

Alumni Careers

What can I do with my
Psychology degree?

www.bristol.ac.uk/psychology/

According to the British Psychological Society's careers website, only about 20 per cent of psychology graduates end up working as professional psychologists. However, this does not mean that psychology graduates do not use the skills they have learned during their degree. They are well placed for careers and further training in a wide variety of fields. Here, with the help of our past students we highlight just a few examples of these career options.

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Teaching

Dr Kim Gin, Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS PICU, London
BSc Psychology, PGCert Psychological Therapies,
MSc Neuropsychology, University of Bristol
DClinPsych, Kings College, London, 2020
A-Levels: Psychology, English Lit, Sociology, Welsh Bacc



How did you get your job?

I was interviewed towards the end of my doctoral training.

A typical work day involves holding individual and group sessions with young people, attending case reviews and meetings with colleagues and undertaking administrative duties and supervision sessions. We are a psychiatric intensive care unit (PICU) for adolescents between the ages of 12 to 18 years of age. Our eight-bedded, mixed-sex unit is part of the South London Partnership, and is located within the heart of south London at the Bethlem Royal Hospital. We provide short, focused admissions (six to eight weeks) to decrease the level of risk so that the young person may be transferred back to a less restrictive environment. We treat young people experiencing severe mental health problems, and who require a hospital admission within a more intensive and secure setting. All of the young people admitted to our unit will be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. Should the young person's level of risks exceed that which can be safely managed on a PICU, or their level of risk is continuing beyond a reasonable period, they may be transferred to a low or medium secure unit for on-going treatment. We offer a broad range of treatments, including medication, cognitive behaviour therapy, group work, psycho educational family work, systemic family work and art psychotherapy. Our multidisciplinary team is made up of psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, teachers, occupational therapists, social workers and other therapists. A 24-hour, seven day a week emergency admission service is offered for both new presentations to services via A&E, the police, or for those requiring transfer from general adolescent units within the South London Partnership. We maintain close links with the person's referring team to ensure they experience a smooth transition back to the local general adolescent unit or in some cases straight to the community. Our ward is part of the larger CAMHS inpatient care pathway across the South London Partnership, which includes crisis care, generic adolescent inpatient care and a supported discharge service. I am new in post - but very much enjoying working with a highly skilled multi-disciplinary team with young people with very complex presentations. My career ambition is to become a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and academic.

What have been your challenges?

Starting on an in-patient ward wearing PPE masks has been quite tricky in terms of engaging young people.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Do not give up your personal life for a career in clinical psychology! Prioritise self care.

Dr Jenna Todd Jones, Clinical Psychologist, Lecturer
BSc Psychology, 2009; MSc Neuropsychology, 2010;
PhD, University of Bristol, 2015; DClin Psych, 2018
A-Levels: Psychology, English Literature, Theatre &
Computer Studies



How did you get your job?

I studied for a very long time! A clinical psychologist works with people with severe, enduring, and complex mental health difficulties. I chose to specialise in caring for people with brain injuries or degenerative brain conditions such as Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis, as well as stroke, a traffic accident and cancer. I am also a lecturer at Bath University where I teach students about clinical psychology and the brain. A typical day involves meeting NHS patients either at the hospital or in their homes. I talk to them about how I can support them with psychotherapy. I also spend a lot of time talking to the staff I work with about how physiotherapy, occupational therapy, language therapy, and nursing. I also train staff in new ideas and research in mental health with brain injuries, and can be used in treatment. I also conduct research alongside local university students and trainee clinical psychologists. When you see a patient who struggled very badly at first begin to recover it makes me happy! I plan to complete the Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology (QICN), to become a registered clinical neuropsychologist. I hope to continue working partly at the hospital and partly lecturing at the University as I thoroughly enjoy both jobs!

What have been your challenges?

It has been a demanding journey and I will admit that at times I wasn't sure if I was the right person for this job, and whether I had the strength to commit to getting here. I struggled with my mental health personally, which has only made me a stronger advocate for this work.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

My psychology degree provided me with a grounding in knowledge and theory and inspired me to pursue my career. My MSc allowed me to study further in this area. My PhD developed my ability to design and conduct research. Clinical psychologists are evidence-based practitioners, meaning we use research findings of therapeutic interventions to determine our practice. I also trained in using electroencephalography (EEG), eye-tracking, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). My Doctorate in Clinical Psychology was necessary in order to practice as a clinical psychologist. I gained experience in different disciplines before specialising. I conducted research examining how positive psychology traits like resilience are linked with return to work after a brain injury. I also volunteered a lot for public engagement events which helped me develop my communication skills.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Be prepared for the long slog, it is very much worth it. Understand exactly what the job entails and if it is the right one of you. There are many parallel professions that may better suit you. Look after yourself! If my work has taught me anything it's that life is short, and you must do what makes you happiest in the short- and long-term. Having said this, when you figure out how to balance that out let me know!

Dr Jess Colenutt, Clinical Psychologist in Neuropsychology
BSc Psychology, University of Birmingham, 2015
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2016
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology University of Bath
A-levels: Biology, Psychology, Physical Education & Dance



How did you get your job?

I found out about this role through networking during elective placements whilst on doctoral training. I work at the Neuropsychology Department, Southmead Hospital (North Bristol NHS Trust) and Totus Community Neurorehabilitation (Bristol and South Wales). We offer specialist assessment and cognitive intervention.

My working week in the NHS is spread across therapeutic interventions for multiple sclerosis, diagnostic neuropsychological assessments for early onset cognitive disorders and a range of other neurological conditions. I also work privately, predominantly working with litigation cases as a result of accidents or medical negligence. This involves multidisciplinary neurorehabilitation working towards person-centred and meaningful goals, often drawing on cognitive neurorehabilitation models, cognitive behavioural therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy and trauma-informed approaches. Each day is very varied, working with a variety of different conditions and varying between diagnostic neuropsychological assessment and different models of intervention. There is often the element of unpredictability and having to respond to unexpected events which keeps things very interesting. It also means there is a need to often think creatively. I love meeting a diverse range of people and making meaningful connections. I meet people at a particularly difficult time in their lives when there may be no one who can hold a space where they feel able to be vulnerable and it feels like an absolute privilege to be able to sit within a space where people share their vulnerabilities with you. I also find the inquisitive nature of neuropsychology and formulating a complex picture of inter-related factors very rewarding when trying to understand how a person's life experiences may shape how they present and cope with a neurological condition. I'm aiming to access the Specialist Register of Clinical Neuropsychologists and perhaps do some expert witness work in the longer term.

What have been your challenges?

The journey to get onto clinical training was hard work and can make you question whether you will ever reach your end goal, however perseverance and enjoying learning within each role along the way made the journey very rewarding. Neuropsychology also encourages you to reflect on your own life experiences in order to better understand what you bring to your practice and this can be a challenge.

In what way is your education relevant to this role?

I chose to take neuropsychology based modules within my undergraduate degree. I took a module called 'why we remember, why we forget' which was all about memory processing, clinical neuropsychology and ageing and brain damage in the attention system and intellectual disability. This helped foster some knowledge to then go on and do a Masters in Applied Neuropsychology. I believe the taught content of these qualifications was crucial to gaining my first Assistant Psychologist posts and allowed me to have a foundation of clinical skills to further build upon. I still draw on a lot of this content in my clinical practice now.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

I'd tell people to never give up on the end goal, to reach out and seek as many opportunities as possible.

Dr Alex Drake, Clinical Psychologist, Devon NHS Trust
BSc Psychology, Manchester Metropolitan University 2014
MSc Research Methods, University of Bristol, 2015
DClinPsy, University of Exeter, 2020
A-Levels: Physics, Computing, Psychology, Maths



How did you get your job?

After completing a 4-year Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, I applied through NHS jobs for this position. My role involves treating older adult mental health problems, complex neuropsychological assessments and providing psychological input to an Older Persons Community Mental Health Team. I provide interventions to patients using an approach called intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy (ISTDP) in 90-minute sessions. The patients I see might be experiencing anxiety and depression that has not responded to previous treatment as well as thoughts of self-harm or suicide; bipolar disorder; hoarding disorder; or personality disorder. I attend multidisciplinary team meetings, undertake neuropsychological assessment of patients with suspected dementia and attend supervision sessions with clinical colleagues and I really enjoy the breadth of this role. I am very interested in providing and improving therapy outcomes for patients. I am also fascinated by the brain. Working with older adults is one of the best ways to provide therapy and develop my neuropsychological skills at the same time. I am also interested in developing and promoting our understanding of the interface between body and mind, and psychological problems manifest in the body as unregulated anxiety, functional neurological symptoms, and more. My ambition is to further our understanding of the factors which determine therapeutic gains to improve outcomes for patients.

What have been your challenges?

Assessing and providing an opinion to differentiate suspected dementias is complex and intellectually demanding work, especially given the implications of a dementia diagnosis to a patient's life. Providing therapy over the internet has also been difficult with the older adult population, some of whom have no internet-enabled devices or whose computer literacy is very poor, making the therapy process harder.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My MSc enabled me to secure a place on the University of Exeter Clinical Psychology doctorate. I had applied five times previously without securing a place. Learning advanced methods and statistics at Bristol strengthened my DClinPsy application and gave me the knowledge and confidence to talk about my research during the interview in a compelling way.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Work hard; read more; don't give up; and, if you want to become a clinical psychologist, get some therapy - it helps (and not in the way you might think).

Dr Laura Wade Clinical Psychologist, Adult ADHD,
Bristol
BSc Psychology, PGCert Psychological Therapies,
MSc Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, DClinPsych
A-Levels: Biology, Chemistry, Maths, History



How did you get your job?

