What can I do with a degree in Psychology?

Some graduates will want to pursue further postgraduate study through a Masters to become a specialist Psychologist or will pursue registration through supervision upon graduation of a four year degree. Many students are unclear of the options available for three or four year psychology graduates whose goal it not to gain registration as a psychologist, but are still interested in working in an area related to human behaviour and how the mind works. What type of jobs and roles can they go into?

Psychology is a great base degree which develops many skill sets both transferable and technical, that are in demand from a wide range of employers. These include:

- Excellent analytical and problem solving skills
- Outstanding research and information sourcing skills
- Strong critical thinking, judgment and decision making skills
- Appreciation of mental health issues and how this impacts at an individual, family and community level
- Understanding of developmental psychology issues and how this affects individuals, families and communities across the lifespan
- Exceptional interpersonal skills, oral and written communication skills
- Appreciation for diversity and a global understanding that can bridge cultural differences
- Ability to use appropriate technologies such as SPSS for research purposes
- Strong team work skills with the ability to work collaboratively.

A three or four year degree in psychology also allows you to explore the many fields and special interest areas within this science based discipline. Reflection on the units and topics of study you enjoyed most will assist with clarifying your preferred career direction. Units of study within your undergraduate degree may have included:

- Child development psychology
- Adult developmental psychology
- Mental illness (Abnormal Psychology)
- Cognitive psychology (including sensation and perception)
- Social and community psychology
- Cross cultural psychology
- Research methods
- Interpersonal communication
- Learning
- Health, emotion and motivation
- Organisational Psychology
- Addiction studies
- Sexology
- Forensic psychology and criminology
- Consumer behaviour
- Performance management
Who employs three/four year psychology graduates?
Many of the skill and knowledge sets mentioned above are required by all employers. This places psychology graduates uniquely to create their own career path and capitalise on their strengths, interests and unique qualities to market themselves towards employment. Self-awareness if the key to understanding what type of opportunity you are most suited towards. Your preferred career future may change over time as your life roles change, develop new and enhance existing skill and knowledge sets and engage in lifelong learning such as professional development, networking and work shadowing activities.

Graduate Careers Australia (www.graduatecareers.com.au) outlines some areas you might work in after graduating with a Psychology degree.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Related sub-discipline of psychology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creating social change to improve or prevent human problems</td>
<td>Social/ community psychology and cross cultural psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with the law, police services and in correction services</td>
<td>Forensic psychology and criminology</td>
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<td>Studying accident prevention</td>
<td>Research and social/community psychology</td>
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<td>Assisting people involved in sport and exercise to maximize their performance and participation</td>
<td>Sports psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undertaking assessment, intervention and counselling for learning and developmental issues in people of all ages</td>
<td>Clinical psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing educational material</td>
<td>Many disciplines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting the prevention of treatment of illness and promote healthy behaviours</td>
<td>Abnormal and clinical psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing and implementing recruitment and selection strategies. Organisational development to maximize the performance of the existing employees.</td>
<td>Organisational Psychology/ Human Resources</td>
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<td>Assisting clients to live healthier, happier lives</td>
<td>Counselling psychology and health psychology. Life coaching</td>
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<td>Case management to assist individuals on welfare benefits to attain meaningful employment</td>
<td>Social/Community psychology, organisational psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assisting people to achieve goals in areas such as welfare and community projects</td>
<td>Social/community psychology and cross cultural psychology</td>
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<td>Working with children with developmental delays and their families</td>
<td>Child development psychology</td>
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<td>Assessment, diagnosis and management of individuals with brain impairment</td>
<td>Rehabilitation psychology and neuro-psychology</td>
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<td>Conduct research and teach in universities</td>
<td>Academia and research</td>
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<td>Assessment, diagnosis and interventions of behavioural and development issues with school aged children and adolescents</td>
<td>Education/Development/School psychology</td>
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<td>Market and consumer research</td>
<td>Consumer behaviour</td>
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<td>Career guidance and assisting people with making enhancing career and life decisions</td>
<td>Adult developmental psychology/ Career development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counselling and developing preventative and treatment programs to assist people with personal wellbeing, relationships, work, health and crisis management</td>
<td>Adult development psychology, social/community psychology, counselling psychology</td>
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<td>Sexual difficulties and gender issues</td>
<td>Sexology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping disorders</td>
<td>Adult developmental psychology</td>
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These are just some of the areas you may work in as a three or four year psychology graduate. Networking with industry professionals and finding out about the pathways other psychology graduates have taken will assist with you uncovering the wide variety of opportunities available to yourself. Working with a mentor, who is an experienced industry professional, may assist with uncovering these opportunities and expanding your occupational knowledge. To find out more about the specialisations and sub disciplines within psychology go to the Graduate Careers Australia website or the Australian Psychological Association website (http://www.psychology.org.au/)

