



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Study Psychology at Trinity College Dublin

B.A. Honours Bachelor Degree (NFQ Level 8)

CAO Code - TR006

Number of Places - 40 Places

CAO Information

2024:	592
2023:	589 in both rounds, but not everyone was offered a place
2022:	600 in first round; 590 second round.
2021:	600 in first round; 578 in third round but not everyone was offered a place.
2020:	555
2019:	565
2018:	543

Frequently Asked Questions

How many places are there?

40, including access routes such as TAP, HEAR, DARE. There are additional places for international students.

Tell me about the course?

Psychology at Trinity is a 4-year programme. In your first and second year, you take a number of foundational modules that introduce you to the major pillars of psychology including cognitive psychology (how thinking works), developmental psychology (how children's thinking and behaviour develops), personality and individual differences, social psychology (how other people influence our behaviour), neuroscience (where you learn about different parts of the brain and how they relate to human behaviour), evolutionary psychology (where you learn why we evolved to have certain psychological abilities and interests, how language emerged, etc.), and the history of psychological thought. We also have a heavy emphasis on research methods and statistics, as these are the backbone of psychology and provide the evidence base for everything that we do. Students learn how to do research and how to work with data and perform statistical analyses using Python coding, which is one of the most popular and in-demand coding languages in the world.

In second year, students also have the opportunity to take a number of modules from other disciplines across the university through the Open Modules and Trinity Electives system. Otherwise, there isn't a lot of choice in the modules you take during first and second year, but once you get into your third and fourth year there are a lot more options - you get to build your own curriculum by choosing a number of modules from a large selection. We have a really wide range of modules covering many different areas within psychology, including neurorehabilitation, psychology and policy, the psychology of the climate crisis, criminal psychology, global mental health, the psychology of mind-wandering, applied developmental psychology, workplace wellbeing etc. In addition, you undertake two major research projects. In third year, you complete an applied group project and in fourth year, you do an independent capstone research project under supervision of research-active member of staff in the School. There's also an opportunity to study abroad during third year.

What sets Psychology at Trinity apart from other courses elsewhere?

First, studying at Trinity is a unique experience in itself - and our Psychology course stands out for a number of reasons. First is the broad range of topics offered as both foundational and advanced/senior modules, many of which are linked with the special interests of highly research-active and internationally recognised staff working in a diversity of sub-disciplinary areas such as global mental and brain health; language, sociocognitive, and brain development in infancy and early childhood; organisational systems; sustainability and climate psychology; perception; reasoning; and neuropsychology and neurorehabilitation (naming only a few); access to range of interdisciplinary modules from across the College through the requirement to take open modules/electives in 2nd & 3rd year; the hands-on research experience gained through the applied group project in 3rd year and independent capstone research project in 4th year; deep engagement with research methods and statistics (the nuts-and-bolts of psychology) from first year - now taught through python coding which is a highly transferrable skill sought-after by many employers.

Are there alternative or access routes to Psychology?

There are a variety of paths to Trinity and Psychology besides CAO. For example, there is a foundation course for young adults, which is open to Leaving Certificate pupils from schools in the Greater Dublin area which are affiliated to third level access programmes. There is also something called Disability Access Route to Education, which is a third level admissions scheme for school-leavers who have a disability or specific learning difficulty. Students who are considered to be DARE eligible may secure a place on a reduced points basis. Students curious about these route should talk to representatives of the Access routes who are in the Arts Block. Another route to Psychology is through our Postgraduate Conversion Course. This is a two-year condensed version of the undergraduate degree that is open to graduates of other degree courses. The course provides a pre-professional qualification in psychology, which confers eligibility for graduate membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and allows a student to proceed to postgraduate training, including higher degrees by research, and to specialise in an area of professional psychology.

What are the requirements for mature student undergraduate entry to Psychology?

There's a short aptitude test and an interview. In addition to doing well in the aptitude test (which entails demonstrating verbal skills and numerical reasoning including the interpretation of simple bar charts and graphs), applicants should have a good understanding of what Psychology is and why they want to study it, and what the course at Trinity offers. They should also be able to demonstrate a strong interest in the subject e.g., through having done some reading in psychology.



Can you take psychology with another subject?