I have worked at the Adult ADHD Clinic in Bristol for the last two and a half years. After completing my doctorate I used the NHS jobs site to look for NHS positions in clinical psychology. My job entails providing specialist assessment and treatment to adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the development of clinical formulation and therapeutic interventions. In addition, I provide consultation and supervision to other staff and students and engage in a number of clinical research and audit projects. My working week is very varied. One day a week I see patients for new assessments of ADHD. I also see patients who are transitioning their care from child to adult services. I may also see patients for reviews of on-going treatment. This means I also do a lot of report/letter writing as part of my job. I also do guest lectures on ADHD for various clinical training programmes in the South West. The most rewarding part of my job is helping patients gain insights into their own condition and changing their lives as a result of the therapy I can offer. I hope to continue working in the NHS as a clinical psychologist and hopefully in more senior roles such as a clinical lead. As a service we have a long waiting list which patients are unhappy about. Working in the NHS means that there is always more demand than resources and this can be challenging.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

As a psychologist I need both my BSc and DClinPsych to legally practice so these were relevant requirements. The MSc helped me learn about an interesting area very relevant to what I do now and also provide further evidence of my academic and research abilities. The PGCert was a specialist CBT qualification and was part of my first job in the NHS, where I was providing CBT for anxiety and depression in the community. In my spare time earlier in my career, I did voluntary work in the NHS and also charities, such as Headway. This was invaluable in terms of gaining experience, good references and also showing my commitment to my career. This is vital in my opinion in a career in clinical psychology which is a very competitive field.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Make sure that you want to do clinical psychology rather than just working in mental health in general. Explore other related careers before choosing the most competitive one (e.g., psychiatry, mental health nursing, occupational therapy, social work or counselling). Get as much work experience as you can either in the NHS or with charities. Do not rely on your degree alone. Build good relationships with your employers and do the basic stuff like turn up on time, appropriately dressed and treat people with respect. You never know when you will need them for a reference! Also, try to learn something from every job you do.

Georgina Cox
Trainee Clinical Psychologist, London
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014
A-Levels: Classical Civilization, Economics, Physics



How did you get your job?

I had to apply to a university course offering a professional doctorate in clinical psychology. To get onto the course, I needed several years of experience working clinically with people experiencing mental health difficulties. I have been in this role for about 6 months now. I study part-time and I am on placement part-time with Camden and Islington NHS Trust delivering therapy to people who have experienced psychosis. A typical day involves team meetings, individual therapy sessions with clients and supervision sessions where I can discuss cases that I am working on with my clinical supervisor. I love working with people and doing work that aims to help people to live more meaningful lives. My ambition is to become a qualified Clinical Psychologist.

What have been your challenges?

It took quite a long time to get a place on the clinical psychology doctorate course which came with a number of rejections along the way.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

Gaining my psychology degree was a requirement for the course that I am now completing. It is only possible to qualify as a Psychologist if you have an undergraduate Psychology degree that is recognised by the British Psychological Society.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Don't give up after being rejected. Gaining a place on clinical psychology training is a long journey but it is possible and worth it.

Tom Davis, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Exeter
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2012
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2014
A-Levels: Physics, English Literature, Biology



How did you get your job?

Following an undergraduate degree in Experimental Psychology and MSc in Applied Neuropsychology I was keen to work in the field of dementia research. I made applications over the course of a few years through the competitive national Trainee Clinical Psychology application process as I worked in an Assistant Psychologist role and was awarded a place following my third application.

My job is to undertake and meet the requirements of a structured programme of learning including personal study, academic work, research, clinical practice & placement learning and assessment leading to the award of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. The typical day of a trainee clinical psychologist usually involves working towards one of these three strands through lectures, written or presented assignments, research projects, or clinical work.

I value the opportunity to continue to engage in learning whilst applying the knowledge in a variety of placement settings with a variety of people including clients, academics, and healthcare professionals. This leads to a rewarding experience and invaluable personal and professional growth through the supportive structure and supervision, and peer relationships developed during the training. I hope to continue my professional development to train as a Clinical Neuropsychologist, to work in line with my values to draw on multiple models of evidence-based psychological therapy to tailor psychological therapy to each individual client's unique needs, presentations, abilities and experiences.

What have been your challenges?

Hailing from a research-focused background, neurobiological explanations of behaviour had sat well with me. I was naturally drawn to build on this knowledge through the challenge of making sense of my own personal emotional world developed through reflective practice and to relate with others through the professional work of a trainee clinical psychologist in ways to support others to make sense of and develop maps of often complex and internal landscapes.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

The MSc Applied Neuropsychology course allowed me to begin to develop the skills of critically appraising academic psychology and research into clinical applications. This was facilitated by the course delivered by practising clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

The experience of working towards a career in Clinical Psychology is a unique and valuable one that can only be enhanced through experiences that lend themselves to a reflective, compassionate, and curious stance towards yourself and others.

Nina Rabbit

Assistant Psychologist,

Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

BSc Psychology, University of Bristol (2019)

A-Levels: Biology, Philosophy & Ethics, History



How did you get your job?

I had been applying for a few months and got a few different interviews for psychology related roles. Luckily, in the end I got offered two roles and I chose this Assistant Psychologist role. I had previous experience during my undergraduate degree working as a tutor and a large part of that role involved working with children with special educational needs. I also volunteered at a mental health charity supporting them with groups, one-to-one sessions and their telephone service. I had been president of the Black Dog Project working with many local schools on mental health education. This was all valuable experience in getting my current role. I love the variety of the work and how I am constantly learning and growing. Learning new things and educating yourself about different topics is actively encouraged. This really suits me as I am a naturally curious person. I also love the interaction with the service users and their families. I find it so fulfilling to work with someone and build up that therapeutic relationship. It is such a privilege for people to share their experiences with me. On the flip side I also really enjoy the research and service evaluation side of things and I find it exciting that research can be used to inform the way services run going forward. Ultimately, I love that the role is geared towards helping people. I hope to one day study for a Clinical Psychology doctorate and go on to work as a qualified Clinical Psychologist.

What have been your challenges?

The biggest challenge so far has been getting an interview for mental health related jobs and working out what makes a good application. It's tricky to stand out from the crowd with so many people applying to these kinds of jobs. Another challenge has been being able to switch off at the end of the day - I am still working on this!

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

We use theories I learned in my psychology degree all the time. For example, attachment theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs etc. My degree is directly relevant to my work and that is what I love about it because I really enjoyed my degree subject. Having a psychology degree is a requirement for Assistant Psychologist posts so in that way it is also a necessity.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Try and get relevant experience as early as possible. Perhaps work as a healthcare assistant, support worker or with children with special educational needs. It can be so valuable to leave university with experience already under your belt. It is a competitive field, but someone has to do it and why shouldn't that person be you?!

Jessica Towner

Assistant Psychologist, Recovery Advisor and HCA
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2019
MSc in Early Intervention in Psychosis, KCL, 2022
A-Levels: Psychology, English Literature, Performing Arts



How did you get your job?

I work for the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust as a Health Care Assistant, and in Central North West London NHS as an Honorary Assistant Psychologist and a Recovery Advisor at a specialist Personality Disorder centre in Brighton called the Lighthouse. Finally, I am working with a charity called Culture Shift running a mental and physical health program that I co-designed for adults with learning disabilities, for colleges and now am working on developing a specialised format for young people with mental health problems alongside the Discovery College.

The Honorary Assistant Psychologist role involves undertaking assessments and running family intervention and carer support sessions for clients and their families. Soon, I will be starting psychology groups within the service to support clients in relapse prevention and mood management, using therapeutic approaches like acceptance and commitment therapy and narrative therapy, specifically the tree of life. As a Health Care Assistant, I work in the psychiatric intensive care unit in-patient ward in Brighton, it involves supporting patients, doing observations, vitals, room checks, and running activities. As a Recovery Advisor, I cover support groups for clients with personality disorders including social groups, relaxation, and life skills groups (cooking, gardening). I really enjoy having such a varied working life. I aim to complete a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and pursue a career in mental health and wellbeing.

What have been your challenges?

Finances were challenging at times. I believe there are many challenges still to come as the career path I have chosen is not an easy one, but I have had some excellent support from academic staff and colleagues so far and I know I will be able to achieve my aim to be a clinical psychologist.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

My degree allowed me to get a place on my chosen MSc course, which is a stepping-stone to attaining a Clinical Doctorate in the future. which will greatly enhance my application for my doctorate when I decide to apply. During my degree, I volunteered for the Hearing Voices Network and a charity called Changes Bristol and I feel that these experiences taught me so much and prepared me for the daily interactions I have in my work which can sometimes be extremely emotive or challenging.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Working in the mental health and wellbeing area can be tough and it can sometimes seem impossible to gain enough experience to get a job in a clinical setting. Stay resilient even when the jobs or grades aren't going your way. Enhance your CV with extra-curricular experience - it will absolutely help you in the long run. Ask for help when you need it!

Sophie Johnson, Activity Coordinator,
Beacon Centre CAMHS, London
BSc Psychology, University of Bristol, 2017
A-levels: Psychology, Sociology, English Literature &
Language, Welsh Baccaalaureate



How did you get your job?

Prior to my current job as an activity coordinator, I worked as a healthcare assistant on a CAMHS ward. This equipped me with experience of working with service users in a clinical setting. I gained experience of co-facilitating groups during this time and built on experience of conducting 1-1 sessions with the young people. I utilised my interests in walking, cooking and mindfulness and applied these to the workplace to gain employment as an activity coordinator. Having an undergraduate degree in Psychology was beneficial in understanding neurological processes that influence mental wellbeing.

My job involves working in the evenings to deliver a therapeutic ward group programme with an aim to promote functional daily living skills and as well as leisure and psycho-education based groups. I work alongside ward occupational therapists with young people with a range of mental health needs. I plan and facilitate ward based groups to increase each patient's level of independence and help them acquire the appropriate life skills. This includes creative, exercise and culinary activities to contribute to recovery as well as tasks designed to promote relaxation before bedtime.

I really enjoy the variety of my job, and the freedom to bring new ideas to the role. I enjoy working collaboratively with the young people; developing new activities and learning things together. It is really rewarding to see how they progress throughout their admission. My ambition is to train as an occupational therapist and to specialise in Child & Adolescent Mental Health or Specialist Eating Disorders.

What have been your challenges?

I initially found it difficult to deal with challenging behaviours but have since been taught de-escalation techniques which have proven useful. The job can be unpredictable. Some days can be calm and straightforward, while others can be busier and require me to think on my feet.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

I gained a fundamental understanding of how the mind works which helps when working with people with mental health issues. This has subsequently developed into an interest in mindfulness and wellbeing more generally. I particularly enjoyed studying the Nutrition and Behaviour module in my third year and find the content to be useful when working with service users with eating disorders.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Take it slow. There is no rush to become a qualified professional right after graduating. I initially worked as a healthcare assistant in a psychiatric ward. This gave me exposure to a number of different job roles and the opportunity to learn about which areas of the role most interested me. You could start building up this experience while doing bank shifts alongside studying to give you an idea of what you'd like to do next.

