options</b>
<b>NVQ/SVQ</b>	Counselling (level 3)
<b>National Certificate/Advanced Certificate</b>	Counselling skills
<b>Higher National Diplomas</b>	Counselling Counselling and health & social care studies Counselling for people in organisations
<b>Undergraduate degrees</b>	Applied counselling Applied counselling for people in organisations Child studies and advice, guidance and counselling Counselling and psychology in community settings Counselling studies and society Counselling skills combined with subjects including : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• art</li> <li>• business</li> <li>• communication studies</li> <li>• community studies</li> <li>• computer science</li> <li>• drama</li> <li>• health studies</li> <li>• physical education</li> <li>• social sciences</li> <li>• theology</li> </ul>
<b>Postgraduate degrees and diplomas</b>	Counselling Counselling and psychotherapy as a means to health Counselling psychology
<b>Continuing professional development and short courses</b>	There is a variety of courses on the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) website <a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk">www.bacp.co.uk</a>

### **Can I do part of my study outside of the UK?**

Possibly, but you need to make detailed arrangements with your chosen university. Credits for previous terms of study outside the UK are not yet well established in the UK. It is up to individual universities to decide whether to accept you and credit your previous study.

### **Can I go on to qualify in the UK if I have an overseas degree?**

Possibly. You would have to submit details of your degree to the relevant professional body.

### Checklist: Choosing the right course

- be sure you are clear which occupation you intend to follow
- make sure that your course will qualify you for registration (as a counsellor) or give you the graduate basis for registration (as a psychologist)
- compare the institutions' teaching and research assessment scores by going to [www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/reviewreports.htm) (teaching) or [www.hero.ac.uk/rae/index.htm](http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/index.htm) (research). For further information refer to *Quality issues* in this series
- make sure that the course you choose will help the career you hope to pursue in your country.

## 2 Entrance

Psychology degree courses can be very competitive. You could be asked for high grades at A-level/Scottish Higher or equivalent. Typical grades are ABB and BBC. You may also be asked for a minimum standard of English.

Counselling degree courses will also ask for A-level/Scottish Highers or equivalent, but are not as competitive as psychology courses.

## 3 How can I register as a professional?

In the UK, you do not need to be registered to call yourself either a counsellor or a psychologist, but employers are increasingly asking for registration or accreditation.

### **Psychology**

Registration is as a chartered psychologist on the Register of Chartered Psychologists, administered by the British Psychological Society (BPS). To qualify for registration as a chartered psychologist with the BPS you need to have successfully completed the following :

- A BPS-accredited honours degree in psychology (three years).
- A BPS-accredited postgraduate professional training programme (one to three years). Each branch of psychology has its own prescribed training programme –it may be a postgraduate certificate, a postgraduate diploma, a Master's or a doctorate. The branches you can specialise in are : counselling psychology, clinical psychology, educational psychology, occupational psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, teaching and research.
- An additional period of directly supervised work experience (one to three years).

Not all psychology graduates go on to become chartered psychologists. They may go into other fields such as market research, social work, nursing, advertising, sales, personnel management and careers guidance – all areas in which a psychology degree will provide a good basis.

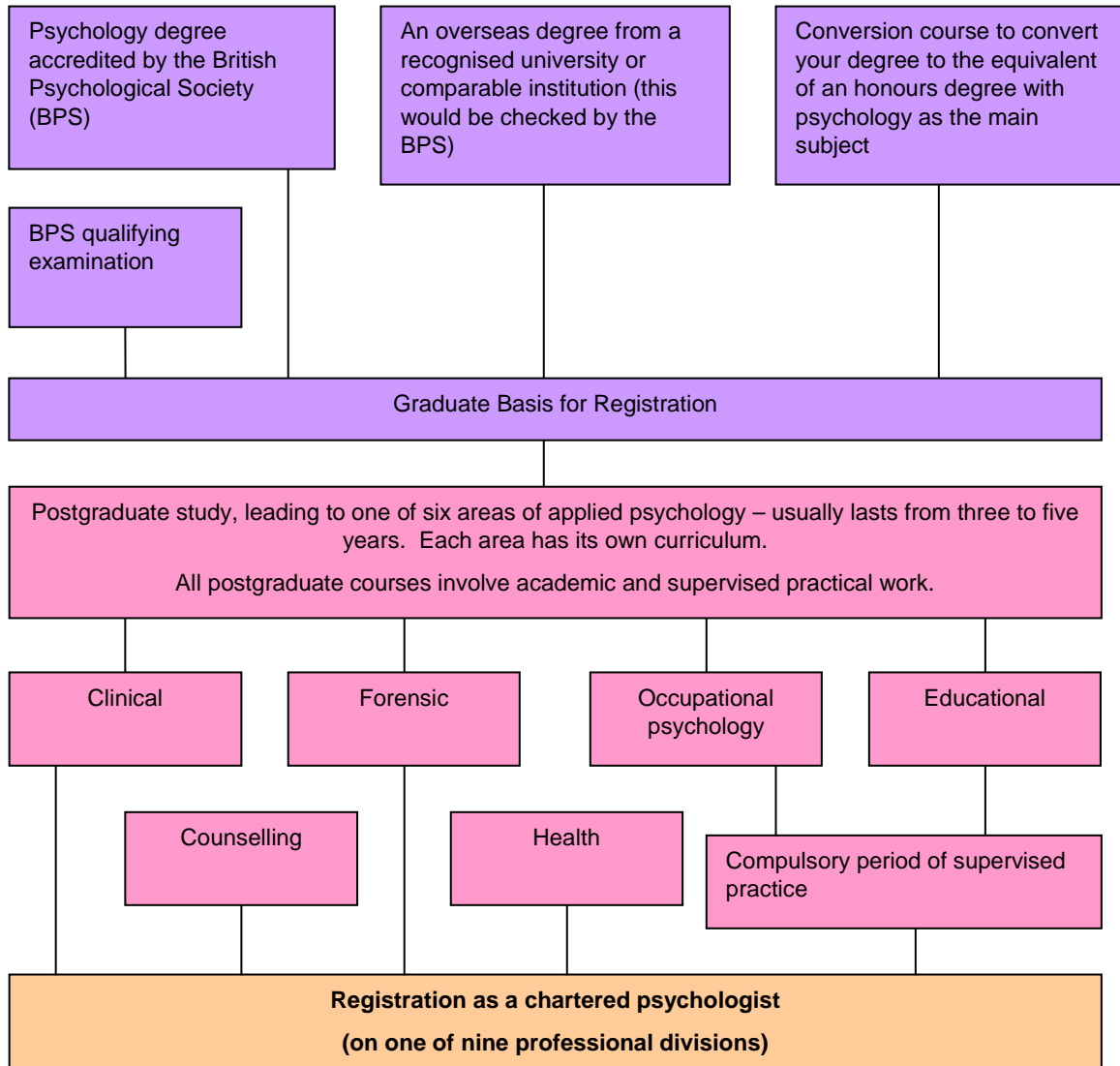
A degree in psychology is essential for the following careers:

