



# Securing your University offer for Psychology

Essay Competition Award Ceremony: July 23rd, 2022

**New College of  
the Humanities**

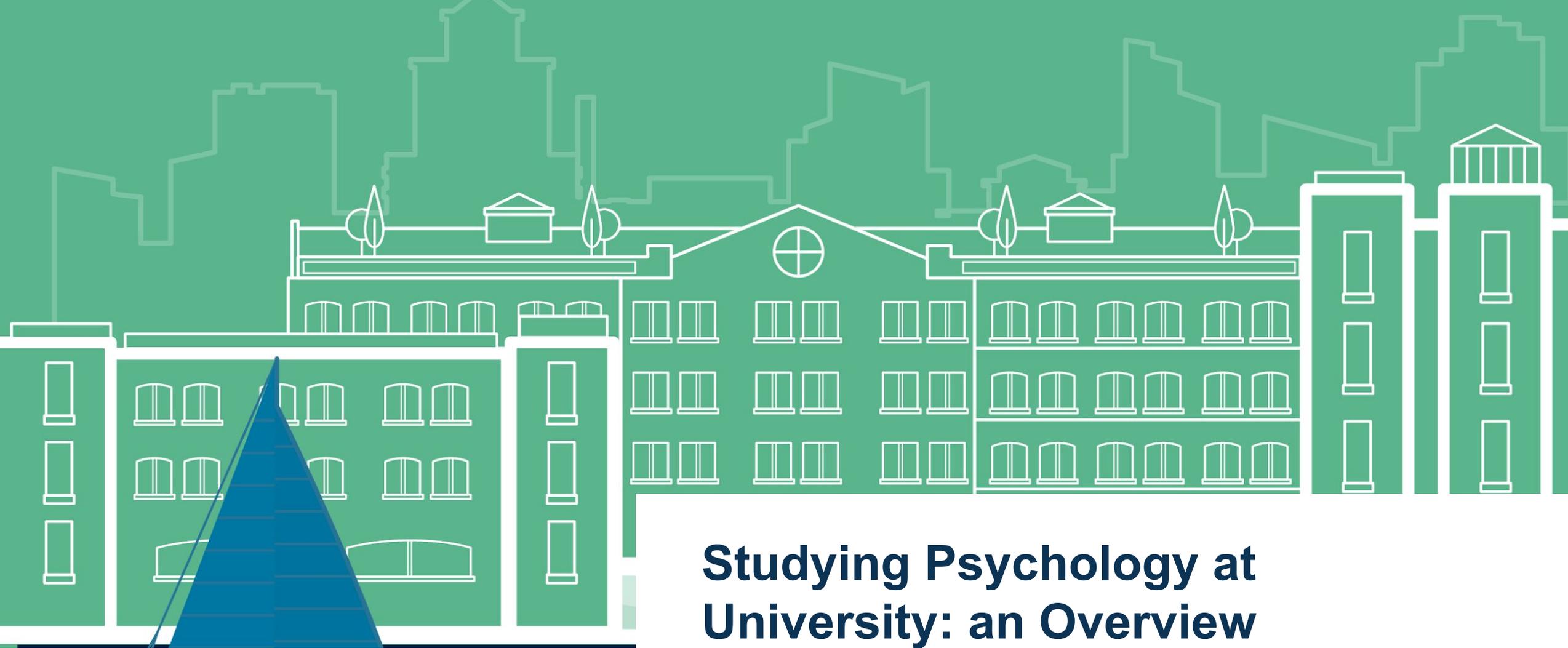




# Agenda

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- Welcome
- Studying Psychology at University: an Overview
- Submitting a Competitive Application
- NCH Insights
- Q&A



# Studying Psychology at University: an Overview

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## What is the study of Psychology?

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- Psychology looks at the ways people think, act, react, and interact. It is the study of human (and animal) behaviour, and the thoughts and emotions that influence behaviour
- Courses can focus on scientific research and/or applied Psychology
- Many degree courses are accredited and follow the professional body guidelines, set out by the British Psychological Society (BPS)



## Where and how can you study psychology?

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- Single Honours BA Psychology, qualifications ranging from BSc (Hons) and BA (Hons) degrees
- Many joint and combined honours options, e.g.: Psychology and Criminology, Psychology and Biology, Psychology with Sociology (\*note that the study balance is likely to be other than 50/50 if it's Psychology *with* rather than Philosophy *and*)
- Different degree spans (standard English 3 years, standard Scottish 4 years, fast-track 2 years etc)
- Degree apprenticeships take a more practical approach (potentially useful to fast track toward particular careers)
- Full-time/part-time; online/in-person; as well as some courses with a placement (sandwich courses)
- Foundation Certificates