Bea Herberts

Director, States of Mind, London

BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014

A-Levels: Psychology, History, Philosophy & Ethics,
English Literature



How did you get your job?

After my degree I began training as a psychotherapist. I felt frustrated by the limited career choices and I wanted to develop ways for therapeutic models and approaches to be applied more easily to people's lives. I completed a social enterprise programme and set up States of Mind. I work with young people in education and community settings to design new forms of support. Each working day always feels different. I do a lot of listening and thinking about people's perspectives and stories. I work with young people, teachers and professionals to come up with new ways of doing things. I love that I work with people and ideas every day. I feel like I get to see a side to life that is often hidden or only explored within friendships and close relationships, so I get to know people on a deeper level through my work. I love having freedom to adapt and change what my work looks like and to think with other psychologists about deep and complex issues in a solution focused way. I would like to contribute to research and policy around new ways of applying psychology to promote mental health in society. My ambition is to inspire others and to support the systems in society to be more psychologically informed and person centred.

What have been your challenges?

I have often struggled with the weight of the responsibility of what I do and the complexity of what I learn can often be difficult to manage if I don't have the right support. I have had to learn so much so quickly and a lot of things I try just don't work, so managing expectations and failures has been a big challenge. I've had to learn how to run a business, get funding, market and promote what I do while also focusing on creating change and all those elements can be difficult to manage.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

I regularly use skills in research methods and evaluation that I developed during my degree and the external speakers who delivered lectures also played a big role in inspiring me to develop my thinking more broadly. I volunteered with community organisations while at university and that really supported me to gain confidence in different settings and become familiar with different ways of thinking and working.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Trust your instincts and personal ambitions. Take risks and work with other people to create new ways of doing things. Our society is an open landscape for developing new ideas and methods for working and the biggest barrier is our own perceptions of what is possible. I encourage anybody who wants a career in the field to explore all the new ways of thinking that are emerging in this field.

Jade Taktak, Enhanced Mental Health Nursing Assistant,
King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
BSc Psychology, University of Bristol, 2019)
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2020
A-level Chemistry, Maths, Psychology



What is your job?

I saw the job advert on LinkedIn and applied through trac.jobs (a website for jobs within the health and public sector). The application process involved writing a supporting statement, followed by a video interview. I work on a trauma ward, so we are always busy. We care for patients who have sustained physical and or psychological trauma. As a result, we see a lot of people with complex mental health issues and brain injuries. I help patients with personal care, feeding and monitoring fluid intake. Moreover, I carry out regular observations including taking patient's blood pressure and temperature, escalating any abnormal scores to the nurse in charge. If patients need to be taken to other areas of the hospital, I normally escort them. As an enhanced nursing assistant, I tend to work one-to-one with patients who have specific, complex care needs. Every day is completely different! Each shift starts with a handover from the previous nursing team. Our aim is to keep patients as independent as they can be, so have to continually assess their capabilities. A lot of the day is also spent answering patient's call bells, especially if they are bedbound. I love meeting so many different people. I have learned so much in the past 4 months, and I am constantly learning which I love. My career aim is to become a clinical neuropsychologist or to work in paediatric psychology.

What have been your challenges?

Working on the COVID wards was extremely emotionally draining as patients would deteriorate rapidly with not much that could be done for them, other than make them as comfortable as possible. However, seeing many patients recover was very rewarding. Shift work is exhausting, although I'm sure I'll get used to it at some point!

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

The assessed presentations definitely gave me the confidence to express my ideas clearly in my job interview, and at work. The focus in my postgraduate studies on taking a biopsychosocial approach has definitely helped me in caring for patient's mental, as well as physical, wellbeing. Also, various roles held in student clubs and societies taught me how to balance a busy schedule whilst finding time to relax.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Get to know your clients/patients/service users as best you can. One of the most important aspects of work in the health sector is tailoring care to meet patient's specific needs. Knowing about someone's past and their goals for the future can definitely help you achieve this. Also, do not be disheartened if you don't get the role you want straight out of university, even if you have a postgraduate degree!

Jack Loxam

Trainee Counselling Psychologist, Dublin

BSc Psychology & Philosophy, University of Bristol, 2015

MA Philosophy, University of Amsterdam, 2017

A-Levels: Psychology, Philosophy, Politics



How did you get your job?

It took me approximately nine months to get onto my training programme. The recruitment process involved me providing a detailed account of my relevant professional experience including my personal reflections on the effects of these, and also a personal statement. Once I had passed this first round I then had to write in a more detailed, personally reflective fashion with four questions (e.g. describe the key personal learnings in your life to date) as guides. The final round took place over a day on campus beginning with a group interview, a written exam and then individual interview. I have two days a week on placement where I conduct psychological assessments and have a case load of between six and eight clients whom I meet weekly for short- to long-term psychotherapeutic treatment. Client sessions are usually around fifty minutes each, and there are also weekly supervision sessions with a Senior Counselling Psychologist who holds clinical responsibility for my work. In between these meetings I undertake the general administrative duties required for case management as well as relevant academic and practical reading required for the course. Days at university involve full days of classes and practical lessons (including group supervision and video analysis of our psychotherapeutic styles) with both permanent and visiting lecturers and trainers. The course also includes typically bi-weekly, six hour days of group psychotherapy with my course mates. I would like to work as a counselling psychologist with a view one day to teach, supervise and/or train others.

What have been your challenges?

Adjusting to the so far less academic and more practical demands of the course compared to previous degrees completed has been a challenge.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

A thorough grounding in psychological research methods and theory is essential for my current course, but equally important has been my experience of volunteering and working in mental health, living and studying abroad, undergoing regular psychotherapy, enjoying and (very rarely) creating art, and listening more deeply to others.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

More practically, gaining relevant experience (both academic and applied) as soon as, as much as, and for as long as you can. Develop your qualities of interpersonal sensitivity and self-reflection as these are key proficiencies in the counselling domain.

Samantha Drake

Engagement Worker, Off the Record, Bristol, UK

BSc Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018

MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2020

A-Levels: Psychology, History, Art & Design



How did you get your job?

I started off as a volunteer Peer Navigator at OTR, where I got a an opportunity to demonstrate my passion and enthusiasm for this work. My days normally start with working through some personal emails and maybe checking our Enquiry mailbox. What happens after is anyone's guess - I could have meetings booked in, be heading into a school to do some engagement work, or making resources for pop-ups and Hubs. In the afternoon I could be on 'Lounge duty' manning the Enquiry Line, or on my way to Yate to set up for the drop-in Hub. All the while supervising volunteers and answering any questions they may have. It's great to be in a role where I can help people with their mental health and also be so creative and involved on the marketing and communications side. There's a real sense that we're doing things differently and talking about mental health in a refreshing way. It's also a pleasure to be able to go into schools, as they're always so grateful to have extra support when it comes to mental health. My ambition is to train as an Education Mental Health Practitioner in order to deliver low intensity interventions in schools.

What have been your challenges?

There is truly so much you can do with this role but there's just not enough hours in the day! When you think about all the schools, colleges, youth clubs, and GP surgeries in Bristol and South Glos, as well as the two universities, there is so much ground to cover. Keeping a work/life balance can be a struggle!

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

Studying both Psychology and Applied Neuropsychology was really helpful as it gave me a good foundation of knowledge about mental health, behaviour and child development. As a university student you gain a great deal of transferrable skills such as computer literacy, time management, organisation, and verbal and written communication skills which are all very relevant to my role. I do wish I had taken more advantage of the student-led volunteering projects on offer though.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Think outside the box. There is a very typical route into mental health (i.e. Support Worker/Healthcare Assistant onto Assistant Psychologist and onto the Doctorate). But there are some great opportunities within the third sector which allow you to gain direct experience in this area. I feel these experiences genuinely help you bring something a bit different to job applications and interviews. Look out for volunteering opportunities. The Peer Navigator programme at OTR is amazing if you're particularly interested in working with young people.

Frankie Dempsey
Student Wellbeing Advisor, University of Bristol
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol (2017)
PGCert Low Intensity Psychological Therapies (2018)
A-Levels: Biology, English Literature, Psychology



How did you get your job?

I started working as a healthcare assistant in a psychiatric hospital and following this worked in a service delivering CBT in primary care. I applied for this role as it was a new service and my previous experience helped me to land the job. My role is about supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties. This might be working through a strategy together, or thinking about other services in the university, or locally that they can engage with. I also support academic staff through training and supervision around how to support students experiencing mental health difficulties, or with more complex needs. The days are varied but usually include student appointments, either face to face, on the phone or online. I'm also involved in liaising with other services such as the NHS, GP or counselling service to follow-up a student referral. In addition, I provide workshops to students on managing common issues such as stress, perfectionism and anxiety. I enjoy the diversity of this role and also my ability to help someone to feel better. I was drawn to this role because students can take something and really run with it; they're more resilient than they might think. In the longer-term, I hope to become a clinical psychologist.

What have been your challenges?

My challenges have included developing a new service from the ground up. The University is an old institution, so change can be a difficult thing to enact. Initially it was challenging to get all staff to 'buy-in' to the service and start a new way of working but I think we have achieved this now.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

Studying psychology got me interested in mental health, and then how to support people with their mental health issues. There were particular units on clinical psychology, social psychology and developmental psychology that are applicable now in my current role. My MSc in applied Neuropsychology has been extremely helpful when working with individuals with brain injury as you can understand why people might be experiencing certain difficulties and how to compensate for them.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

A great piece of advice that was given to me, was to join the bank of a local mental health trust. This way you can get some experience and work with lots of different people and presentations to see what you enjoy and what interests you.

Shiren Goush,
Assistant Educational Psychologist, Bristol CC
BSc Psychology, 2015
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2017
A-Levels: Maths, Biology, Chemistry & English Lit



How did you get your job?