No, in Trinity, like most other Irish universities, psychology is offered only as a single honours degree. During second and third year you have to take 30 credits (out of 240 in total for the degree) in subjects outside psychology, so that provides an opportunity to study other subjects from across the university.

Is the degree accredited?

Yes our degree is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland and this accreditation is also recognised by the British Psychological Society. This means you can take postgraduate training in, for example, Clinical, Counselling, or Educational Psychology in Ireland or the UK.

Are there placements or internships?

No, our programme does not offer placements – typically placements happen as part of further training in professional psychology e.g., as part of a doctorate in Clinical or Counselling psychology.

Is the degree recognised in the United States?

We do not know if our degree is recognised as a prerequisite for professional postgraduate training in the US, but we do know that some of our students have gone to the United States for post-graduate training. And to Europe too! You would need to check the requirements and prerequisites of the particular course or training programme that you are interested in.

Do you have to be very good at Maths to do psychology?

While there is no requirement to have honours maths to take our programme, training in research methods and the statistical analysis of research data is central to our programme. A substantial proportion of the class time in first and second year is dedicated to learning about research methods and statistics. We teach statistical data analysis using Python programming - one of the most popular programming languages in the world. So, if you are comfortable with numbers, this will certainly make it easier for you.

What can you do with a degree in psychology? What kinds of careers could I hope to get after completing this course?

The possibilities are endless – not all of our graduates stay in psychology. Our degree is an excellent good basic degree because of the foundation it provides you in lots of transferable skills, like critical thinking, being scientifically minded, being a very good researcher with numerical, statistical, and programming skills. Psychology graduates are highly sought after. If you want to work as a psychologist, then you need to go on to specialist post-graduate training in psychology. Trinity offers programmes in Clinical and Counselling Psychology. Some of our students go on into Clinical or Counselling Psychology, but there are also careers in areas such as Sports Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Health Psychology. Other students choose to pursue careers in academia and go on to conduct research. Others go into industry - working in marketing, consulting, management, human resources, data science, and many other things.

What's the difference between psychology and psychiatry?



There is a lot of overlap between the types of patients psychiatrists might see, and who clinical and counselling psychologists work with – this is why people sometimes get confused about the difference between them. However, they look at things differently and might use different treatment approaches. Psychiatry is a branch of medicine, if you want to be a psychiatrist then you must do a medical degree. Psychiatrists tend to understand mental illness from a biological point of view – so they often prescribe medication as a treatment.

Psychologists (like clinical and counselling psychologists) tend to take what's called a bio-psycho-social perspective when they work with people with mental health difficulties. This means that as well as understanding the biological basis of mental health difficulties, they also look at people's coping skills, and social factors such as social support and stress. Psychotherapy, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is usually the first port of call for treatment. They often work as part of multi-disciplinary teams with psychiatrists, who might prescribe medication if needed.

Are there any options to study abroad during the course?

Yes! You can go abroad for either half or all of your third year of the programme. Our students go lots of different places, including Europe, Australia, Canada and the States, so there are lots of possibilities.



What are the requirements to do an Erasmus year?

To do an Erasmus year you must have completed at least one year of their undergraduate programme. Where the language of tuition at the host institution is not English, you will of course need some local language knowledge. To participate in a full-year Erasmus exchange you would need to complete modules in psychology equivalent to at least 45 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits. However the credit requirement is reduced for students going abroad for less than one academic year. The School of Psychology normally allows students to study abroad during their Junior Sophister (3rd) year only.

I'm interested in going into counselling/psychotherapy. What options are there?

It depends on the area you want to go into - postgraduate training in Clinical or Counselling Psychology is at doctoral level (this means 3 years). For other areas of psychology (like Health or Forensic Psychology) postgraduate training is at Masters level (usually 2 years). A PhD is more if you want to go into research and/or university lecturing. This typically takes 4 years.

I want to be a Clinical Psychologist, will I be qualified after this degree?

You won't be qualified as a psychologist after our degree (or any degree in Ireland!), but the Psychology undergraduate degree in Trinity is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland, and this accreditation is recognised by the British Psychological Society. This means that you will be eligible to complete further postgraduate education (after your degree) in Ireland and the UK. Students who want to become a Clinical Psychologist usually (though not always) do a Masters and get some relevant work experience, usually by working as an Assistant Psychologist. Then they can apply for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology - these are three year programmes that are funded by the HSE (you get paid during your training). All universities in Ireland offer these programmes. It can take quite a few years before you become a clinical psychologist.