- clinical psychology
- counselling psychology
- educational psychology
- forensic psychology
- health psychology
- occupational psychology
- neuropsychology
- sport psychology

- teaching and research in psychology.

With modular degrees (degrees that let you choose options), you may need to choose certain areas of study to be awarded an accredited degree. This is necessary as a step towards becoming a chartered psychologist.

**Qualifying as a chartered psychologist**




**Counselling**

Registration on the UK Register of Counsellors is through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). You will need to show that you have a combination of qualifications and experience. Several combinations are acceptable (for details, look at the BACP website [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)).

To join the UK register, you also need to show that you have had forty hours of personal counselling (as the person being counselled, not the counsellor).

**Would a United Kingdom qualification be recognised in other countries?**

UK academic and professional qualifications are respected all over the world. However, there is no arrangement between countries for practising as a psychologist or counsellor. You should always contact the national



psychology/counselling body in the countries in which you want to work. The BPS website [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk) has an area, 'Useful Contacts', which gives contacts of psychological bodies worldwide.

## 4 Next Steps

### Checklist: Your next steps

- 1 Before you start a UK course, do some thorough research at home (or in the countries in which you want to work) about the best qualification for your chosen career.
- 2 Always ask for the course prospectus.
- 3 If you want to practise as a chartered psychologist, ensure that your course is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS). Similarly, if you intend to become a registered counsellor, choose a course accredited by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

## 5 Where can I find more information?

### British Council Education information

Website [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at [www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm) which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

### EducationUK Scotland

Website [www.educationukscotland.org](http://www.educationukscotland.org)

### Wales International Consortium

Website [www.walesinternationalconsortium.com](http://www.walesinternationalconsortium.com)

### British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

BACP House  
35-37 Albert Street  
Rugby  
Warwickshire CV21 2SG  
Telephone +44 (0) 870 443 5252  
Fax +44 (0) 870 443 5161  
Website [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

### Relate

Email [enquiries@relate.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@relate.org.uk)  
Website [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

### Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

P O Box 28  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ  
Telephone +44 (0) 870 1122 211  
Fax +44 (0) 1242 544961  
Email [enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ucas.ac.uk)  
Website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

167-169 Great Portland Street  
London W1W 5PF  
Telephone +44 (0) 20 7436 3002  
Fax +44 (0) 20 7436 3013  
Email [ukcp@psychotherapy.org.uk](mailto:ukcp@psychotherapy.org.uk)  
Website [www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)


### Other useful resources

*British Qualifications 34<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Kogan Page, 2004, ISBN 0 7494 4138 0) – lists every recognised qualification on offer in the UK, by schools, colleges, universities, business schools, learned societies, trade and professional bodies and associations.

*Occupations 2004* (DfES 2003, ISBN 0 86110864 7) Connexions compilation, an in-depth guide of over 600 career choices of all types from unskilled to professional work, also list prospects and qualification for each occupation.

*CRAC DCG2: Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics 2004/05* (Trotman 2004, ISBN 0 8566 0924 2) This allows applicants and their advisers, *Degree Course Guides* are unique because each degree presents a wide range of information on a specific degree discipline, laid out in tabular format enabling at-a-glance course comparisons

*Training in Counselling and Psychotherapy Directory 2004* (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 18<sup>th</sup> edn) – contains over 340 pages, with course listings for over 350 university, further education college and specialist training providers. Courses are listed by county and region for ease of use with a national section also



included for larger training organisations - Ordering details on the BACP website (see 'Where can I find more information?').

*UKCP's Directory of Member Organisations 2004/2005* (United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapy) – details of all training courses. Ordering details on the UKCP website [www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk).

The booklets *Studying Psychology* – a guide for international students – and *Careers in Psychology* are both available to download from the BPS website [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk).

**NB.** Please note these books may not be available at your local British Council office.

*While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct and up to date, the British Council accepts no legal liability for its accuracy, currency or completeness.*

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