I applied to a job advert and got invited to an interview selection process which involved a group interview, an individual interview and a test. I assist Educational Psychologists in compiling Statutory Reports for Educational Health Care Plans. Usually I will have been sent reports to proofread and cases to prepare. I attend school visits where I will take notes and make detailed observations. I also organise the annual Special Education Needs Conference. I am also involved in training related to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Video Interaction Guidance, Narrative Therapy and Adverse Childhood Experiences. The opportunity to learn about therapy and interventions to help children struggling with social, emotional and mental health needs is really interesting. I really enjoy the supportive work environment, receiving supervision, and having kind and considerate supervisors. I would like to become a clinical psychologist, specialising in sports and movement therapy to help young people struggling with mental health issues. I would also like to contribute to research on depression and other mental health issues.

What have been your challenges?

In my previous role as a mental health youth worker my job was entirely based on direct contact with service users. However, working without supervision and sufficient support led to burnout so my challenge has been to figure out a middle ground that would allow me to engage in report writing and research while allowing direct contact with sufficient support. Another challenge was finding employment relevant to psychology directly. Being an international student made it much harder and the competition is fierce. One of the big challenges I have faced is trying to narrow down my area of interest and being sure about which path I'd like to pursue.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

The MSc course gave me the opportunity to complete a clinical project as an honorary assistant psychologist, an experience which was helpful in getting my subsequent jobs. The training in writing, critical thinking and giving presentations has afforded me the confidence to undertake my current role. I have been involved in numerous voluntary roles which gave me valuable experience and demonstrated my interest and passion in this area of work.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Don't be afraid to take lower paying jobs if they offer you the opportunity to gain experience. This will then serve as a base to propel you into better jobs. Do not worry about how long it takes. Take all the time you need to explore your areas of interest so that you can be sure when you finally pick a suitable route for you. Utilise the contacts you have and speak up, don't be afraid to reach out or ask questions because that is how you will learn and be able to open doors for yourself. Engage in lots of voluntary roles and opportunities in areas that spark your interest.

Lena Berger
Medical Student and Health Care Assistant
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2016
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2017
A-Levels: Maths, Psychology, Biology, German



How did you get your job?

I am currently in my third year as a medical student, and during this training period I am also working part-time as a Health Care Assistant. For this I applied to a position advertised on the NHS careers website. I work 12.5 hour shifts where I help patients to get ready in the morning with their personal care and meals. I measure the vital signs as often as the patient needs (depending on the reason for their admission). I make sure everyone is comfortable and try and help if they are not. Some patients require enhanced care observations, so I sit with them and make sure they are safe and get all the care and help they need. It is very rewarding to be able to help patients with their care. My ambition is to become a doctor and work with patients every day.

What have been your challenges?

Long days and understaffing in the NHS.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

The degrees (especially Applied Neuropsychology) have helped in understanding a variety of health conditions that are common among the patients I care for. It has been particularly useful in caring for patients with degenerative brain diseases as well as strokes and traumatic brain injuries.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Start working in the NHS as an HCA (Bank work can fit around other jobs and studying) just to get the experience of what it is like working in healthcare. Try asking doctors whether you can shadow them for a day to see what their day looks like. Some universities require Chemistry and Biology A-Levels as well as a degree in natural sciences, however some universities just require a degree and ambition or relevant work experience.

Jessica Tingley
Clinical Research Assistant
B.Sc. Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience, 2015
M.Sc. Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2016
A-Levels: Psychology, Sociology, Maths, Chemistry



How did you get your job?

I work as a Clinical Research Assistant at the Bath and North East Somerset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. I applied for this role through an advertisement on the NHS job website. I work on the Beating Adolescent Self-Harm study involving families and young people. A typical working day involves checking study referrals and attending team meetings at any site in the Trust. I will meet with a young person and their parents to complete an assessment. If this was their first assessment, I explain the study and obtain consent. I then record this interaction on the young person's online healthcare records. Next, I input the data into analysis software. I spend time reading research papers relevant to the study and I am writing an article on the use of technology for providing interventions to young people who self-harm. I enjoy interacting with other clinicians and young people and knowing that the study will make a difference to young people. My ambition is to become a clinical neuropsychologist.

What have been your challenges?

Having worked in clinical settings as a healthcare assistant and assistant psychologist for 3 years prior to this role, I found not working therapeutically with young people challenging. Instead of creating care plans, safety plans and develop risk assessments with clients, I have had to adapt my approach as a research assistant, only being required to go through consent forms and questionnaires with clients. I have embraced this challenge and have developed my skill set further as a result.

In what way is your education relevant to this role?

Studying psychology based degrees enabled me to obtain grounding in common mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression and trauma, many of which are related to the topic of the research I am working on now. Research modules during my degrees, as well as my dissertations, gave me the knowledge and understanding of statistics and various research methods relevant to my current role as a research assistant. This helped refine my abilities to critically analyse and write research papers, skills which I am using for my current role. The opportunities to deliver presentations also contributed to my confidence in talking to mental health professionals about research.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Take your time and enjoy the journey. Try to stay mindful and remember any experience is good experience which will help to build your personal and professional skills.

Evelyn Martin, Research Assistant, NHS
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018
MSc Clinical Neuropsychiatry, 2019
IB: Psychology, Biology, Maths, Economics, Modern Greek,
English.



How did you get your job?

I got this opportunity through an advertisement on the NHS jobs website. I have held my position for the past 6 months and my main job is to identify suitable patients through NHS records or through memory clinics and make contact with them regarding our research. Once a patient has been recruited my job is to build a rapport with them to enable me to visit them at home so that I can undertake clinical assessments and arrange any follow-up sessions with them as necessary. Working with patients can be a challenging role but I love learning how to overcome the difficulties I face.

What have been your challenges?

The most challenging part is that most patients with dementia and their carers face really difficult times. Knowing that with neurodegeneration things will only get worse is emotionally quite challenging sometimes.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My MSc dissertation was on mild cognitive impairment and neuropsychiatric symptoms. I also completed a placement at Lewisham Memory services clinic. Both of these experiences gave me research skills, and interpersonal skills that allowed me to recruit patients and build relationships with them.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Take advantage of university and use its connections. Ask your course director if there are any opportunities for you to gain clinical experience through internships or volunteering.

Mei Bai, Graduate Informatics Trainee,
University College London Hospital
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018
A-Levels: Physics, Chemistry, Maths



How did you get your job?

I am on the NHS graduate management trainee scheme (health informatics stream). I have two placements based at UCLH, with two different teams: corporate analytics and workforce intelligence. I use machine learning algorithms to build a model that predicts scheduled hospital attendance. I also support the production of new routine infection control reports, working with the divisional information teams and other customers to ensure these reports clearly and accurately communicate the relevant information. I obtained my job through the NHS graduate scheme and the recruitment process involved an online application and psychometric tests, video interview and attending their assessment centre. The graduate scheme provides an opportunity to work in different teams so I can develop different competencies. It also includes an education element and as part of my role I am undertaking a part-time MSc in Health Informatics at UCL.

What have been your challenges?

Developing new skills can be challenging, so I devote many of my weekends to study. I also have assignments for the Masters degree so sometimes it is tricky to balance work, study and social life.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

A lot of people working in health informatics obtained a degree in psychology or biology (or biochemistry/pharmacology/neuroscience). The modules on statistics helped a lot when I started work, but I wish I had learned R. The more generic, transferable skills gained from my degree also helped me. These include academic writing and presentation skills; critical thinking and analytical skills; abstract reasoning; problem solving; communication and interpersonal skills. The career service was also helpful in terms of preparing for the online job application and assessments.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

A career in this field requires some experience of either technology or healthcare and a degree in a technology-related discipline. There are different roles in this field, from business analytics to data management, or project management which manages major projects to implement new digital systems that put informatics at the forefront of healthcare. Outside of the NHS, companies like EPIC and Babylon are notable in this field, and consulting firms like Deloitte and EY also have roles related to health informatics.

Yongli Chen, Trainee Information Analyst,
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018
A-Levels: Maths, Psychology and Economics



How did you get your job?

My job entails Information management, and I use Excel, Power BI & SQL, it is part of a Level 4 Apprenticeship. I applied online through Graduate Into Health which is part of the Health Innovation Network (HIN). I completed an online application, undertook some cognitive tests and video interviews. I was then invited to an assessment centre, and job interview with my line manager. A typical day involves shadowing senior staff, undertaking routine tasks including gathering data from different sources to compile regular weekly or monthly reports for management. I also attend training programmes to improve technical skills as well as knowledge about the NHS system. Knowing that everything I do every day could contribute to the running of clinical services, and hopefully bring more benefits to the patients and staff is something I really enjoy about this role.

What have been your challenges?

The NHS as an organisation is very complicated. There are a lot of new concepts and operating procedures to learn.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My degree in Experimental Psychology provided me with research and analytical skills which helped me to process information and solve problems in a structured and effective way. I particularly enjoyed the seminars in the Y3 which gave me with an opportunity to develop my oral communication skills. I think these are the most important attributes in my current role.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

The soft and hard skills (e.g. communication skills & Excel) I have developed so far are easily transferable between jobs. The advice I wish I had listened to is to start to apply for jobs early on.

Natali Farran, Senior Research Fellow,
American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

BSc in Nutrition, Lebanese American University of Beirut, 2015

MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2018

A-Levels or Equivalent: French Baccalaureate (Life Sciences)



How did you get your job?

I had worked with my current employer and mentor prior to pursuing my Masters degree in the UK and they were delighted for me to return. As a senior research assistant my job entails performing various clinically related research activities. The main research areas that I contribute to are neuropsychological assessments, and cognitive rehabilitation in Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I have validated several cognitive measures in Arabic in this population such as the Brief International Cognitive Assessment for MS. I have also helped develop a tool which examines verbal learning/memory (Verbal Memory Arabic Test). In rehabilitation, we are examining the effectiveness of a novel intervention using Virtual Reality (VR) to decrease cognitive fatigue. My job also entails working within large multi-disciplinary teams within Lebanon. I enjoy working with patients and contributing to research that is relevant to their health care. Working within large multi-disciplinary teams of neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists and engineers, is also really satisfying. My ambition is to become a clinical neuropsychologist and contribute to applied research in the field. I have recently been accepted to King's College in a DClinPsy program.