# How is Psychology taught?

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- **Reading:** Set readings are vital for Psychology, as you will be looking in detail at the content of several important sources
- **Lectures:** Lecturers can discuss the set reading and analyse various texts, primary sources, and key events, as well as further contextualise key topics
- **Seminars:** Seminars allow for a more in-depth discussion of a topic and a chance to ask any questions to your lecturer/seminar supervisor. It's probably even more important that you are well prepared for the seminar as you will need to participate
- **Essays:** Formative and summative, to test your analysis of a subject
- **Presentations:** Occasionally presentations are used to assess how well you understand a topic - these may be individual or group presentations



## What skills do you develop?

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- Essay writing
- Critical thinking
- Research
- Planning
- Analysis
- Creative writing
- Time management
- Referencing skills

The skills you will acquire as a Psychology graduate will allow you to pivot flexibly into a variety of industries, when you enter the working world.

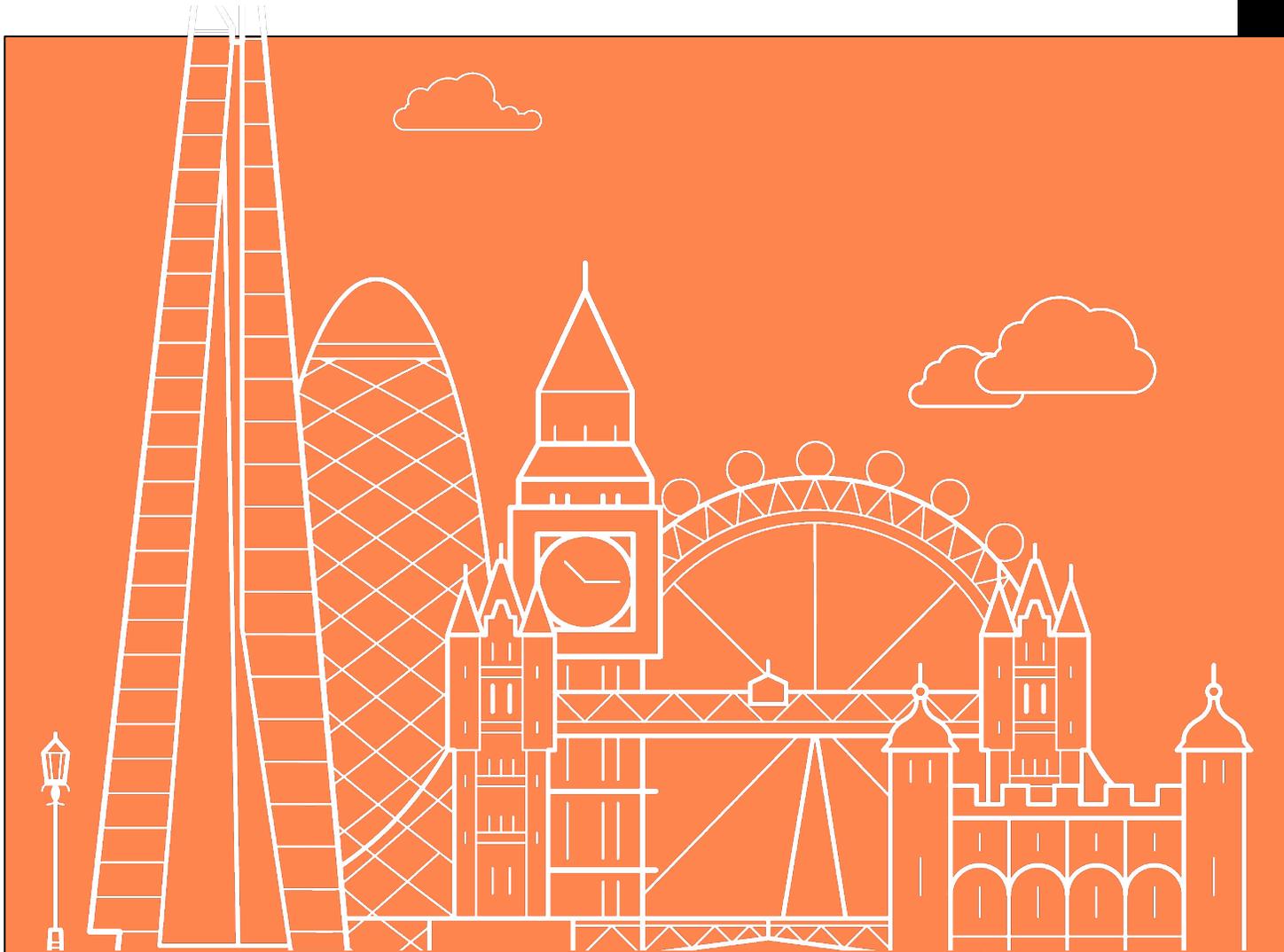
# What can you do after your degree?

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As an Psychology graduate your transferable skills can take you into ANY industry. Some of the top graduate destinations are:

- Human health and social work
- Education
- Retail/administrative and support
- Legal, social, and welfare professions
- Business, HR, and finance
- Marketing, PR, and sales

Note: If you are interested in becoming a psychiatrist, you need to qualify as a doctor, then go on to train in Psychiatry.



# Submitting a Competitive Application for Psychology

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# What are the entry requirements?

UCAS

*Information provided by [ucas.com](https://ucas.com)*

## **A levels:**

- Usually need a minimum of two A levels, with three A levels and A-B grades required for the most popular courses
- Entry requirements range from CCC to AAB
- Psychology A level is desirable, but not usually required
- Literature, Maths and Statistics can be helpful

## **International Baccalaureate Diploma:**

- From 30-39 points overall in the IB Diploma

## **Scottish Highers:**

- From BBBB to AAAAB (most frequently required AABBB)



## What are admissions tutors looking for?

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- Enthusiasm and motivation to study Psychology
- Credible evidence that supports your subject passion
- Proactive subject exploration and engagement - e.g.: wider reading
- Relevant extra-curricular/super-curricular activities
- Interests outside of school, relating to Psychology
- Relevant and transferable work experience
- Aims and goals; career plans if known
- Understanding of the demands of studying at university, and how this is different from school

# What super-curricular activities would support my application?

Super-curricular activities take the subjects you study further, beyond what you have learnt at school or college. Some examples for Psychology may include:

- Wider reading beyond the set texts
- Reading specialist magazines and journals
- Attending university taster lectures or taster days
- Listening to podcasts, TED talks or online lectures
- Attending a Psychology Summer School
- Taking an online (MOOC) Psychology course
- Taking part in university essay competitions!



# Why is the personal statement so important?

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- Often your only chance to 'sell yourself' to the university and impress the admissions tutor
- Helps to differentiate between equally excellent candidates with similar or identical grade profiles, especially for competitive courses
- Helps if you are a borderline candidate
- Demonstrates your reasons for applying for a course
- May form basis of an interview - tutors may ask questions arising from the statement
- May help if on results day you don't quite make your grades

# How can I write a compelling personal statement?

- Invest plenty of time in the brainstorming/thinking stage, before starting to write your statement
- Structure your personal statement
- Use positive and enthusiastic language
- Make every sentence count - word count is tight!
- Ensure it reflects your 'voice', and your 'journey'
- Use evidence to support claims/statements
- Be prepared to draft and redraft
- Be honest - don't exaggerate and don't plagiarise
- Double check grammar and spelling for errors
- Ask for support, especially with proofreading and checking - it's easy for mistakes to slip through!



# What might an admissions interview look like?



- Unique opportunity to discuss a subject you are passionate about with an academic tutor
- Opportunity for tutor to get to know you and your motivation for applying - you can also ask questions!
- May take the form of a 'taster' tutorial
- Unlikely to be a test of knowledge - tutor will be more interested in how you think, rather than what you know
- Discussion-based; questions will probe your subject interest, enthusiasm and aptitude
- Questions may build on your personal statement
- Questions will be challenging - don't panic if you don't immediately have an answer; take your time to think
- Some interviews may include a task, or pre-reading



## How can I prepare for my admissions interview?

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- Carefully reread your personal statement, and be prepared to expand upon any of the points you have included
- Re-read or re-familiarise yourself with any texts you referenced, so these are fresh in your mind
- Undertake any reading or pre-interview tasks in good time
- Practice talking about the points in your statement
- Research who will be interviewing you
- Make sure you are clear regarding interview logistics
- If you will be undertaking a virtual interview, make sure you have somewhere suitable for this task, with good wifi
- Prepare questions you would like to ask in the interview



## NCH Insights

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# Faculty insights

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- The skills that Psychology students acquire can be applied to a range of careers, from Neuromarketing, to Creative Writing, to any setting which calls for interpersonal skills and an understanding of human behaviour
- Psychology graduates are highly sought after in the jobs market to fill a multitude of roles, including some surprising ones, like HR or Sales
- When writing your personal statement, don't be afraid to make it personal - we'd much rather read something about you and your interests than a 'deep' quotation
- Check out the seminars, lectures, events and podcasts available online - think about what really motivates you to study Psychology at university
- The most valuable trait of a Psychology student is curiosity

# Student tips and hints

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- There are a lot of great online resources that can help you explore your subject interest in Psychology! Look for recorded lectures and case studies
- Use the 'Show' not 'Tell' approach - show what you have learned, and why it's made you want to study Psychology at university
- In your personal statement, write about subjects you are genuinely interested in and want to talk about. Let your enthusiasm shine through!



## Suggestions for wider reading

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- Nicky Hayes (2011), *Psychology Made Simple: Flash*
- James Kalat (2011), *Introduction to Psychology*
- Ellen Pastorino and Susann Doyle-Portillo (2010), *What is Psychology? Essentials*



# Q&A



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