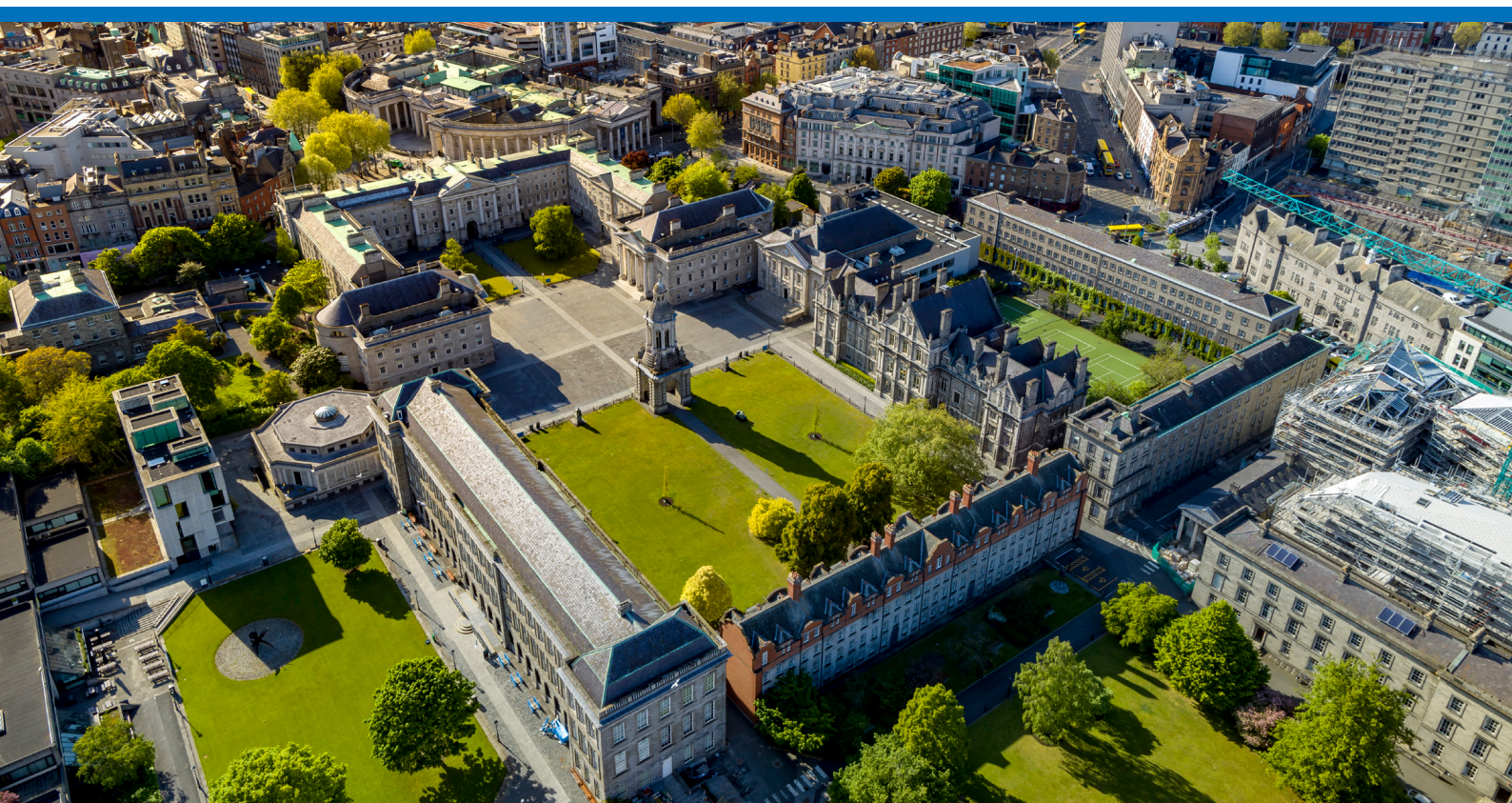
How would I go about specializing in forensic psychology/criminology?