What have been your challenges?

There are many challenges to working in neuropsychology, especially the cruel nature of neuropsychological impairment. It can be difficult to conduct assessments on individuals with such impairment as you cannot help but be affected by this.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

The Master's degree at Bristol significantly contributed to my current role. The course was heavily focused on neuropsychological assessment, which is one of my main roles. It helped me become grounded in psychometrics (in which I have now published, ex. validating scales and deriving normative data, etc.). One of the skills that the course helped me enhance is in formulation. This has made me approach research more critically from a clinical perspective. Indeed, the course has helped me to become a critical thinker, which is a skill that I apply daily at my current work.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

I would say that while the field is full of challenges, it is very fulfilling. In addition to working with passion, I would also advise others to surround themselves with people who are effective and inspiring within the field, whether it is through a Master's course or other avenues.

Julia Bradley

NIHR Bristol BRC Nutrition Theme, Research Intern

BSc. Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2019

A-Levels: Psychology, Biology, Spanish, Combined English Literature & English Language



How did you get your job?

I applied to an online advertisement on the University of Bristol jobs site and then attended an interview. I work as part of a team of researchers developing a weight maintenance intervention for individuals with type 2 diabetes. This includes searching the scientific literature, writing research and ethics protocols, creating questionnaires and recruitment flyers, attending meetings and public involvement events and communicating with other staff, study participants and external organisations. My typical working day involves attending one or two meetings or talks and carrying out some independent work or seeing participants that are taking part in our studies. I really enjoy the variety. I am always learning new skills and it makes the job more engaging. I also get to attend lots of really interesting events and talks with external speakers. I would like to continue in the field of research but, I am very flexible about my career path in Psychology.

What have been your challenges?

Sometimes it can be quite challenging when I am undertaking a completely new task. For example, I have just started to work on a systematic review with a group of researchers. This is something I have never done before, so I have had to research and learn a lot of new information about how these reviews are carried out.

In what way is your education relevant to this role?

My degree gave me experience in conducting scientific research. In my third year, I carried out an experiment with three other students. This taught me how to design an experiment, prepare important documents such as patient information sheets, recruit participants, analyse data, and write scientific reports. All of these are valuable skills that I use regularly in my current job. My course also helped me to improve my communication skills, such as doing presentations and public speaking. These skills are very important for my job, but are also for life in general.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Work hard and learn how to be proactive during your degree, as this can open up more opportunities for you after university and makes it easier to adapt to a working environment where you are expected to take initiative and carry out tasks independently. During my studies I also found it really useful to take up extra-curricular activities, such as being a committee member for a university society that promotes mental health education. Widening your experience like this helps increase your confidence and you never know when the skills you learn might be useful in your future career.

Dr Fiona Hyland, Senior Programme Manager for Enterprise & Engagement, University of Bristol
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 1992
PhD Psychology, University of Bristol, 1998
A-Levels: Maths, Chemistry, Biology



How did you get your job?

I have been doing my current job for the past two years, although I have held other roles at the University prior to that. A combination of prior work experience, subject knowledge and general persistence led to me being well placed to compete in the recruitment process. My job entails developing a new way of working at the campus we're building at Temple Quarter which involves a more ambitious approach to collaborating with external partners. There is not really any such thing as a typical working day in this role, although attending meetings and writing reports are common requirements. The job provides an opportunity to make positive changes to the city region and the lives of those living and working here.

What have been your challenges?

A 6-year career break looking after my children meant that I had to work hard to get back on the career ladder. Gender & BAME issues are a challenge when you don't quite fit the model of what employers are looking for. Hopefully though this is improving.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

Having a degree opens doors. The extra-curricular activities I undertook at university helped shape the person I was when I started on my career path.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Once you're in a role, don't wait to be recognised for good work, as that might not happen. Be proactive in asking for opportunities and be prepared to move if an organisation doesn't value you.

Sarah von Grebmer zu Wolfsthurn, PhD Student
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2016
MSc Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2017
IB plus AS Maths, Chemistry, Physics, French, German
and Italian.



How did you get your job?

I knew I wanted to do a PhD during my Masters degree. I am currently working on the MultiMind project where I look at the interference of two or more languages within a multilingual brain using EEG and behavioural techniques, and my data collection has taken me to facilities in Germany as well and Spain. I spend my mornings analysing my data, designing the next experiment and keeping up with the literature. I am chair of the PhD Representative Council and organise monthly talks for our experimental group. The rest of the day is spent on data analysis, planning the upcoming weeks, organising my project, discussing with my interns and supervisors about future steps in the project and taking courses alongside my PhD. I'm passionate about neuroscience, so for me working everyday towards a better understanding of what the brain needs to do in order for us to understand a foreign language or to select the right language to speak in is what I enjoy the most. We get a lot of students interested in EEG research, so I also get to teach. I am also in a highly stimulating environment, where I get in touch with research very different from my own and therefore gives me a different perspective on things. Being a Marie Curie Fellow, it also means that we get to travel a lot to conferences, workshops and for data collection, which has been amazing. I would like to stay in academia, as my current favourite environment is a university where I have access to knowledge in the form of laboratories, courses, workshops and conferences. I would like to continue as a postdoctoral researcher once I finish my PhD.

What have been your challenges?

Being in a linguistics department is different in that there is a smaller circle of people who know about psycholinguistic research and methods. The challenge was to reach outside of that circle and cross the university to get support. Since I am the only MultiMind Marie Curie fellow in Leiden, my colleagues from the project are in different countries and getting in touch involves a lot more organisation and travelling.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

From my degree in Psychology, my degree in Neuropsychology and the Erasmus+ intern-ship at the MPI in Nijmegen the research methods part and the science communication part were highly relevant to my current role and led to me being a better researcher. My volunteering work as senior board member at Bristol Nightline and my involvement in the Department of Psychology and Bristol University as peer mentor and PsychSoc member made me a better, more flexible and more open person, which is highly relevant now that I am in a job that requires a lot of travelling and networking with different people from different backgrounds.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Do not give up! If you have set your mind on wanting to do a PhD and if you really want it, you will get there! You need patience and persistence, and do not be discouraged by rejections.

Kate Anning
PhD student, Cardiff University
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018
A-Levels: Maths, Biology and Psychology



How did you get your job?

I got my current position by applying for an advertised PhD studentship and I have been in post for about 6 months now. My work entails carrying out assessments with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, interviewing parents and working as a graduate teaching assistant on a Masters course, alongside my studies. On testing days, I work with children to assess strengths and weaknesses in areas such as language, attention, memory, theory of mind. In my research I work on developing an intervention to improve executive function in this group of children. I also attend regular supervision meetings to discuss the children we see and research which is being undertaken. On teaching days, I provide material and support for MSc workshops. I really enjoy working with children with issues with emotional behaviour. I would like to peruse a career in research or as a clinical psychologist. I am also interested in working in policy surrounding improving care systems for vulnerable children and people.

What have been your challenges?

I've had to learn to manage my time to ensure my teaching and testing duties are met, alongside research and study for my PhD.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

I studied psychology which gave me a strong understanding of the psychological underpinnings of my current research, how to write essays and lab reports, deliver presentations and conduct my own research on an area I am interested in. Alongside my studies I gained experience through voluntary and paid roles, working with children and adults with learning difficulties in care, education and playscheme settings.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Look out for support work jobs. They can be very tough, but they will teach you a lot. Psychology is a very competitive field so explore your options by trying out different things and working with different groups of people.

Helena Davies, PhD Student, Institute of Psychiatry, London
BSc, Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018
MSc by Research, University of Bristol 2019
MSc Genes, Environment & Development, KCL, 2020
A-Levels: Psychology, English Literature, Biology



What is your job?

I'm a PhD student working at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London. I found my PhD on findaphd.com and got in touch with the supervisor to ask some questions about it before applying. There was an application form to fill out followed by an interview with four members of King's staff. At the moment, I'm spending around two hours a day working on tasks for the upcoming Psychiatric Genomics Consortium (PGC) genome-wide association study of anorexia nervosa and binge eating behaviour. Then, I work on one of my own projects, so that might be a few hours of coding, writing, or planning, depending on what stage the project's at. Usually, I have one or two meetings in a day (although this can vary). I'm learning a wide range of skills, from coding to writing social media posts to presenting. This means I'll finish my PhD with a real breadth of skills that will be useful in many different contexts, not just academia. I also love that every day is a little bit different, and that I am in charge of what I do in a day. After my PhD, I may stay in academia, in which case I would like to continue my research into the causes of psychiatric disorders. Or I may pursue a career in research outside of academia or in science communication or, possibly, as a genetic counsellor. That is the beauty of doing a PhD - it gives you a huge range of skills that extend to many different careers (i.e., academia is not your only option!).

What have been your challenges?

It's been a really steep learning curve which means that imposter syndrome has definitely been a challenge for me. In meetings, it's easy to feel as if you are the least competent person in the room and that you don't really belong there. I'm working on this though, and have spoken to many other students who feel the same way!

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

My degree in Psychology gave me a grounding in statistical methods, terminology, and psychological research. During my MSc at Bristol, I took part in a range of science communication initiatives, I went to a conference in Sweden, and I learned how to navigate a student-supervisor relationship. Overall, my experience at Bristol, both my BSc and MSc, set me up well for starting a PhD at King's. The content of the MSc at King's was more specifically relevant to what I do now (many PhD students at the SGDP Centre complete this MSc before undertaking a PhD); it included topics of molecular genetics, social psychology, and advanced statistical methods.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

The best advice I can give is not to be afraid to get in touch with people whose research interests align with your own, even if they're not currently recruiting a PhD student. Speak to a current PhD student or postdoc about your application.

Edouard Bonneville, PhD Student in Biostatistics
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2016
MSc Statistical Science, Leiden University, 2019
OIB Scientific Track. A variant of the French
Baccalaureate with extra courses in English



How did you get your job?