**Where should I start looking for jobs? What companies are interested in psychology graduates?**
Register with websites for specific job alerts – Consider both broad and narrow search terms e.g. Clinical Psychologist, Organisational Psychologist, Counsellor, Team Coordinator, Child and Family Worker, Support Worker, Rehabilitation, Recruitment, Employee Assistance etc. This will ensure that email alerts of appropriate jobs are sent directly to you.

If positions on Seek, Health and Community Jobs (HACs Jobs) or Career one etc., give the name of the recruiting company – go directly to their website and check for other employment opportunities. Apply directly from the company website if possible.

www.seek.com.au  
www.careerone.com.au  
www.jobs.wa.gov.au  
www.careerjet.com.au  

**Community, Non-for-Profit and Non-Government Organisations**
The Kalbarrin Centre: www.kalparrin.org.au/  
Therapy Focus: www.therapyfocus.org.au/  
See The West Australian Council WACOSS links for a full list of community services and peak bodies www.wacoss.org.au/  
Intework: http://www.intework.org/
Ishar Multicultural Women's Centre: http://www.ishar.org.au/
Recreation and Sport Network: http://www.rec.net.au/
Save the Children Australia: http://www.savethechildren.org.au/
South Metropolitan Youth Link Services (SYML): www.smyl.com.au
Women’s Health Service: http://www.whs.org.au/employment

State Government
Department for Child Protection: www.dcp.wa.gov.au
Department for Communities: www.community.wa.gov.au/
Department of Corrective Services: www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/
Department of Justice: www.justice.wa.gov.au/
Drug and Alcohol Office: www.dao.health.wa.gov.au

Federal Government

Education
Department of Education and Training www.det.wa.edu.au/education/
Employment Directions Network www.employmentdirections.net.au/

Private
Private Sector employers can include, for example, Accounting firms looking for Psychology students for HR graduate roles.
How do you go about registration?

What does supervision entail? How do I find a supervisor? How much will supervision cost?
Due to the complexity of supervision you should contact your state or territory registration board for more details. For assistance with finding an appropriate supervisor the APS Referral Service can be contacted on 1800 333 497 or email referral@psychology.org.au. The cost of a supervisor will vary, your state or territory registration board can provide more information about this.

Do I have to be employed to register, and should this employment be full-time?
To undertake supervision for registration you do not have to be employed by an organisation or be self employed. Supervision can be achieved by engaging in voluntary work. Supervised practice can be undertaken either through full- or part-time basis – usually a minimum of two days per week.

Once you have organised your supervisor, you will need to submit your proposed program to the appropriate registration board for approval before you begin supervised experience. If you are unsure of the types of work activities that are suitable for supervision towards your registration, check with your potential supervisor or the appropriate Registration board.

As the types of work activities that involve the application of psychological knowledge are broad, typical activities include providing counselling to clients, human resource management or personnel services, and conducting intellectual assessments.

For further information go to: http://www.psychology.org.au/study/working/

References: