

# TEACHING AND RESEARCH

**WHEN UNDERTAKING DOCTORAL-LEVEL RESEARCH YOU'LL GATHER DATA, TEST AND ANALYSE IT, AND COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS. AS A PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER, YOU'LL ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENTS TO INCREASE THEIR OWN PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS.**

## **RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY**

Before you start a PhD you need to be aware that most places are increasingly given to those with master's or first class honour degrees. The most common way of getting a PhD place is through direct enquiries to relevant departments and potential supervisors.

Many people decide to do their master's or PhD at the institution they have already studied at, supervised by people they already know. If this isn't possible, talk to people in your chosen area to find out about potential supervisors and other university departments.

Once you've decided on your topic and secured your university place you will need to find a supervisor who can support your work over the next two to four years.

There are many potential sources of funding but they often require the support of a university department and supervisor. It's best to secure your place first and then get advice from your university on the type of funding you can access.

# TEACHING PSYCHOLOGY

As a psychology teacher you have the opportunity to inspire the next generation of psychologists. If you love your subject, enjoy interacting with young people and want more than a typical 9–5 job, teaching could be the career for you.

Teachers of psychology work across a variety of academic levels to deliver a psychological education to their students in order for them to gain skills, knowledge and qualifications. Teachers within schools teach psychology at GCSE, A Level, and Scottish Higher or as part of the International Baccalaureate. Teachers or lecturers within higher education are mainly engaged in teaching psychology on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Teachers often combine a career in teaching with research.

## WHO COULD I WORK WITH?

Teachers mainly work in schools, colleges and higher educational institutions. Students can range from 14–19 year olds at secondary schools to adult learning and CPD training for professionals.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RESEARCH AND ACADEMIA  
CAREERS.BPS.ORG.UK/AREA/ACADEMIA-RESEARCH-TEACHING**

# TRAINING TO BECOME CHARTERED IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY

You can gain Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC) by completing a BPS-accredited undergraduate degree or conversion course.

**COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHING ROUTE OR**

**PHD IN PSYCHOLOGY OR**

**EQUIVALENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is the best possible way to learn about a career in psychology and decide on whether it's what you want. You'll also need it to get a place on most accredited postgraduate courses, and to find work in the field. Some postgraduate courses are looking for specific types of work experience. So contact the universities for further information.

If you are looking for work experience you could consider the following areas:

**RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN A UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT**

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# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## **DR HELEN L. FISHER** **ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGIST**

My undergraduate degree was in psychology but I have subsequently received training in social psychiatry, epidemiology, genetics, and epigenetics and I now draw on all of these disciplines in my research. My days are varied – I might meet with researchers in my team to discuss results, lecture and support students, comment on journal papers, answer journalists’ queries, mark assignments, decide who should be given research funding, or develop my own research ideas.

### **THE BEST PART OF MY JOB**

Having the opportunity to work with amazing data that has been painstakingly collected on thousands of people over several decades. This means I can investigate a whole host of questions to help us better understand why people develop mental health problems.

### **THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF MY JOB**

At this more senior level in academia, I have very little time to conduct any actual research myself or write papers. Instead the majority of my time is spent completing administrative tasks, managing projects and supervising the people who I employ to do the research.

### **WHY I LOVE MY JOB**

The work I do has a very real possibility of changing people’s lives – both in the longer term

by providing another piece of the puzzle to prevent mental health problems occurring, and in the shorter term by supporting my team to develop their own careers in research.

### **ADVICE TO OTHERS**

Take it slowly. Don’t say ‘yes’ to everything. Focus on publishing decent papers, obtaining small pots of money (travel grants, small research grants), and apply for awards from the BPS and other organisations. If you get a chance, do attend conferences and present a poster. I’d also recommend following top researchers and those with similar research interests to you on Twitter as often they follow you back and this can increase your visibility.