I have been a PhD student for the last two years. I applied a few months before graduating. I was already familiar with the department, as many of the professors were lecturers on my MSc course. The selection process consisted of a single interview. I research/develop statistical methodology, with applications predominantly in the field of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. In particular, I focus on challenges with missing data in survival analysis, with so-called competing risks and multi-state models. My duties include meetings with my supervisors or with other researchers to discuss ongoing projects. I also assist the teaching of statistics to medical students. Otherwise, time is generally split between programming (mainly in R), reading research papers and writing up current studies. I love that I can work on a variety of applications, without necessarily being an expert on any of them. For example, I can work on a project predicting survival 5-years after a pancreatic cancer diagnosis, without knowing much about the cancer itself! I also enjoy the fact that the work I do can have a tangible impact on future medical decision making. Following the completion of my PhD I hope to become a statistical consultant, with focus on medical or biological applications, hopefully combined with teaching.

What have been your challenges?

It has been a challenge to stay motivated and organised. Large amounts of new knowledge need to be processed rapidly, and you can often feel like you are not good enough for the job. Keeping a healthy work-life balance has helped me in this.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

The statistical courses in my psychology degree were important in developing an interest in the topic. The general emphasis on the scientific method and written and oral presentations has been extremely useful. The Master's thesis was however by far the greatest factor for me applying for a PhD position. It gave me the skills to pursue a PhD, despite having not done much Mathematics since high-school, and not knowing how to program beforehand. Extra-curricular sports roles were also helpful in terms of gaining self-confidence and time-management skills.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Learn to program! Even if it is just for fun at the beginning, it is an extremely useful tool. For working in Bio/Medical statistics, a Masters degree is generally a minimum requirement and there are many programs available all around Europe and the US. If you are switching fields, it will be challenging at the beginning but also extremely rewarding.

Dr Madeleine Keehner, Senior Research Scientist,
Educational Testing Service, USA
BSc Psychology, University of London, 1988
PhD in Psychology, University of Bristol, 2002
A-Levels: Psychology, Sociology, Human Biology



How did you get your job?

After my PhD I had a couple of postdoctoral research positions and a couple of university lecturer roles. During this time I was studying how people interact with different kinds of computer-based representations of information. I wrote an application that showed how my academic expertise could be applied to educational technologies. I am involved in projects assessing the use of technology for educational assessment and learning (e.g., computer-based testing, educational simulations). I advise on the design of assessment tasks and new digital question types in large scale tests for US national and state education departments. I work on many different projects, involving teams of people ranging from small to large and I really love the fact that this is a very collaborative, team-orientated environment. The work is cross-disciplinary, interesting and extremely varied.

What have been your challenges?

There was a bit of a shift in understanding the culture, going from academia to industry, but not much, since most of my scientist colleagues in the research division at ETS are ex-academics. It seemed like a big decision to leave academia, but I haven't regretted it for a second.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

Having a background in Psychology and knowing about human cognition, especially general processes such as working memory, learning and reasoning has been very useful to me and allows me to offer this expertise across a wide range of projects in the education field. I am amazed how often I find myself remembering back to things I learned in my degree when we are trying to work out why we got certain findings in our research studies. Studying interactive technologies has been useful as well. An understanding of research methods, including how to ask critical research questions and design good empirical studies to investigate them, and being confident in exploring, visualizing, and analysing data, have been highly valuable for the research projects I work on. Because so many domains have access to huge amounts of data, these skills are in high demand.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

My top tip for those wishing to enter this field (and many others) is to become comfortable with manipulating, visualizing and analysing data. Data scientists, data analysts, and many other similar job openings need people who can make sense of the masses of user data that are flooding many different fields, including education.

Daisy Mummery,
Development Policy & Improvement Officer, Bristol
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018.
A-Levels: Psychology, Geography and Biology.



How did you get your job?

I was alerted to my current position at Sovereign Housing Association through a person I knew, who encouraged me to apply and I have been doing this for two years now. My work involves the development of policies and procedures behind affordable housing development. My typical working day involves office work, site visits, and networking with key stakeholders. I really enjoy the varied nature of the work I do. In the future though I would like to be able to move into a job more specifically related to my psychology training.

What have been your challenges?

Starting in a role that did not exist before and finding my feet.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My degree in Psychology provided me with key skills in statistical analysis and academic writing that have been invaluable in my current role.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Never say never!

Steve Gatfield
Group Chairman, Elmwood Design, USA
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 1981
A-Levels: History, English, Economics



How did you get your job?

I had several years experience running top-tier creative industry enterprises across UK, US and Asia Pacific, gaining an understanding of acquisitions and start-up development in the digital sector. I have been lucky enough to lead organisations that have won Cannes Grand Prixes and even an Oscar. Competing with the best is a foundational experience. I've been Group Chairman at Elmwood for the past 4 years. My role is to oversee strategic development of the business with key clients as well as corporate development of new ventures and this includes responsibility for key management hiring.

A typical day varies from driving the key objectives and goals across our operations to deep involvement in new business development with our major global clients. Our product is a combination of strategy, inspiration and craft. Design is becoming ever more important not least because design thinking is at the heart of usability and engagement. Iconic design creates an indelible impression that deepens meaning and memorability. It is exciting when you are creating meaning!

What have been your challenges?

Creative industries are an unusual blend of art and science and the spark of creativity is tied closely to the talent and culture you create. It is inherently fragile and on occasions it is challenging to reconcile the commercial ambitions for the business with the cultural character to which you aspire.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My foundation in psychology and human behaviour has been key. I have always looked for hypotheses to test and have been interested in building diversity into teams to achieve exceptional results. I took on a few leadership roles whilst at university from reviving and running Niteline to setting up a theatre company.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

The world is changing faster than you can teach it. If you want to prosper in innovation you have to open yourself up to new influences, be relentlessly curious and develop core knowledge in the skills and frameworks required to innovate successfully.

Antonia Austyn

PR Account Executive, Nous Communications

BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol 2017

A-Levels: Psychology, Geography and English



How did you get your job?

My current job involves coordinating media campaigns and media coverage for Bang & Olufsen. In this role, a typical day involves looking for press opportunities for my client and meeting with journalists to talk about new launches for the brands I support. I work on current campaigns for the press and issue media information for those clients. I was originally an intern at the company and this helped me to get my current position.

What have been your challenges?

My initial challenge has been to overcome shyness when talking to journalists which has improved a lot! I am aiming to become a PR Director in 5 years.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

The content of my degree in Psychology placed an emphasis on understanding human behaviour which is useful when trying to understand how to grab a journalists attention or how to make your brand stand out in the media. Specifically, content on academic writing, presentation skills, and critical thinking are essential to this role. The career service was also helpful in terms of preparing for the online job application and assessments. I really enjoy the social aspect of the role which involves working with journalists, meeting with new people and coordinating events.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Try to do as much extra-curricular activity as you can, to help you with getting a job after university - you don't necessarily have to know what you want to do but any experience you do get will help you climb the career ladder faster

Olivia Outram
Management Consultant at Blackdot Consulting
BSc in Philosophy & Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014
A-Levels: Biology, History & Philosophy



How did you get your job?

I worked at Accenture, a Global Management Consultancy and applied to Blackdot after being contacted by a recruiter via LinkedIn with some available roles from boutique consultancies. I have held my current position for about a year now. This is a client facing role where I work on consulting projects which are based around customer centric growth. We also undertake benchmarking of their sales managers and leaders against our Global database. This gives our clients a relative score of where their staff sit against their global peers. Based on the results we are able to give them a view of their strengths and their opportunities at a team, country and individual level in order to input into their development plans. The job is office based with a team of ten people in a central London office - throughout the day we have team meetings, conference calls with the client and I manage several projects as the project manager and work with a number of clients. The team I manage is a fun group of people who are all very ambitious and working towards the same goal of growing our company and our brand. I am responsible for hiring and training new staff to maintain this important balance of skills and team working. My ambition is to run my own company because I enjoy leading and managing people.

What have been your challenges?

The challenge for me was to decide what I wanted to do with my life. My advice is to just go for any opportunity that arises, you don't need to know if it's what you will do for the rest of your life. Try it, see if you enjoy it, and go from there. You can always try something else, but not going for things or making decisions will hold you back.

In what way is your education relevant to this role?

The research, analytical and writing skills I gained in my degree have been invaluable. We also have projects employing psychological profiling which has been really interesting! We do assessments around the personality traits, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability of the workforce to help inform our findings and insights.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Apply to a global management consulting company out of university, they have the best opportunities and training you could possibly get at the start of your career!

Thanaj Amin
Business Development Associate, PitchBook, UK
BSc Psychology, University of Bristol, 2019
A-Levels: Biology, Politics, Geography



What is your job?

I'm a Business Development Analysis at PitchBook in London, a financial data and software company providing thousands of global business professionals with comprehensive data on the private and public markets. This role entails liaising with potential clients in the Private Equity, Venture Capital and Mergers & Acquisitions space across Europe, Middle East, and Africa. It's a trainee role and currently involves researching a potential client, scheduling calls to understand what deals they are working on and how PitchBook can help. I work closely with senior members of the team to understand our clients and the private market complexities relevant to their needs. Exciting things happen in the private market and our product is well trusted in the field to help make those choices.

What have been your challenges?

It is a totally new space for me and there is a lot going on to navigate. Plus, there are very few women especially of colour and from my social background so it is up to me to pave the way.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

Communications needs to be clear and concise, and my science training has helped me in this regard and clients appreciate this way of consulting. Much of the Psychology degree involved statistics and data processing skills, these have been essential for me to be able to interpret research reports and present information clearly to others.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Unpacking jargon is simpler than it seems, so this is an important skill to focus on. Private Equity, Venture Capital and Mergers & Acquisitions does not have to be an exclusive space, I can be accessible to people with a willingness to learn and be curious and overcome any obstacles you face.

Ruhani Duggal

Creative Director, Vilasa Travel, India

Bsc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2018.

A-Levels: English, Psychology, Political Science, Economics & History.



How did you get your job?