It is possible to specialise by completing a masters course in criminal/forensic psychology. The Psychology undergraduate degree in Trinity is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland, and this accreditation is recognised by the British Psychological Society. This means that you will be eligible to complete further postgraduate education (after your degree) in Ireland and the UK. UCC offers a postgraduate courses in forensic psychology in Ireland and there are several such courses in the UK. In our programme, we offer an optional module in 'Criminal Psychology' that you can take in your 3rd/4th year.

What does a typical day or week look like?

A typical day in the life of a psychology undergraduate in Trinity would be full of variety. In your first and second years, you'll have around 10-12 hours of tuition a week - a mixture of lectures, statistics classes, seminars, and tutorials. Outside of these hours, you're expected to do some prescribed & recommended readings and to complete assignments such as essays and research reports. You'll generally have fewer formal teaching hours in your third and fourth years because you'll be conducting a group research project (3rd year) and an independent final year project (4th year) which will take up a lot of your time. You'll of course have meetings with your supervisors about your research projects in your 3rd and 4th years.

Although there's often the impression that there's a lot of reading in Psychology (which there is), it's definitely not the only thing that you will be doing on the course. On top of attending typical lectures, you'll also have labs (where you'll get hands on experience of using the programming language Python to conduct statistical analyses) and seminars (where you'll discuss the material covered in your lectures and learn to carry out short psychological experiments). In your third year, you'll complete a group research project on a topic of your interest (previous projects have included investigations of the impact of fitness content on social media on the wellbeing of young adults). In your final year, you'll complete your own independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member. Since there's not too many formal teaching hours in Psychology, you'll have plenty of flexibility to fit in society/sports club activities like attending talks and debates, social meetings and other activities hosted by the Psychology Society or the Neuroscience Society.



What kinds of subjects do you cover?

You cover a wide range of topics over the 4 years including but not limited to;

Foundations of Psychology

Neuroscience (where you learn about different parts of the brain and how they relate to human behaviour)

Evolutionary Psychology (where you learn why we evolved to have certain psychological abilities and interests, how language emerged, etc.)

Developmental Psychology (where you learn about how children develop)

Personality and individual differences

Social Psychology (how other people influence our behaviour) etc.

These modules provide you with basic psychology knowledge and they are (usually) taught during your first and second year.

Once you get into your third and fourth year there is a lot more options - you get to choose a number of modules from a larger selection (depending on your own interests). So we would have modules such as;

Criminal Psychology

Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology

The Brain throughout the lifespan

Language and Cognition

The Psychology of The Climate Crisis etc

You also have to take some modules outside psychology, in second and third year, and this provides access to a really wide range of subjects from across disciplines within the university.

What kinds of in-person contact/learning are there?

In addition to traditional lectures - where a lecturer talks about a topic for about 50 minutes (with opportunities for questions and activities), the course also has some tutorials, seminars and labs. In the 'labs' you learn how to use Python programming to manage data and to run statistical analyses. The seminars that are aligned with these labs provide tuition on research skills and methodology. These seminars and labs provide learning and training in how to conduct psychological studies and how to manage and analyse the data that you've collected. During other seminars and tutorials, you meet in small groups and discuss various topics in psychology as well as develop academic skills. There is a very nice diversity of learning settings.

What kinds of assignments and exams do you do?

There's a mixture of assignments in the psychology course. You'll have some continuous assessment (e.g., essays and also lab reports where you write up the findings of small experiments that you carry out in class) and also end-of-term exams. Some exams might be essay-based or involve writing shorter answers. Some modules assess by multiple-choice questions as well. In your third year you'll complete a group research project, and the group report that you produce will form quite a substantial part of your grade for that year. Similarly, in your fourth year, you'll complete your own independent Capstone research project, which you'll write up as a final year thesis or dissertation.



Some recommended readings:

- **Van Bavel & Packer:** The Power of Us, Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony
- **Oliver Sacks:** The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat
- **Britt Wray:** Generation Dread
- **Daniel Kahneman:** Thinking, Fast and Slow;
- **Melissa Hines:** Brain Gender
- **Lilienfield, Lynn, Ruscio, & Beyerstein:** 50 great myths of popular Psychology
- **Stuart Ritchie:** Science Fictions