I observed a gap in the market between what was offered as luxury and what the clients wanted and thus, Vilasa was born as a brand. I guess you could say I didn't get the job, I created the job! I have been Creative Director for about two years. The job entails understanding the psyche of travellers from different countries and crafting bespoke travel experiences. Since Vilasa is young as a brand, I wear multiple hats throughout the day which I love! I brainstorm with my creative team for product and promotional materials and check on their well-being. In between, you can catch me juggling anything from excel cost sheets to writing hand-written notes for our travellers. I make sure to always end the day with uninterrupted reading, it's what energizes me to innovate. I love how diverse my role is at the moment. It gives me the chance to learn extensively, but it's also really honed my design thinking skills. I'm often called upon for a 'psychological hack' when we're stuck in a tricky situation! What I strive for everyday is to create a difference, not just for my clients but also our partners. The goal is to transform the way people travel. If I can retire as a respected individual in my industry, I'll be content.

What have been your challenges?

It is a challenge to be a woman in the tourism industry in India. Since the job requires odd work hours and frequent travelling, it is mainly a male dominated field where I have to work twice as hard to be considered just as good as my male counterparts.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

Studying psychology was an essential contributor to starting my own travel brand. I was the only Indian student in our class, so adjustment did take some time but today, I have the confidence that I'll fit into any work role required. In class, we were encouraged to debate, to critique and to question things, a skill I wasn't taught before. Acting as the course representative really honed my communication and leadership skills. Today, I work with a team of over 50 people all across the globe and communication's never been a challenge. The statistical analysis skills I gained have also been invaluable in my current role.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Don't be afraid to break the mould. If your idea shakes the table there's nothing like it! It is what will get the attention and appreciation of your future clients. A personal touch, no matter how small, will also make a difference, so do pay attention to the personality of your clients. Oh, and remember, a happy traveller tells five but an unhappy traveller tells fifteen!

Adam Fanthorpe
Senior Researcher, WarnerMedia, London
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2015
A-Levels: Psychology, Human Biology, Physical Education



How did you get your job?

I initially applied for a 3-month intern position with the company and following that I got a permanent job with them. The role involves conducting research for executive level roles (Director and above) across all of the WarnerMedia businesses including Warner Bros., Turner Broadcasting (CNN, Cartoon Network etc.), HBO and WarnerMedia Corporate in EMEA territories. A typical day involves supporting the Search Directors with candidate sourcing, calls to market, interview scheduling, client reports, market-intel projects, application screening and management of our ATS and social media platforms. I enjoy staying up to date with industry news and trends, learning about new functions and roles and understanding how a global media business works. My ambition is to continue learning and developing my executive search skills both in terms of research and sourcing but shifting more towards client and candidate management, with the hope to become a Search Director leading senior global assignments within the media and technology space.

What have been your challenges?

It has been a challenge conducting research in different countries and understanding new job functions that were previously unfamiliar to me (e.g., data science).

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My Psychology degree was heavily research focused and taught me valuable skills such as report writing, data collection, insights and analysis. These are all relevant and transferable skills in my current role as a Senior Researcher.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Having prior experience in a research focused role and study is very valuable here and in terms of specific personal qualities, this field requires patience, diligence and the ability to manage or deliver large projects independently and within a team.

Alexandra Baines

Research Executive, Technology & Media,
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2017
MSc Strategic Marketing, Imperial College, 2018
IB: History, with higher Maths & Psychology



How did you get your job?

I have worked in my current role for one year and prior to that I applied for a summer internship during my Masters degree and then accessed the company's graduate recruitment scheme. My job involves conducting all stages of commercial research, specialising in quantitative studies for technology and media clients. I also work within the Be Sci team to help companies use our academic and commercial view of behavioural science to understand consumer behaviour and encourage changes. I find the role very interesting and by working with our clients I am constantly learning new avenues to apply my research skills. I use my understanding of psychology and push myself to research more into this when consulting in behavioural science workshops.

What have been your challenges?

The greatest challenge for me has been learning to manage others in a team.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

The content of my psychology degree was the perfect grounding for this role. I also learned to work in a team and gained presentation skills which has been extremely useful.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

There are research careers beyond those one typically associates with this sort of role (Finance, Consulting, Marketing). I didn't know this field existed whilst at university and it's the perfect combination for those studying psychology who want to move into the commercial world. So my advice is to do as much research as possible while you are at university and make use of the expertise available in the careers service.

Emilie Coalson, Marketing Coordinator, Taboola, UK
BSc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2017
MSc Marketing, University of Exeter, 2018
IB Psychology, Maths Studies, English Literature, French,
Environmental Systems & Societies, History



How did you get your job?

I was recruited by the company's Talent Acquisition team via LinkedIn because I had relevant education and experience in Marketing, and because I spoke Russian - they were looking for someone Russian-speaking for the job. My job entails planning and executing online and offline events, creating marketing assets and managing communications with clients. I am usually in the office, working with my team to make arrangements for all the events that we organise and attend to get the company's name out there. I also work on creating and updating marketing assets like one sheets, brochures and content. A fun part of my job is also taking care of 'swag' - the branded merchandise that we give clients and prospects to build relationships with them. About once a month, I travel to attend an event such as DMEXCO, a huge digital marketing conference held every year in Cologne. When I'm travelling, the days are very long and tiring - I spend all day on site making sure that everything runs smoothly and sales people are well equipped to pitch to prospective clients. It is exhausting, but lots of fun and very satisfying. I'd love to one day be a Head of Content Marketing or Head of Growth for an organisation, building strategy and getting the word out about something that I believe in.

What have been your challenges?

When I started my job, I was overwhelmed by how little I knew about the products and the industry. It seemed like I would never catch up! Throwing myself into the work took care of that and I learned incredibly quickly on the go.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My Psychology degree taught me to take a scientific approach to things and helped me learn how to conduct research - this has been an incredibly useful skill, as we often conduct surveys and market research in my role. While I was studying at Bristol, I was also involved in a student-led organisation called Best of Bristol, which organised open lectures by the student body's favourite lecturers. As Marketing Officer, this was my first marketing role and showed me the direction that I wanted to go in my career.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Get as much experience as you can, whether from internships, volunteering projects or full time roles - employers want to see that you are interested in the industry and know what being a marketer entails.

Dr Carolin Sievers, Data Scientist, Frank Knight, London
BSc Psychology, London Metropolitan University, 2013,
MSc Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2014
PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience, UEA, 2018
German Abitur in Maths, French, Geography and PE



How did you get your job?

I was part of a network called “Women in Data” and someone from their recruitment team put me in touch with Frank Knight and the rest is history. As a data scientist in the residential research team, I work with vast amounts of real estate and housing data to predict sale prices and to inform decisions about the location of new housing developments. I am also charged with understanding why some groups of people are more likely to sell their houses with competitors. Members of the research team will come to me with questions, which I will translate into machine learning algorithms and use the data we have to find the answers. This will then inform their decision-making processes going forward. I like the fact that the skills I developed in my academic career have real world applications. Having worked in cognitive neuroscience and medical sciences in the past, I feel passionate about healthcare and how we can apply mathematical models to solve some of the biggest challenges in that sector. My ideal future job would be in medical imaging analysis, developing algorithms that help to detect diseases earlier and better predict their progression.

What have been your challenges?

The transition from academia into the commercial world was quite tricky. Despite having extensive experience it was difficult to communicate my data science skills to people in industry and show them what I could offer.

In what way is your past education relevant to this role?

The statistical training I received in my Psychology degree definitely paved the way to learn new analysis techniques throughout my career. For a career in data science, excellent communication skills are a selling point to most employers. There will always be someone who is better at programming or can develop a stronger algorithm, but not everyone is able to understand the question they are given and, more importantly, interpret the results accordingly. In my postdoctoral employment, I worked in medical research, which really improved my communication skills, as I collaborated with both medical doctors and engineers, where I learnt to speak to different audiences about my work. Finally, extra-curricular activities, such as university open days, mentoring schemes, public engagement opportunities etc., provided a great platform to enhance those skills even further.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Make smart decisions. Don't let others tell you that you are not good enough. Meet as many people as you can and ask them about their experiences and don't get too hung up on the perfect job because sometimes it takes a few detours to get there.

Anand Solanki
Data Analyst, GamCare
Bsc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2017
A-Levels: Psychology, Government & Politics, Drama



How did you get your job?

I work for GamCare- a charity that helps individuals affected by problem gambling in the UK, and I have been in this role for about 6 months. I found the advertisement on Charityjob.com and applied from there. My job entails providing insights from our database that could help improve patient outcomes and charity operations. To achieve this, I carry out statistical analysis and report on my findings to key stakeholders and members of the public.

This role has given me an insight into how psychological knowledge and data analysis skills can be used to change the lives of others. As a result, I hope to explore future opportunities to undertake research with clinical groups, or perhaps clinical psychology in general.

What have been your challenges?

Learning new skills such as R and Python has been a challenge but something I have enjoyed.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

The statistical elements of my degree helped massively and the research and writing elements gave me experience in searching for relevant literature and producing reports and presentations.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

The advice I would give to others wishing to enter my or any area of the job market for that matter is to maintain your willingness to learn new skills throughout your career.

John Lau, PayMe Solution & Integration Manager, HSBC,
Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014
MSc Computer Science, 2015
A-Levels: Maths, Biology, Psychology



How did you get your job?

I have held my current position for 9 months. I was working at another bank before this and applied through the HSBC's website. I'm on the commercial side of PayMe and my role is to assist commercial clients to onboard to PayMe's API product and ensuring their integration is up to our internal standard. I will guide them through the whole integration journey and provide support to their developers by answering technical questions and possibly providing a solution walkthrough with them. I also work in tasks related to Business development such as market research, assisting in contract negotiations with business partners. I really enjoy the client-facing aspects of my job and these opportunities are rare in banking in Hong Kong. PayMe is considered quite advanced in Banking Technology, and being part of a company using cutting-edge technology is quite exciting. In the longer-term, I would like to move into a career in cybersecurity.

What have been your challenges?

My current role is not as challenging as some of my previous roles, but in any new job there is a need to gain a wider understanding of the different processes used by the company and sometimes there can be conflict between different teams that needs to be resolved.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My degree gave me an excellent understanding on human behaviour and has this been really useful in working with the range of different people I come into contact with in my role. I'd say that most problems I encounter are really people problems (and this includes some of the technical challenges I have to resolve) so this is really useful knowledge to have. My MSc course also gave me the technical skills required for this role. I continue to take courses that will help me in my future career choices.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Knowledge is power, so always find something to learn while you can. The Cloud and Data is the future, so it is helpful to develop an understanding of these things early. Embrace change - working in tech means you will likely be the last one who leaves the office and first to get fired, the technical skills you learned today will not be useful after 1-2 years. So, you need to be prepared to continually update your knowledge.

Alex Walford

Senior Associate, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Cardiff
Bsc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2015
A-Levels: Maths, Biology, Psychology



How did you get your job?

I first found out about PwC at a careers fair held at Bristol University. I joined the firm in September 2016, exam qualified in November 2018, and fully qualified as a Senior Associate in September 2019. I work as a financial auditor, so my main job role is to review the accounts of companies to ensure the validity and legality of their financial records. We also provide financial and business advice to our clients, that offers improvements on control systems and cost-saving methods to maximise profitability. A typical day can vary depending on what client you are working on. The job is not often office based, as much of the work is completed at the client site. However, with the advancement in technology, a lot more work can be completed remotely. A typical day will often involve meetings with both the client and the team. Teams can vary depending on the size of the audit, but usually range from about 2-10 people. The majority of the work is completed on your laptop, using a variety of systems to carry out audit tests established to assess the validity of client records. I love the variety the job offers, and the relationships we build with clients. At PwC, I have worked in a range of industries, which has enabled me to interact with clients and gain a great understanding of different types of businesses.

What have been your challenges?

For me, the greatest challenge has been managing the stress of tight deadlines. You often work on multiple clients at the same time, therefore, you have to manage and prioritise deadlines to ensure all the jobs are completed when required.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

My university qualification enabled me to apply for the job, as one of the requirements was a degree (although this did not have to be financial). My qualification gave me confidence in public speaking, which has helped me to present in client meetings and tutor the year groups below me. My degree also gave me an in-depth understanding of report writing, which I have used to consolidate and summarise our audit findings to clients. The statistics part of my degree helped me analyse numbers and data in a comprehensive format, which is something I now use on a daily basis in my job.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Never give up! The exams are hard, especially coming from a non-financial background. However, with determination and commitment, I promise you will complete them and have a lot of fun on the way.

Lana Crick, Senior Associate, Price Waterhouse Cooper
Bsc Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 2014
MSc Organisational Psychology, 2015
A-Levels: Psychology, Maths, Art



How did you get your job?

I joined PwC's graduate scheme in 2016. My work involves consulting to both private and public sector clients on issues that impact their workforce, such as; culture and communications, workforce structure and planning, training and development, pay and fairness (gender pay, equal pay, minimum wage). A typical week is very varied. I might be at a client's office elsewhere in the UK conducting interviews / focus groups / training sessions, or I might be in the office (or working from home) doing research and working on reports. I travel a lot to other PwC offices for meetings and training sessions. I really enjoy the subject matter. Often for clients, their workforce is their biggest asset and their biggest concern, and the work we do can ultimately impact their employees experience of their jobs.

What have been your challenges?

It's often fast paced with challenging deadlines.

In what way is your university education relevant to this role?

Studying psychology means you have a deeper understanding of the human experience, enabling you to better understand people in the workplace and the issues that affect them. There are a number of research areas (such as psychometric assessments, motivation and culture) which are directly relevant to some projects I am involved in. Additionally, your dissertation provides important experience of writing up research findings in a concise and simple manner, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods and drawing conclusions.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

You do not need to have studied a Masters in organisational psychology, but having an interest in this area of psychology and reading around the subject is useful, as is any experience in HR / learning and development / employment law.

Jamie Tucker

Platform Controls Sen. Assoc., Benchmark Capital, Brighton
BSc Psychology, University of Bristol, 2022
A-Levels: Maths, Computer Science, Physics, Psychology



How did you get your job?

I was laid off shortly before starting a position in Oxford building electric vans. A recruiter called me up one day and got me an interview and the rest is history. I currently work at Benchmark Capital, a Wealth Management Platform. This has recently been acquired by the UK asset management company, Schroders. In short, when financial advisers have clients who wish to invest their money, they do this via our platform. We facilitate investments into a range of strategies/models and our operations side of the business handles the management and servicing of those accounts. I work in Platform Support in a compliance-adjacent role. I'm currently based out of our Horsham office, near Brighton where I live. I work 3 days a week in the office 2 days remotely. Our core work is the identification and rectification of accounts that have been flagged on any one of our 42 individual reports. We will then liaise with financial advisers who service these accounts or internal teams to rectify the issue. This makes up about 60% of my day. The remainder is spent training new starters, updating our procedures, ad-hoc reporting requests and cross-team project work. It's very varied. There's a lot of investigative work in our role which I enjoy and some interesting bespoke reporting requests where advisor firms request us to pull certain data subsets off the system for them or look into discrepancies they've noticed on their end. I would like to transition to a Compliance Analyst, Risk Analyst, or Financial Crime role in the next 2 years. Beyond that, we'll see!

What have been your challenges?

I am responsible solely for the training of new members in the team. This has been a big step for me as I haven't been particularly comfortable mentoring an individual in the past. However, with time, I am getting more used to this role.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

My experience handling large amounts of data in my third year dissertation set me apart from other candidates in the interview process. We spend all day in excel in my team and so being comfortable in this really helped me. Additionally, I still use the skills I developed in frequent presentations we did throughout our tutor sessions today. Presenting has never been my favourite thing but I am much more comfortable with this now in the rare case that I do have to present something to another team.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

If you have the opportunity to do a placement or summer internship on your degree, take it. I know so many people who effectively had guaranteed jobs out of university because of this, whereas people like myself who didn't engage in those options had a much tougher time in today's job market.

Elizabeth Hayhurst
Paralegal, Clyde and Co, Manchester
BSc Experimental Psychology University of Bristol, 2017
Graduate Dip. in Law, BPP Law School, Manchester, 2019
A-Levels: Biology, Philosophy & Spanish



How did you get your job?

I found out about the job through a recruitment agency, having submitted an application for a different role within the same company. My job involves assisting solicitors with the day-to-day management of their files. We deal with complex personal injury claims arising from road traffic accidents. My days are typically varied, however, generally, I draft key court documents, submit said documents to the court and the third party, take witness statements, and generally liaise with all parties to the proceedings to ensure deadlines are met and the claim is progressed. I enjoy the varied nature of my role as I am constantly faced with new challenges and have to learn quickly and use my initiative to solve problems. As part of my job, I get to work with a range of different people, from police officers to plastic surgeons, and my role involves more than just law, which adds an extra element of interest. I hope to qualify as a solicitor within the next few years and then specialise, perhaps as an Intellectual Property lawyer.

What have been your challenges?

My main challenge has been breaking into the industry. In order to become a qualified solicitor, the most common route is to secure a training contract with a law firm however this is an extremely competitive process and it generally helps to have some experience in legal practice, such as working as a paralegal. I initially found it difficult to secure a job as a paralegal having no prior relevant experience, however I spent an unholy number of hours submitting job applications and eventually was given the opportunity I needed

In what way is your university qualification and any extra-curricular activities you undertook relevant to this role?

The theoretical and statistical units in my Psychology degree helped me to be critical of my own and others' work, analyse and breakdown theories, and look for errors in methodology and conclusions. Such skills are very valuable as a paralegal, as I am regularly faced with large amounts of information and have to break this down into the salient points, look for errors in reasoning and apply this to the problem I am dealing with.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Get started as early as possible. Take advantage of the university's resources, from career advice to law fairs, and approach a wide spectrum of firms for experience, whether paid or unpaid. That said, everyone has to start somewhere and if you really want to become a lawyer, persevere, and eventually, you will get your opportunity.

Maria Camila Gracia Romero, Teacher
Colegio Nueva Granada, Columbia
BSc Psychology, Pontifical Javeriana University, Columbia, 2016
MSc in Applied Neuropsychology, University of Bristol, 2018
Degree Entry: Colombian ICEFS with Humanities focus



How did you get your job?

I used LinkedIn and also attended job fairs as a route to getting this job. I work at Colegio Nueva Granada, Columbia in the Learning Centre. It is a private American school and the learning centre supports special educational needs students. I have held this teaching position for around 1 year. A typical day involves meetings with other teachers at the centre and planning for one-to-one work that I undertake with the students. I really enjoy working with the students at the Learning Centre because they are highly motivated and work extremely hard to do their best.

What have been your challenges?

Pupils at the Learning Centre may have complex needs and working with those with challenging behaviours can be difficult at times.

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

The material I was exposed to in my MSc in Applied Neuropsychology has been really helpful in this role. I am able to employ a more evidence-based, clinical perspective in developing new approaches for supporting children with neurodevelopmental disabilities. Also, as the MSc was in English, that really boosted my second language skills and academic vocabulary which is extremely useful.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

For this role you will need to develop skills in patience, perseverance and discipline.



How did you get your job?

I got my job following a period of postgraduate training placements and a search of vacancies in the Bristol area. My day is really busy! No two days are the same in my job, but all are great fun. Much of the work actually happens before and after the children arrive at school. I love working with this age group as they come out with some really interesting questions! My ambition is to become a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

What have been your challenges?

The most challenging thing about my job has been teaching during the COVID period and dealing with difficult parents!

In what way is your university qualification relevant to this role?

I work with a lot of children with additional needs, and both my undergraduate and postgraduate studies have helped enormously in understanding of conditions and tailoring teaching accordingly.

What advice can you give to others wishing to enter this field?

Get experience before you apply to study! At university, make the most of any public engagement opportunities with local schools. When in a school, ask to take small groups, schools love this and will often agree to you teaching intervention groups.

Some useful careers resources

American Psychological Society Careers

<https://www.apa.org/careers/>

Brightnetwork

brightnetwork.co.uk/no-idea-what-do/what-to-do-with-degree/psychology-degree/

<https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/no-idea-what-do/what-to-do-with-degree/what-can-i-do-science-degree/>

British Psychological Society Careers Website

<https://careers.bps.org.uk/>

Charity Job Listings

Charityjob.com

LinkedIn

linkedin.com

MedComms Networking careers guides

medcommsnetworking.com/startingout/index.html

NHS Resources

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-jobs-changing>

National Careers Service

nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers

Prospects Careers Site - Details on a range of careers here.

prospects.ac.uk

Voscur

voscur.org/



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